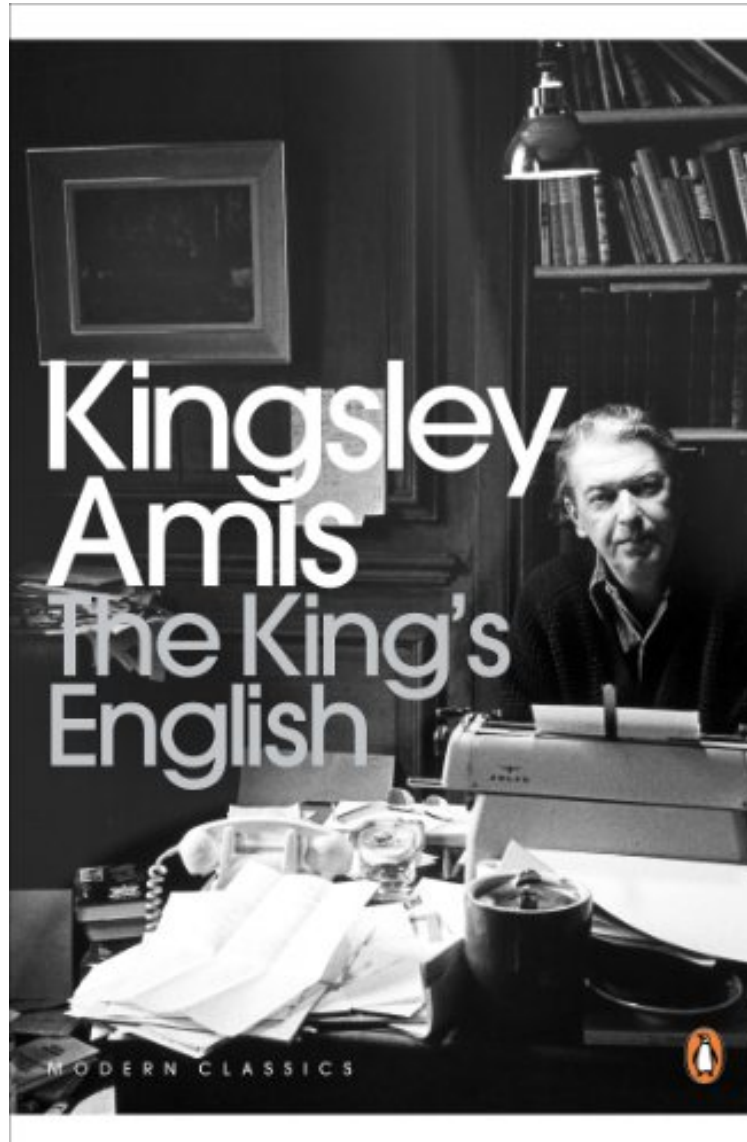


[E-BOOK] The King's English: A Guide to Modern Usage (Penguin Modern Classics)

## The King's English: A Guide to Modern Usage (Penguin Modern Classics)

*Kingsley Amis*

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#286712 in Books 2011-06-02Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.50 x 5.25 x .751, .44 #File Name: 0141194316241 pages | File size: 16.Mb

**Kingsley Amis : The King's English: A Guide to Modern Usage (Penguin Modern Classics)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The King's English: A Guide to Modern Usage (Penguin Modern Classics):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Amusing Perusing.By Steven DaedalusKingsley Amis would never

go for the fake rhyme in the title of this review, being too much the gentleman. But he calls the shots as he sees them and spares no one in this personal critique of English spelling, grammar, and pronunciation. It's not the kind of book that you pick up and read from beginning to end. I have it near my recliner and whenever a television program is interrupted by a commercial ad for male enhancement products, I pick it up and browse at random. Often smiling, sometimes chuckling, at his candor. My own use of English is based on what I learned in school, which was in turn based on Noah Webster's idiosyncrasies. I have no idea why Webster decided that "four-head" is a better rendering of anatomy than the English "forrid." But it doesn't matter much. Amis' ire is directed more at "posh" expressions than Americanisms. The author would approve, by the way, of "Amis'" for the possessive, instead of "Amis's." At the end of the day -- and there's a phrase that would turn him pale green -- we have to ask, "What is the book all about?" At that, he'd turn a bright chartreuse. Here's what he has to say about "What x is all about," as in "What's it all about, Alfie?" "It seems important not to spend a moment more than strictly necessary in denouncing this fearful gobbet of trend. Anybody who speaks or writes to the effect that anything is what anything, anything at all from aardvarks to zymotics, is ABOUT, especially ALL ABOUT, deserves exclusion from the ways and habitations of mankind forthwith and without possibility of remission in the foreseeable future." Not all his decrees are quite as definite, and I've had to use capitals instead of his italics, but you get the general flavor. He has nothing to say about flavor/flavour, so I think I'm safe. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A delight By M. Sundstrm This book follows in the tradition of Johnson's dictionary and Fowler's *The King's English* in adding a flavour of the personal to what might otherwise be pretty dull and descriptive endeavour. The title is of course a wink to Fowler, but Kingsley was in fact informally called the King by his inner circle of friends, and biographic information suggests that he cut a pretty regal figure from time to time certainly in all matters lingual where he was a (rather self-aware) dignitary. The book is a true delight, and any Kingsley Amis fan will smile a lot while reading it and also learn a great deal about the language that Amis loved so much. I have about 10 books that never leaves my desk this is one of them. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Your cranky uncle takes on usage and grammer By Prairie rose Oh, he is such a curmudgeon, and this book is just a treasure. The crabbier he got, the more I loved it. A book to read one or two definitions at a time, then leave out somewhere to open up to a random page every now and then, just to be reminded of how the world is full of ignoramuses and going to hell in a handbasket.

An indispensable companion for readers, writers, and even casual users of the language, the Penguin Modern Classics edition of Kingsley Amis's *The King's English* features a new introduction by Martin Amis. *The King's English* is Kingsley Amis's authoritative and witty guide to the use and abuse of the English language. A scourge of illiteracy and a thorn in the side of pretension, Amis provides indispensable advice about the linguistic blunders that lie in wait for us, from danglers and four-letter words to jargon and even Welsh rarebit. If you have ever wondered whether it's acceptable to start a sentence with 'and', to boldly split an infinitive, or to cross your sevens in the French style, Amis has the answer - or a trenchant opinion. By turns reflective, acerbic and provocative, *The King's English* is for anyone who cares about how the English language is used. Kingsley Amis (1922-1995), born in London, wrote poetry, criticism, and short stories, but is best remembered as the novelist whose works offered a comic deconstruction of post-war Britain. Amis explored his disillusionment with British society in novels such as *Lucky Jim* (1954) and *That Uncertain Feeling* (1955); his other works include *The Green Man* (1970) *Stanley and the Women* (1984), and *The Old Devils* (1986) which won the Booker Prize. If you enjoyed *The King's English* you might like Amis's *Lucky Jim*, also available in Penguin Modern Classics. 'A terrific book ... learned, robust, aggressive, extremely funny' Sebastian Faulks

From *Library Journal* Praised as a superb prose stylist, British writer Amis, who died in 1995, was nonetheless controversial, variously labeled a Communist, Thatcher conservative, alcoholic, misogynist, and philander. Even in *The King's English*, an entertaining manual that is hardly meant to be exhaustive, Amis's wit and candid opinion prevail. Anyone wishing to distinguish between the words belly and stomach (don't even consider tummy) or feeling particular angst over the crossed 7, the disappearance of Latin, and the use of such popular expressions as in-depth, in terms of, or whatever will find a discerning explanation. For insight into Amis's life and work, readers can turn to the authorized biography by Jacobs, a Fleet Street journalist and broadcaster. Amis wrote 24 novels, including the acclaimed *Lucky Jim*, plus several works of poetry and nonfiction. Focusing on the novels, Jacobs deftly reveals a man who is not always admirable or likable but is certainly intriguing. Recommended for literary collections. A Robert Kelly, Fort Wayne Community Schs., IN Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Kirkus* sA delightfully arch, irreverent handbook for those who dare to speak or write the King's English Kingsley Amis's *English*, that is. The late author, who earned his reputation as one of the Angry Young Men of British literature in the 1950s, apparently reserved his greatest ire for those who misused language. To do so willfully in print was an indication of bad judgment, to do so unwittingly in conversation was mere stupidity. In an effort to curtail the abuse of the King's own (and to launch an attack on creeping Americanisms, such as the use of advocate and progress as verbs), Amis wrote a guide to modern usage that isn't. But it is a gleeful intellectual stomp through malapropisms, false unions, split

infinitives, danglers, floaters, berks, and wankers. Think of it as a twisted Strunk White for the English middle class, to which the London-born, Cambridge-educated Amis certainly belonged. But he was no avatar of class-consciousness in fact, just the opposite. He deplored the excessive use of French and discouraged affected pronunciation. Anglicized French words, like *hors doeuvres*, for example, were to be pronounced with robust disregard for accuracy. Seen from an American angle, Amis's book provides a highly entertaining glimpse into the social implications of speech in Britain where accent so influences public image as well as Amis's own stylistic consciousness, which permeates this text. (Who else would devote a lengthy entry to Pronunciation: he-she?) But Amis's handbook has a serious undercurrent, as well, no matter how dry the author's wit. I am sustained, he wrote, by reflecting that the defense of language is too large a matter to be left to the properly qualified. Although useless as a guide to the English language, Amis's book functions as a droll literary tract and a reminder that the price of a good style, like that of other desirable things, is eternal vigilance. (Eric Jacobs's biography of Amis is also to be published in June. See p. 634.) -- Copyright 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. A terrific book ... learned, robust, aggressive, extremely funny -- Sebastian Faulks