PART II. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF LINGUISTICS

KEY TOPIC(S):
- Early history.
- The Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

READING ASSIGNMENT 9
The purpose of this reading assignment is to help you to become aware of the emergence of systematic ideas about the nature of language among the scholars of Ancient Greece, Rome, and India, and the persistent interest in language through the middle ages and the Renaissance to modern times.

PAIR DISCUSSION – Working in pairs, answer the questions that follow.

1. According to the text, how were Philosophy and Grammar related among the scholars of Ancient Greece and Rome? Explain, using your own words.
2. In the text, David Crystal mentions two important linguistic issues (linguistic debates) addressed by the grammarians and philosophers of Ancient Greece. Describe briefly both of them using your own words and explain their importance to the study of language in modern linguistics.

3. What did the Stoics establish in the 3rd century BC? Why was it important that Stoics grouped words into parts of speech for the development of the study of language?

4. What did the word *grammar* mean when the concept was developed in Ancient Greece?
5. Why do you think that grammarians of Ancient Greece focused on the written language instead of focusing on a spoken language?

How is this fact related with today's misconceptions about particular languages and about language in general?

6. When did the widespread idea that language had to be preserved from corruption originate? And the idea of correctness?
7. When was the first formal grammar of Greek written?

8. Why do you think that Romans used Greek categories and terminology with little change when describing Latin from a linguistic point of view?

9. Who introduced the view that language is first and foremost a social phenomenon with a communicative purpose?

10. When did the ‘traditional’ approach to grammar originate?
11. What was the difference between Indian linguists’ view of language change and Greek grammarians’? Do you think that modern linguistics would be different if the work of Indian linguists had reached the western world earlier on? Explain.

12. What concepts of modern linguistics do you think that derive from the early history of linguistics?
13. Write down two issues from The Middle Ages and the Renaissance that have had an impact on you, and give your reasons.

14. Write your reaction to the usefulness of this reading assignment. Also, comment on what you learned about modern linguistics as a result of this assessment.