



READ AND PASS

GNS 102

(USE OF ENGLISH)

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CONTRIBUTORS

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PREFACE

Over the years, English language has risen from its humble roots to become a global language and an indispensable tool in international relations as well as wider communication. In fact, the status quo of English confers an impressive degree of prestige on people who are able to manipulate the language conveniently and strategically to suit various linguistic and non-linguistic purposes. It then becomes expedient of us students, as second language users in a second language community, to learn and relearn the nitty-gritties and eccentricities of the language most especially as expounded by its native speakers. The grammar of English is a must-know for every student who wants to excel in reading and writing across all levels of the Nigerian educational system.

GNS 102 (Use of English) is a two-unit course in Lagos State University which carries the

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‘compulsory’ status. Being a compulsory course, every student is obliged to register it and pass the exams before he or she can graduate from the university system. This material is specially designed to help students understand the course with a view towards scoring excellent grades after sitting the exams. Students are first expected to read through the GNS textbook before taking up this material for revision. This material therefore must be seen as serving an auxiliary cause without replacing the mandatory GNS textbook.

All of the topics captured in this material are **grammatical units, writing techniques, dictionary and the word, spelling correctly, the correct usage of modal verbs, tense and aspects, principles of word formation, common grammar mistakes in English and common rules of concord**. Special appreciation also goes to the students, Ajao M. Temitope, Adetu Olayinka,, Okewole Suleimon and me, who painstakingly put heads together and created time out of their tight schedules to produce this material. I wish everyone success in the forthcoming examinations.

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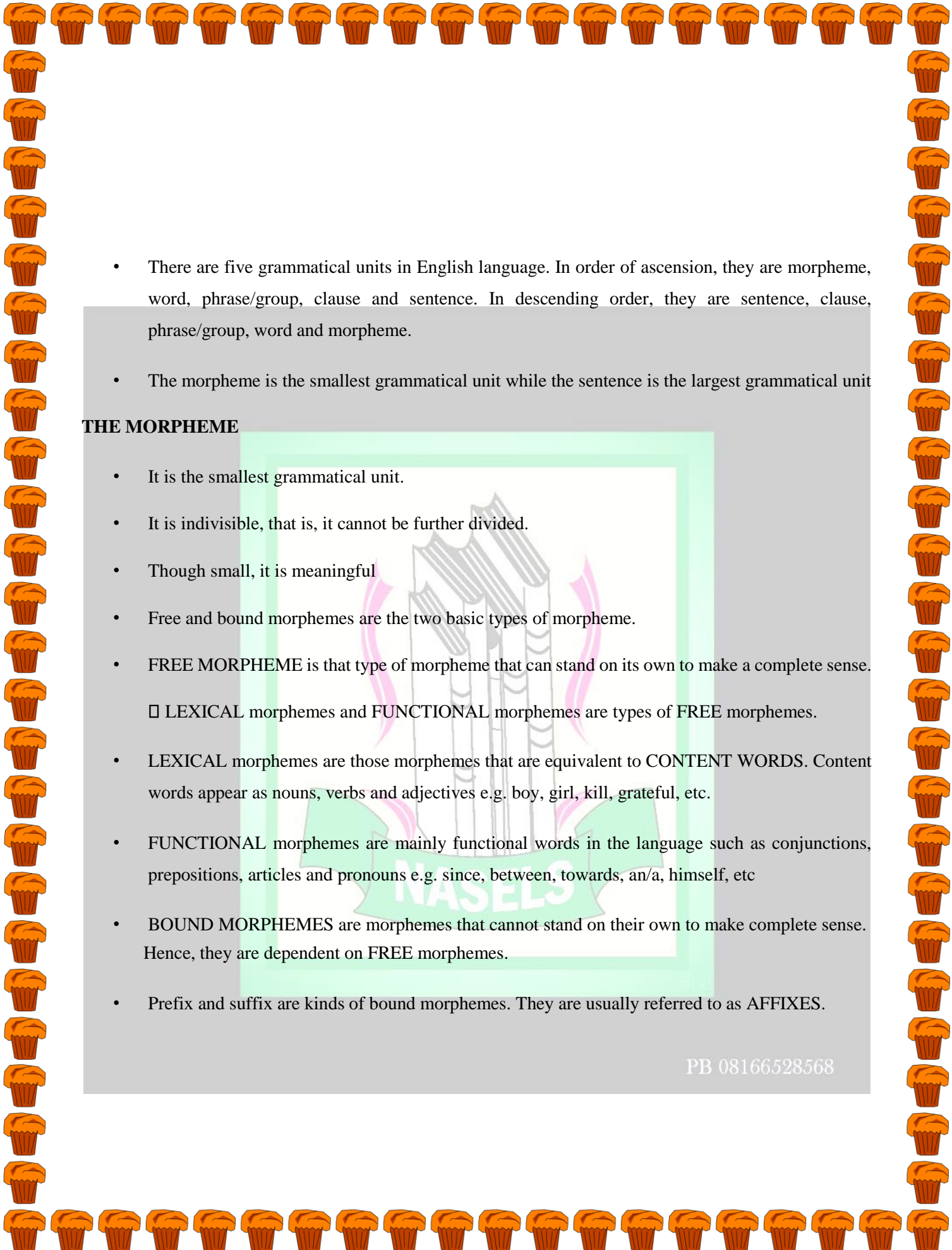
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GRAMMATICAL UNITS

- Grammar refers to the rules which govern the use of language.

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- There are five grammatical units in English language. In order of ascension, they are morpheme, word, phrase/group, clause and sentence. In descending order, they are sentence, clause, phrase/group, word and morpheme.
 - The morpheme is the smallest grammatical unit while the sentence is the largest grammatical unit

THE MORPHEME

- It is the smallest grammatical unit.
- It is indivisible, that is, it cannot be further divided.
- Though small, it is meaningful
- Free and bound morphemes are the two basic types of morpheme.
- FREE MORPHEME is that type of morpheme that can stand on its own to make a complete sense.
□ LEXICAL morphemes and FUNCTIONAL morphemes are types of FREE morphemes.
- LEXICAL morphemes are those morphemes that are equivalent to CONTENT WORDS. Content words appear as nouns, verbs and adjectives e.g. boy, girl, kill, grateful, etc.
- FUNCTIONAL morphemes are mainly functional words in the language such as conjunctions, prepositions, articles and pronouns e.g. since, between, towards, an/a, himself, etc
- BOUND MORPHEMES are morphemes that cannot stand on their own to make complete sense. Hence, they are dependent on FREE morphemes.
- Prefix and suffix are kinds of bound morphemes. They are usually referred to as AFFIXES.

- Prefixes can only be added BEFORE a free morpheme e.g. 'un-', 'in-', 'ir-', 'im-' in the words 'unholy', 'indirect', 'irremovable', 'impossible' respectively.
- Suffixes are only added AFTER a free morpheme e.g. '-ible', '-ment', '-es', '-ic', '-ize', e.t.c.
- Suffixes are further divided into two: derivational and inflectional.
- Derivational suffix is that morpheme which changes the word class of a free morpheme when added to the free morpheme. For instance, when the derivational suffix '-ly' is added to the free morpheme 'love,' it changes from a noun to an adjective ('lovely').
- Inflectional suffix, when added to a free morpheme, does not change its word class. E.g. the suffix '-es' when added to the free morpheme 'church' becomes 'churches' and the resultant plural word still retains its word class as a noun.

WORD

- The word is second in order of ascension amongst the grammatical units. It's higher than the morpheme and lower than the phrase/group.
- Words are learnt in relation to their meaning in context.
- In traditional grammar, there are eight parts of speech: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction and interjection
- In modern linguistics, the word classes are articles & determiners, nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions and conjunctions
- The meaning of the word could either be denotative or connotative.
- Denotative meaning of word is the literal, primary or dictionary meaning of a word.

- Connotative meaning is the figurative meaning of a word. This meaning goes beyond the dictionary meaning to include other associative meanings a word attracts.

PHRASE/GROUP

- The phrase otherwise known as group is third in order of ascension amongst the grammatical units. It's higher than word and lower than clause.
- Phrase is a group of words that do not make a complete sense.
- it's also a group of words that do not have a finite verb.
- Noun Phrase, Verb Phrase, Adverbial Phrase, Adjectival Phrase and Prepositional Phrase are the various types of phrases.

CLAUSE

- The Clause is above the phrase/group and below the sentence in the grammatical units.
- Dependent and independent clauses are the types of clause.
- Independent clause is that clause that can stand on its own to make a complete sense.
- Independent clause is also referred to as ALPHA or MAIN clause.
- Dependent clause is that clause which relies on an independent clause in order to make a sense.
- Dependent clause is also referred to as BETA or SUBORDINATE clause.

SENTENCE

- The sentence is the highest grammatical unit.

- The sentence refers to a group of words that express a complete thought.
- Sentences can be categorized as structural and functional types.

STRUCTURAL TYPES OF SENTENCES

- **Simple sentence** is a structural type of sentence.
- A simple sentence is usually an alpha/independent clause.
- **Compound sentence** is another structural type of sentence.
- A compound sentence is that type of sentence which has two or more simple sentences. Such sentences are joined together using coordinating conjunctions. Hence, it's the combination of two or more independent clauses connected by coordinating conjunctions like 'and', 'but' and 'so'
- **Complex sentence** is also a structural type of a sentence.
- It comprises at least one independent clause with one or more dependent clauses

FUNCTIONAL TYPES OF SENTENCES

- The functional types of sentences are: declaratives, interrogatives, imperatives and exclamatory.
- **Declaratives** are **affirmatives**. They state experiences, facts, ideas and give reports.eg. (1) the sun rises at dawn (2) the children like fruits
- An **interrogative sentence** asks a question or makes an enquiry. This is done to elicit a response which is usually verbal.eg. (1) are you a man? (2) who broke the mirror?
- **Imperative sentences** give instructions, orders, commands and make requests.eg. (1) wash the clothes (2) get out! (3) drink some more water

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- An **exclamatory sentence** expresses strong feelings and emotions. It normally ends with an exclamation mark. eg. (1) What a comedy this is! (2) what a beautiful girl she is!


WRITING TECHNIQUES

1.0 THE WRITING PROCESS

- Writing is a complex activity and an art that can only be mastered through constant practice.
- Writing techniques refer to the fundamental ways of achieving good writing
- Writing techniques also refer to the pros and cons to be upheld with a view to achieving a nearperfect piece of writing
- Writing techniques can be considered in terms of three broad categories: **pre-writing, writing stage** and **post-writing activities**

2.0 PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES

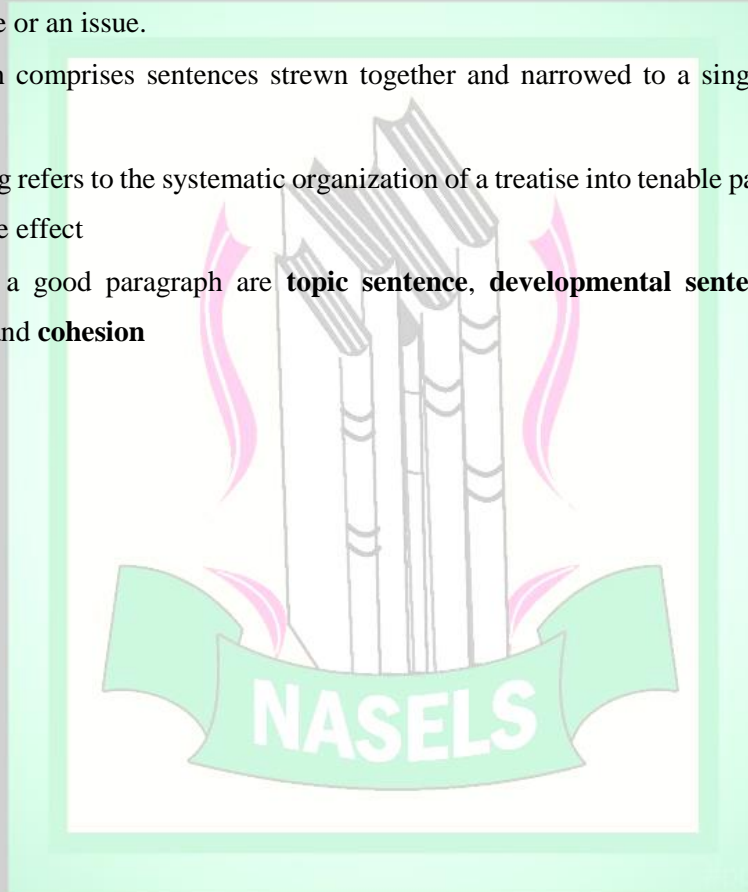
- **Pre-writing activities** involve the series of preliminary activities to be covered and taken into consideration before writing is done. This is the stage in the writing process where planning is effected in order to ensure effective, well-ordered writing.
- In the pre-writing stage, the audience is brought in view, style is considered and ideas are generated
- Ways of generating ideas include **brainstorming, clustering, freewriting, interviewing, classical invention** and **outlining**

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- **Brainstorming** involves thinking and bringing forth random ideas towards expatiating a concept. Brainstorming can be done alone or done with others in a group of common interests.
 - **Clustering** (also *mapping* and *webbing*) occurs when the writer maps out his or her thoughts on a particular subject or topic. To cluster ideas around a stimulus word or basic term is to generate related points in circles and connect them to the basic term situated at the centre of the clustered items. Clustering begins with a word and stretches further to include items related to the first word; this, in turn, may result in further clustering.
 - **Freewriting** is an activity that involves non-stop writing or scribbling for about five to fifteen minutes. It is usually used to end *writer's block*, a situation in which a writer is almost completely bereft of ideas. When freewriting is ordered along a definite pattern or specific topic, it becomes *focused freewriting*.
 - **Interviewing** occurs when a writer has to consult experts on the subject of his prospective treatise. In interviews, a writer generates ideas from people whom he/she believes to be more knowledgeable on the topic of interest.
 - **Classical invention** involves one asking different questions about a particular subject. These questions may involve definitions and descriptions, making comparisons, creating relationships, giving samples and drawing inferences.
 - **Outlining** is usually the final of all prewriting activities. Here, the writer prepares a sketchy or detailed structural breakdown of the writing he is about to embark upon.
 - Outlining involves presenting an organization of key points and topics to be explored while writing
 - Outlining is evident in several books as table of contents
 - Letters, numbers and roman numerals are used while outlining to indicate divisions and subdivisions

3.0 WRITING STAGE

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- At this stage in the writing process, the writer does his first draft while taking into consideration the notions of **paragraphing, coherence, cohesion, topic sentence, thesis statement, punctuation and capitalization**
- A paragraph is a segment or section of an essay resulting from sentences which deal specifically with a theme or an issue.
- A paragraph comprises sentences strewn together and narrowed to a single theme of an entire discourse
- Paragraphing refers to the systematic organization of a treatise into tenable parts in order to achieve a wholesome effect
- Features of a good paragraph are **topic sentence, developmental sentence, thematic unity, coherence and cohesion**



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Topic sentence is the basic sentence of a paragraph. It summarizes the main idea in that paragraph.

Developmental sentences are other sentences which contribute to the topic sentence. They further expand and expound the main idea in a paragraph by providing illustrations, comparisons and giving further descriptions as appropriate.

- **Thematic unity** is achieved when the writer acknowledges that one paragraph holds only one main idea and all other sentences in that paragraph must contribute meaningfully in some way to the main idea shouldered by the topic sentence.
- To achieve thematic unity, the interconnectedness of all the sentences in a paragraph must be pronounced.
- **Coherence** deals with connection and consistency in writing. This is realized when all the ideas in a paragraph flow smoothly from one sentence to the other.
- To achieve coherence in a composition, the writer must choose his/her words carefully as well as select appropriate grammatical sequences
- The use of transitional words and phrases such as *therefore, furthermore, in other words, moreover, in addition, with regards to, on the one hand, on the other hand, similarly, owing to* and *insofar as* may help a writer to achieve coherence while writing.
- **Cohesion** stems from the word *cohere* which means *to stick together*.
- Cohesion is based on the interdependence of meanings generated by sentences in a text. Cohesion occurs when one sentence presupposes the other in a paragraph.
- Some of the techniques considered relevant to achieving cohesion are repetition, synonymy, antonymy, transitions, cause and effect, collocation and exemplification.
- The basic types of paragraph are **introductory** paragraph, **main/transitional** paragraph and **concluding** paragraph
- The **introductory paragraph** must be catchy, well-written and attention-gripping. It must also serve as a prelude by establishing the **thesis statement** to be explored in subsequent paragraphs

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- **Thesis statement** is that key sentence in the introductory paragraph of an essay which summarizes and embodies the subject matter of the entire essay. The thesis statement succinctly informs us in the introductory paragraph of what is to be expatiated in transitional paragraphs.
- **Transitional paragraphs** are other paragraphs that succeed the introductory paragraph and come before the final/concluding paragraph. Each transitional paragraph has a topic sentence aided by accompanying developmental sentences
- **Punctuation and capitalization** are aspects of writing that contribute to coherence and cohesion. A poorly punctuated work will cause misunderstanding and misinterpretation of messages. Patterns of paragraph development include **comparison & contrast, analogy, classification & partition, cause & effect and sequence**

4.0 POST-WRITING ACTIVITIES

- Post-writing activities involve **editing** and **proofreading**.
- Post-writing activities are observed to show that perfection cannot be achieved after one's first draft
- **Editing** involves effecting proper punctuation and rearranging structures more appropriately to achieve a near-perfect piece of writing. A writer may choose to edit his work himself or he may employ the services of a professional editor who is well versed in rules of the language of communication and subject matter.
- Grammar and acceptability are also considered during editing
- **Proofreading** is the final check for errors and misspellings. Proofreading happens shortly after editing.

DICTIONARY AND THE WORD

- The dictionary is a reference book that gives some information about words.
- A good dictionary provides at least five key details about a word: spelling, pronunciation, word class, probable meaning(s) and usage
- Dictionaries may be broadly categorized into two: **general dictionaries** and **specific dictionaries**.
- Examples of general dictionaries are *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, *The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, *Webster's New International Dictionary* and *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary*
- Examples of special dictionaries are *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English*, *Dictionary of Modern English Usage*, *Cambridge International Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs* and *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*
- The dictionary provides the following information concerning a word: spelling, syllabification, pronunciation, word class, inflected forms, etymology, definitions, usage, idioms, synonyms and antonyms
- **Syllabification** refers to the division of a word into syllables using small dashes. Syllables help us to pronounce words appropriately.
Pronunciation is indicated using phonemes in-between two slashes.
Word class refers to the part of speech a word belongs to.
- **Inflected forms** are various forms which a word may assume to indicate number, tense, ownership/possession, comparative or superlative form. E.g. "long" (adjective) may become "longer" (comparative adjective) and "longest" (superlative adjective)
- **Etymology** means the history or origin of a word. For instance, the English word "restaurant" is of French origin. Most of the words in English are borrowed from several other languages across the world like Chinese, Latin, Greek, German, etc.

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- **Definition** of a word is simply the common or general meaning of a word
- **Usage** is included in the dictionary to indicate features like status label (i.e. whether a word is formal, informal, taboo, slang, etc.), occupational label (i.e. whether a word is restricted to medicine, law, etc.) and geographical label (i.e. whether a word is specifically used in a part or region of the world)
- An **idiom** is an expression whose meaning goes beyond the ordinary, basic meaning derived from the individual words forming it
- **Synonyms** are words whose meanings are closely related e.g. *deny* has the following as synonyms: *disclaim, refute, rebuff* and *refuse*
- **Antonyms** are words that are opposite in meanings e.g. the antonym of *sad* is *happy*
- **Homophones** are words with the same pronunciation but distinct spellings. E.g. *advice* and *advise*, *already* and *all ready*, *brake* and *break*, *device* and *devise*, *knight* and *night*, *flour* and *flower*, etc.

SPELLING CORRECTLY

In this section, we will examine how words can be spelt correctly using some rules.

Rule one: Doubling of Consonant

- Words of one syllable (monosyllabic words) with one vowel and ending in a single consonant will double the consonant before a suffix that must begin with a vowel. E.g. 'slap' is a one syllable word

that has just one vowel ('e') and then it ends in a single consonant ('p'). To add a suffix to this word, first, you must make the consonant 'p' become two as in 'pp'. Second, the suffix must have a vowel



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and before the consonant as in 'ed', 'en', 'ing'. Using this rule, you will then arrive in the past tense form of the verb 'stop' which is spelt 'stopped'.

NB: This rule is used for all words that have one syllable, one vowel and a single consonant. Other words spelt in relation to these words are: hid - hidden, drag - dragged, knit - knitted, run - running, e.t.c. It is pertinent to note that monosyllabic (one syllable) words that end in consonants like **w**, **y** or **x** do not double the final consonant before a suffix is added. E.g. **row - rowed, buy - buying,** and **box - boxing.**

- Words with two or three syllables that end in a single consonant following a single vowel will double the final (end) consonant only when the stress falls on the last syllable. E.g. **refer - referred, occur - occurring, recur - recurring, prefer - preferred, deter - deterred, handicap - handicapped, worship - worshipped, kidnap - kidnapped,** etc.
- Words that end in 'l' following one or two vowels which are pronounced separately double the consonant 'l'. E.g. **dial - dialling, model - modelling, appal - appalled, repel - repelled, signal - signalled, quarrel - quarrelling,** etc.

Rule two: Omission of a Final 'e'

- Words that end in 'e' following a consonant will delete the 'e' before taking a suffix that begins with a vowel. Examples: '**Desire - desirable, 'fame - famous, 'fate - fatal, 'age - aging, 'love - loving, 'extreme - extremity,**' e.t.c.

- A final 'e' should be retained before a suffix that begins with a consonant. Example: **'care - careless,' 'safe - safety,' 'sincere - sincerely,' 'rude - rudeness,' 'hope - hopeful,' 'engage - engagement,'** e.t.c.

- When a word ends in 'ue', the final 'e' should be dropped before a suffix beginning with a consonant is added. Also, if a word ends in 'oe', the 'e' should be retained before an 'ing'. Examples: **Argue - argument, due - duly, whole - wholly, true - truly, hoe - hoeing,** e.t.c. **NB: Dye, line and singe are exempted from this rule.** Hence, we've something like: **dye - dyeing, line - lineage, and singe - singeing.**

Words that end in 'ee' do not drop an 'e' before a suffix. Examples: **agree - agreed, agree - agreeing, foresee - foreseeing, foresee - foreseeable,** e.t.c.

Rule three: Words Ending in 'ce' and 'ge'

- Words that end in 'ce' and 'ge' retain the 'e' before a suffix that begins with 'a' or 'o'. Examples: **courage - courageous, manage - manageable, outrage - outrageous, peace - peaceable,** etc.
- Words ending in 'ce' change the 'e' to 'i' before the suffix 'ous'. Examples: **space - spacious, grace - gracious, vice - vicious, malice - malicious,** etc.

Rule Four: Words Ending in 'y'

- Words that end in 'y' following a consonant, change the 'y' to 'i'. Examples are: **apply - applying, study - studying, happy - happily, carry - carried, envy - envious,** etc.

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NB: The only exception to the above rule is that the final 'y' will retain itself when suffix 'ing' is used. Examples: **apply - applying, study - studying, carry - carrying, hurry - hurrying**, e.t.c. Also, if a vowel comes before the 'y' the 'y' still retains itself. Examples: **obey - obeyed, play - played, stay - stayed, joy - joyful, journey - journeying, toy - toys, valley - valleys**, e.t.c. Another exception to this rule is that a few monosyllabic words in which 'a' comes before the 'y' will change 'y' to 'i' before a suffix. Example: **pay - paid, lay - laid, say - said, day - daily, slay - slain, gay - gaily**, etc.

Rule five: Suffix '-ful'

- The last 'l' in 'full' will drop to form the suffix 'ful' when added to any word. Examples: **beautiful, useful, painful, hopefully**, etc.

Rule six: The suffix '-ly'

- When suffix '-ly' is added to words that end in 'l', the 'l' does not drop and some that have double 'll' will have only '-y' as their suffix. Examples: **formal - formally, usual - usually, real - really, wool - woolly, actual - actually, full - fully, dull - dully, shrill - shrilly**, e.t.c. Also, if the word ends in 'le' and comes before 'a', then the 'e' will be dropped and add only 'y' as suffix. Examples: **capable - capably, humble - humbly, subtle - subtly**, e.t.c.

THE CORRECT USAGE OF MODAL VERBS

- Mood is the use of modal verbs to express ideas and concepts.
- Modal verbs are *will, would, shall, should, can, could, may, might, must* and *ought to*.
- Modal verbs are used to demonstrate concepts like **ability, advice, deduction, assumption, intention, willingness, obligation, permission, possibility, and requests.**
- Modal verbs that can be used for **ability** are: **can, could, shall, and will.**

NB: 'can' is used for present tense while 'could' is used for past tense and 'will/shall + be able' are used for future tense. Also, 'could' can be used for present tense with the presence of a condition (e.g. I could buy you lunch, if you want.)

- Modal verbs that can be used for **advice** are: **must, ought to, should, may/might + as well** and **would + advise.**
- Modal verbs that can be used for **assumptions** are: **will, should, and ought to.**

NB: 'will' can be used with the present infinitive, the continuous infinitive or the perfect infinitive. 'Should, will and ought to' can be used for present or past or future actions.

- Meanwhile, assumptions used with 'will' are more confident than that of 'should'.
- Modal verbs that can be used for **deduction** are: **must, may, can't, couldn't** and **might.**
NB: 'can't' and 'couldn't' are used for negative deduction.
- In **obligation**, modal verbs like **must, ought to, should, shouldn't/should not, oughtn't/ought not, mustn't/must not** and **needn't/need not** can be used.

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- For **permission**, the following modal verbs can be used: **may, might, can, could**. **Mayn't/may not, mustn't/must not** are used to deny permission.
- **Possibility** uses modal verbs like **can, could, may, and might**.
NB: '**might**' has lesser degree of certainty than '**may**'.
- In making **request** one can use modal verbs like **will, would, can, could, may, and might**. The use of '**can**' in making request is very informal while the use of '**could**' is more common. NB: **can, could, may and might** can be used for first person pronoun '**I/we**' while **could, will or would** can be used for second person pronoun '**You**'
- **Willingness** in mood uses modal verbs like **will, would, should, and shall**.

TENSE AND ASPECT

- **Tense** refers to the form of a verb which indicates time of an action
- Tense is basically divided into three: **present tense, past tense** and **future tense**
- Aspect shows whether an action is in progress or already concluded □ The two main aspects are **continuous aspect** and **perfective aspect**
- Generally, forms of tenses include **simple present, simple past, present continuous, past continuous, present perfect, past perfect, present perfect continuous, past perfect continuous, simple future, future continuous, future perfect** and **future perfect continuous**

SIMPLE PRESENT

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- Expresses an action that happens regularly e.g. He eats fruits
- Used with adverbs and adverbials such as always, usually, seldom, occasionally, every fortnight, etc. to express habitual action
- Used in news headlines e.g. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SEEK LOAN, MAN ALLEGEDLY KILLS WIFE, etc.
- Used in imperative structures e.g. get lost, kill the bird, etc.

SIMPLE PAST

Expresses events that have occurred in the past e.g. we saw the chairman

PRESENT CONTINUOUS

- Refers to an action happening at the moment of speaking or writing e.g. he is singing a song
- Describes an action happening about this time but not necessarily at the moment of speaking e.g. the committee are presiding over special duties assigned to them
- Also used for an appointment or arrangement in the near future e.g. I am giving a speech tomorrow in church

PAST CONTINUOUS

- Indicates past actions which continued for some period of time but whose exact limits are unknown. E.g. At noon, Tunde was already eating lunch; It was getting darker; etc.

PRESENT PERFECT

- Used for recent actions whose time is not definite or mentioned e.g. I have read the complete works of Soyinka

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- Can be used with *for* to indicate a period extending into the present and with *since* to mean from that point to the time of speaking e.g. Shade has been in Angola since 2000; He has been ill for six months.

PAST PERFECT

- Used to refer to the first of two actions that occurred in the past e.g. the man had travelled before his manager arrived.

PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

- Refers to an activity that started in the past and has still continued in the present e.g. the man and his wife have been arguing for over two hours

PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

- Used for an action which started before the time of speaking in the past and continued up to that time or stopped just before it. E.g. Yesterday, Olu was tired because he had been working since dawn

FUTURE TENSES

Variants of future tenses are future simple, future continuous, future perfect and future perfect continuous

- Generally, future tenses denote actions that are scheduled to be effected at some definite or indefinite time in the future. They are usually expressed using the modal auxiliaries *will* and *shall* plus a form of the verb.

PRINCIPLES OF WORD FORMATION

- The word is the smallest independent form in the English language which represents a thought.
- Every word has a structure that is capable of being described.
- A word is composed of one or more morphemes.
- Morphemes are the smallest, indivisible and meaningful unit of a language.
- A word can be said to possess three principal parts: the Prefix (P), the Base B and the Suffix (S).
- The base is the only obligatory element. The prefix and the suffix are optional elements.
- For example, the word reestablished is composed of three morphemes. The prefix {re-}, the base is {establish} and the suffix is {-ed}.
- Both {re} and {ed} are bound morphemes.
- Bound morphemes cannot stand alone as a complete meaningful word.
- Bound morphemes must attach to free morphemes before their meanings can be fully realized.
- There are a number of ways by which words are formed in the English language.
- Affixation, compounding, conversion, reduplication, clipping, blending, acronyms, and borrowing are some of the processes of forming words in English.
- Affixation involves the addition of either the prefix or the suffix to a base in order to form a new word.
- Prefixation is a process whereby new words are formed by the addition of prefixes to existing words. Prefixes are words that precede the base.
- Uniform, triangle, unhappy, dislike are good examples of prefixation.
- Compounding involves the joining of two or more free morphemes to form a compound word. In this process, words of different classes may combine together to form words. Examples include playboy, bedmate, songwriter etc.

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Conversion is a derivational process that involves a change in the word class of an item. That is, a word can belong to two word classes. For example, the word 'love' can be either a verb or a noun.

- Reduplication occurs when two or more elements in a compound word are identical or slightly modified. Examples include walkie-talkie, ding-dong, tick-tock etc.
- Clipping is another word formation process that involves the subtraction or deletion of one or more syllables from a word. The deletion may however occur either at the word initial or final position. Examples are phone from telephone, bus from omnibus, flu from influenza etc.
- Blending refers to the combination of clipping and compounding. New words are words by putting together fragments of existing words in new combinations.
- Acronyms are pronounceable words that are formed by (usually initial) letters taken from a word or series of words, that is itself pronounced as a word, such WHO, LASU, SWAN; sometimes contrasted with initialism.
- Borrowing is a process whereby a language gains new words by adopting the words of other languages. The English language for instance, has a number of borrowed lexical items. They include “tsunami” which was borrowed from Japan, “bizarre” from France among others.



COMMON GRAMMAR MISTAKES IN ENGLISH

1. Much, more, less (some nouns occur only in the singular form)

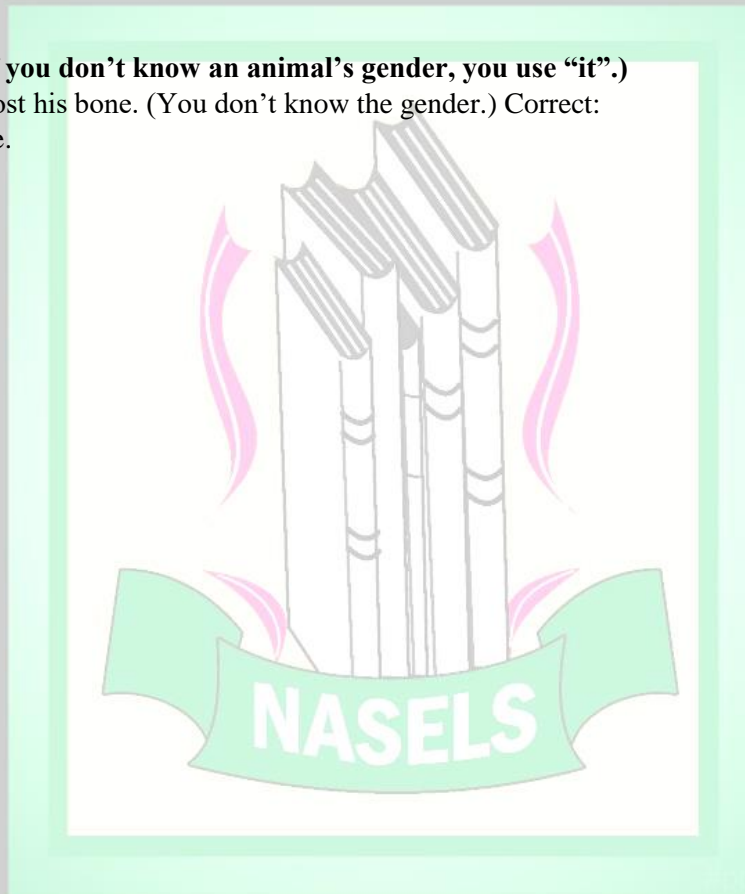
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Incorrect: There is much dusts. There is more courages. He had less funs. Correct:
There is much dust. There is more courage. He had less fun.

2. **Less, fewer (countable nouns)** Incorrect: There were less people.
Correct: There were fewer people.

3. **Possession shared by two nouns** Incorrect: It was John's and Peter's car. Correct: It was John and Peter's car.

4. **His/hers/its (If you don't know an animal's gender, you use "it".)**
Incorrect: The dog lost his bone. (You don't know the gender.) Correct:
The dog lost its bone.



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5. That/who

Incorrect: I have written to my sister that lives in France. Correct:
I have written to my sister who lives in France.

6. Me/I

Incorrect: Give it to I. Jason and me took the class. He read as well as me. Correct:
Give it to me. Jason and I took the class. He read as well as I.

7. This/that/those/these

Incorrect: These/those is my child. That/this are my children. Correct:
This/that is my child. Those/these are my children.

8. Happy (well/good) Incorrect: She feels well. Correct: She feels good.

9. Quality (well/good)

Incorrect: She sings good. Correct:
She sings well.

10. Adverbs with “ly”

Incorrect: She spoke to him quiet. He shouted not as loud as the rest of the group.
Correct: She spoke to him quietly. He shouted not as loudly as the rest of the group.

11. Linking verbs take the adjective form (bad/badly) Incorrect: The meat smells badly. I feel badly.
Correct: The meat smells bad. I feel bad.

12. Answering when there is an either/or question

Incorrect: “Either you go home or stay here.” “Yes.”
Correct: “Either you go home or stay here.” (Select one choice)

13. Subject/verb agreement

Incorrect: One of the planes are late. Each of the cars are fast. Correct:
One of the planes is late. Each of the cars is fast.

14. Plurals and Their Correct Verbs

Incorrect: The wages is little. The scissors are broken. The police is coming. Correct:
The wages are little. The scissors is broken. The police are coming.

15. Misplaced verb as modifier (If you put the modifier in a different place in the sentence, it means something different.)

Incorrect: Josh threatened to divorce her often. (This is not what you intend to say.) Correct:
Josh often threatened to divorce her.

16. Misplaced noun as modifier

Incorrect: We gave the flowers to the customer in the refrigerator.
Correct: We gave the flowers in the refrigerator to the customer.

17. Misplaced adverbs (Be careful where the adverb is placed in the sentence as it has a different meaning.)

Incorrect: She almost washed all of the dishes. He offered to paint the fence last night. (This is not what you intend to say.)
Correct: She washed almost all of the dishes. Last night, he offered to paint the fence.

18. Omission of second part of comparison

Incorrect: Carla ranks Mary higher than Betty.
Correct: Carla ranks Mary higher than she ranks Betty.

19. Any other

Incorrect: Alaska is bigger than any state in the United States.
Correct: Alaska is bigger than any other state in the United States.

20. Parallel verb phrases

Incorrect: She was late for work and fired by her boss.
Correct: She was late for work and was fired by her boss.

21. Old friend/long time

Incorrect: She was my old friend. (You may have known her for a long time, but she might be offended if you use the word “old” as it implies age.)
Correct: She was a friend who I have known for a long time.

22. Parallelism and verb agreement

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Incorrect: He learned to play tennis, to swim and sail.
Correct: He learned to play tennis, to swim and to sail.

23. Avoid lengthy sentence beginnings that offer nothing to the sentence

Incorrect: It goes without saying it is a nice day ... With reference to your question I don't really know ...
At this point in time I would like to work for the bank ...
Correct: It is a nice day ... I don't really know ... I would like to work for the bank ...

24. Redundant phrases

Incorrect: advanced planning, close proximity, end results, grateful thanks. Habitual customs, local residents, mutual cooperation, old adage, past history, self-confessed, successful achievements, true facts, usual customary, young teenager, absolute truth, redo again
Correct: Use one word or the other not two words that mean nearly the same thing

25. Circumlocution/talking around the subject

Talking around the Subject	Correct/ Better Said
ahead of schedule	early
am in possession	have
at an early date	soon
at this point in time	now
best of health	well
caused injuries to	injured
draw attention to	point out
during the time that	while
give rise to	cause
in advance of	before
in the event that	If
in this day and age	today
made a statement saying	stated or said
made an escape	escaped
owing to the fact that	because
put in an appearance	appeared
render assistance to	help

succumbed to injuries	died
take action on the issue	acted
the reason why is that	because, ,
this is a topic that	topic
was of the opinion that	thought
was witness to	saw

26. An/a

Incorrect: It is a old television set, but it still works. It is an costly purchase. Correct: It is an old television set, but it still works. It is a costly purchase.

27. Alternative/alternate

Incorrect: We will alternative playing the video games. The salad is a healthier alternate. Correct: We will alternate playing the video games. The salad is a healthier alternative.

28. Amicable (used to describe arrangements or settlements agreed peacefully by parties)/ Amiable (used to describe people who are kind, gentle and friendly)

Incorrect: The soccer teams were amicable
Correct: The soccer teams were amiable

29. Among/between

Incorrect: She could not decide among the two guys.
Correct: She could not decide between the two guys.

30. Beside (means “next to”)/besides (means “in addition to”) Incorrect: Ask him to sit besides me.
Correct: Ask him to sit beside me.

31. Bimonthly (every 2 months)/Semi-monthly (2 times a month)

Incorrect: I get paid bimonthly (every 2 months when you want to say every 2 months). Correct: I get paid semi-monthly (every 2 months).

32. Bring (action towards)/take (action away)

Incorrect: He will take the book to his friend's.
Correct: He will bring the book to this friend's.

33. Can (applies ability)/may (asks permission) Incorrect: I may drive because I passed the driving test.

Correct: I can drive because I passed the driving test.

34. Deadly (if can cause death)/deathly (like the silence of death but does not kill) Incorrect: A bee sting can be deathly. Correct: A bee sting can be deadly.

35. Farther (refers to physical distance)/further (refers to degree or extent) Incorrect: We will drive no further tonight. Correct: We will drive no farther tonight.

36. Had ought/ought (ought is not used with helping verb) Incorrect: They had ought to call the pizza delivery. Correct: They ought to call the pizza delivery.

37. Hardly/barely/scarcely

Incorrect: He was not hardly/barely/scarcely finished with the paper.

Correct: He was hardly/barely/scarcely finished with the paper

38. Kind of/sort of/type of/variety of (never use “a” or “an” after these expressions) Incorrect: It was kind of a hot day. Correct: It was kind of hot today.

39. Last (that what comes at the end)/latest (last in time, but not necessarily the final occurrence) Incorrect: It is the latest game of the season. Correct: It is the last game of the season.

40. Lay/lie/laid (to put down) – lie/lay/lain (to recline or repose) Incorrect: I will lie the paper on the table. Correct: I will lay the paper on the table.

41. Learn (acquire information)/teach (impart knowledge) Incorrect: I will learn the English to him. Correct: I will teach the English to him.

42. Presently (soon or shortly)/at present (now, currently, at this time) Incorrect: Presently, the boss is in his office. Correct: At present, the boss is in his office.

43. Regardless (despite)/irregardless (a nonstandard word) Incorrect: Irregardless of what you want, the restaurant does not have it. Correct: Regardless of what you want, the restaurant does not have it.

44. Rare (implies value)/scarce (applied to ordinary things that are no longer in abundant)

Incorrect: The painting was very scarce. Correct: The painting was very rare.

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45. Future tense

Incorrect: Tomorrow we go shopping.

Correct: Tomorrow we will go shopping.

46. Since/for

Incorrect: I've been in America since 3 months. Correct:

I've been in America for 3 months.

47. Adjectives in right order

Incorrect: Have you bought the blue china antique vase? I like ice cream vanilla the most. Correct:

Have you bought the antique blue china vase? I like vanilla ice cream the most.

48. Work/job

Incorrect: My boyfriend has a new work. Correct:

My boyfriend has a new job.

49. Misused Irony

Incorrect: It's a free ride if you pay. Correct:

You need to pay.

50. Couldn't care less (not care at all)/could care less (care a little but not much)

Incorrect: I couldn't care less that it is raining (to mean not to care at all when you care a little). Correct:

I could care less that it is raining.

51. Literally (event must happen)/figuratively (event could not happen) Incorrect: He literally flew out the door.

Correct: He figuratively flew out the door.

52. Repeating subject

Incorrect: My English it is improving. My friend Mary she is going out with me. Correct:

My English is improving. My friend Mary is going out with me.

53. Incorrect preposition

Incorrect: In January 13th, I will be twenty. Correct:

On January 13th, I will be twenty.

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54. Nobody/anybody

Incorrect: At the party, I didn't meet nobody. Correct:
At the party, I didn't meet anybody.

55. Possessive

Incorrect: She lives with she's father. Correct:
She lives with her father.

56. Of come/have come

Incorrect: I would of come if I had a car.
Correct: I would have come if I had a car.

57. Loan/borrow

Incorrect: I loaned the book from the library.
Correct: I borrowed the book from the library.

58. Grade/year

Incorrect: I am in the third grade of college. My little brother is in the third year of school. Correct:
I am in the third year of college. My little brother is in the third grade of school.

59. Irregular plurals

Incorrect: I saw two deers in the woods. My foots hurt. Correct:
I saw two deer in the woods. My feet hurt.

60. Confusion over wording of idiom

Incorrect: The boss told me to dot my t's and cross my i's. Correct:
The boss told me to dot my i's and cross my t's.

61. Was/were after "if" and "wish"

Incorrect: If I was going to the movies ... I wish I was seeing an action thriller.
Correct: If I were going to the movies ... I wish I were seeing an action thriller.

62. Answering a common expression with a question

Incorrect: "See you later!" "When?"
Correct: "See you later!" "Sure, good bye!"

63. Confusion over gender

Incorrect: My mother will be coming to America. He is excited. Correct:
My mother will be coming to America. She is excited.

64. Themselves/themselves

Incorrect: They cooked dinner by themselves.
Correct: They cooked dinner by themselves.

65. Comfortable/convenient

Incorrect: Is that chair convenient for you? Is it comfortable that I come over to your apartment? Correct:
Is that chair comfortable for you? Is it convenient that I come over to your apartment?

66. Expressing that you are sorry Incorrect: I am sorry to her.
Correct: I apologized to her.

67. Look/see/watch verbs

Incorrect: I will see for you. I will look the movie.
Correct: I will look/watch for you. I will see/watch the movie.

68. Differences between want/hope/expect

Incorrect: I want that the store has a funny video.
Correct: I hope/expect that the store has a funny video.

69. Very/really

Incorrect: I felt very fantastic.
Correct: I felt really fantastic.

70. "Played" as in having fun

Incorrect: (If in reference to adults, and if not in a sport or a game) I played with my friends Friday night.
Correct: I hung out/went out/had fun with my friends Friday night.

71. Superlatives

Incorrect: It is more hot now. Correct:
It is hotter now.

72. Most/all/some

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Incorrect: Most of Koreans like kimchi.

Correct: Most Koreans like kimchi or Most of the Koreans I know like kimchi.

73. Do you? Would you? (asking at the present time) Incorrect: Do you like a glass of wine?

Correct: Would you like a glass of wine?

74. Missing word(s)

Incorrect: My cousin is having 4 cats. Although I wasn't born, I feel like a real American. I'm from Italy, but I've been living for 4 years. I tried eating American food at restaurants, but now I cook myself as much as I can.

Correct: My cousin's cat is having 4 kittens. Although I wasn't born here, I feel like a real American. I'm from Italy, but I've been living here for 4 years. I tried eating American food at restaurants, but now I cook it myself as much as I can.

75. Misuse of plural

Incorrect: Someday, I'll find the men to marry. Correct:

Someday, I'll find the man to marry.

76. All/over

Incorrect: I want to travel all/over the world.

Correct: I want to travel all over the world (use both words together).

77. Incorrect use of word form

Incorrect: Her father paid for her fly to Canada. He has been eaten at expensive restaurants.

Correct: Her father paid for her flight to Canada. He has been eating at expensive restaurants.

78. By my own – on my own/by myself Incorrect: I got the new job by my own.

Correct: I got the new job on my own/by myself.

79. In my point of view – From .../In my view ...

Incorrect: In my point of view, the language learning program really helps.

Correct: From my point of view, the language learning program really helps or In my view, the language program really helps.

80. Do/make

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Incorrect: I need to do my bed. I need to make my makeup. Can you make me a favor?

Correct: I need to make my bed. I need to do my makeup. Can you do me a favor?

81. I suggested them to/I suggest that they

Incorrect: I suggested them to go swimming. Correct:

I suggested that they go swimming.

82. The/my/his

Incorrect: I go to the house (the house is yours). He drove the car (the car is his). Correct:

I am going to my house. He drove his car.

83. On/in

Incorrect: I was born on 1988. Correct:

I was born in 1988.

84. Day/date answer to a question

Incorrect: "What day were you born?" "1990"

Correct: "What day were you born?" "The 27th."

85. Then (reference to time)/than (reference to comparison) Incorrect: I can speak much better then before. Correct: I can speak much better than before.

86. In/at

Incorrect: My flight departs in 5:00 p.m. It is at 15 minutes from now. Correct:

My flight departs at 5:00 p.m. It is in 15 minutes from now.

87. During/for

Incorrect: My sister studied during five hours. She studied for the football game. Correct:

My sister studied for five hours. She studied during the football game.

88. Always go/go always

Incorrect: I go always to school by bus. Correct:

I always go to school by bus.

89. Using a thesaurus so the words are more formal and don't fit Incorrect: I was crusading/locomoting home from work. Correct: I was coming home from work.

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90. Late/lately

Incorrect: I always sleep lately. Late, I have been going to the movies. Correct: I always sleep late. Lately, I have been going to the movies.

91. Who/whom

Incorrect: His boss was the one whom gave him the raise. Who were they talking about? Please help whomever needs it.

Correct: His boss was the one who gave him a raise. Whom were they talking about? Please help whoever needs it.

92. Possessive case

Incorrect: I would like the amount of gas to be \$40.00.

Correct: I would like \$40 worth of gas.

93. Making one syllable words that end in “ed” into two syllable words Incorrect: I chang – ged my mind. Correct: I changed my mind.

94. Having difficulty pronouncing certain vowel sounds and letter sounds (th, ch, j, ld, rd) and leaving off endings completely

Incorrect: I would like to go to the bathroom (bathroom). It is a hard word (word) to say. The weather is very cod (cold). I see the ba (bear). Correct: bathroom, word, cold, bear

95. Saying impolite expression(s)

Incorrect: Can I have more (when eating at someone’s house and the person is not your very closest friend)? You sure goofed up or that’s not very organized (to your boss). I have to go to the bathroom (have to use the restroom).

Correct: Wait to be asked for seconds and then say Yes, I really like ... or Yes, please.

To your boss say, Do you need any help or Perhaps it could be organized this way ... Say, I have to use the restroom or where is the restroom?

96. Ending sentences with the word “but” Incorrect: I would like to go, but.

Correct: I would like to go, but (finish the sentence or don’t use the connecting word). I would like to go, but I can’t.

97. Accurate word choice

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Incorrect: She was boring in class (the teacher or the student?).

Correct: Mrs. Jones (the teacher) was boring in class. I was bored with the class (student).

98. Could be better than that/Couldn't be better than that

Incorrect: It could be better than that (when it is the best)! It couldn't be better than that (when there is need for improvement)!

Correct: It couldn't be better than that (when it is the best)! It could be better than that (when there is room for improvement)!

99. Using double negatives

Incorrect: I don't need not to be upset. I don't want no coffee. Correct:
I don't need to be upset. I don't want any coffee.

100. Stumbling for word choice

Incorrect: I am all wet (hot). I can't read (implying you don't know how to read as in a menu but you really can't see to read the menu).

Correct: I am all sweaty. I can't see to read the menu.

Common Rules of Concord

Concord in the use of English language means agreement between the subject and the verb or agreement between a verb and other elements of clause structure.

In the use of concord in English language, there are many rules governing the topic. So let analyze the rules one by one.

Rule 1

Subject and verb concord

When the subject in a sentence is singular, the verb should also be singular.

For example,

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She (singular subject) **goes** (singular verb), not: **She go** (plural verb). Also, when the subject is plural, the verb should also be plural.

The girls (plural subject) **go** (plural verb), not **The girls** (plural subject) **goes** (Singular verb).

Rule 2

Subject and Object concord

When **everybody, everyone etc.** are used, **the object must be singular not plural.**

For example

Everybody knows **his or her** name, not : **Everybody** know **their** name.

Rule 3

Mandative subjunctive concord

When **prayer, suggestion, wish, demand, recommendation or resolution** is used in a sentence, the verb that follows must be **plural, whether the subject is singular or plural.**

For example;

For example;

It has been **suggested** that he **go** not ~~goes~~ away.

2) The board has **Recommend** that the manager **resign** not ~~resigns~~.

3) I **pray** that God **help** me on my upcoming examination not God ~~helps~~.

Rule 4

The Principle of proximity

This principle states that when there is a list of nouns or pronouns at the level of the subject, it is the nearest noun or pronoun to the position of the verb that will determine the choice of the verb.

E.g.

If James fails his examination, his teachers, his parents, his friends or John () to be blame.

The correct option to fill that blank is not ~~are~~ because at the subject level, we have his teachers, his friends, his parents and John (four different people)

In order to choose the correct verb, we will need to choose the nearest subject to the gap as the subject which is **John**.

Note: what make us consider the only one noun or pronoun used in this sentence is because of the use of **or**, but if the conjunction used is **and**, all the nouns or pronouns used in the sentence will be considered as the **subject**.

But if the question comes in this manner, the answer will be different, E.g.

If James fails his examination, his teachers, his parents, his friends or I () to be blame.

The correct answer here is, **am**, because, I is the nearest subject to the gap, so if **I** is the subject, the verb that goes with it is **am**.

Rule 5

Many - a concord

When **many - a** is used, the verb and the noun that follows must be **Singular** E.g.

- 1) **Many a candidate** (not candidates) **speaks** (not speak) bad English expressions.
- 2) **Many a girl** (not girls) **is** (not are) here.

The real meaning of the statement 1 and 2 are **many candidates and many girls**.

Rule 6

A pair of concord

When **a pair of** is used, the verb must be singular.

E.g.

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1) A **pair** of **trousers** (not trouser) **lies**(not lie) on the bed.

2) A **pair** of scissors **lies** (not lie) on the table.

Rule 7

Notional Concord

Notional concord is also called collective noun concord.

A collective noun is a noun which stands for many units that constitute a single word. E.g.

1) audience which means people who watch a programme.

2) congregation which means worshippers.

3) clergy which means religion officers.

4) Club which means association of members.

So whenever, you use a collective noun, the verb that follows must be a plural verb

For example, Let
use club,

Club is a collective noun for members, so, we can also say, **members of this association**

Our club **meet** (not meets) ones in a week.

But in some situations, singular verb goes with a collective noun.

Here is the principle;

If the collective noun performs an **action**, a plural verb follows, but if **not**, a singular verb follows. E.g.

1) **Our Club** **is** celebrating its twentieth anniversary today.

In the above statement, you can see that, **Our Club** performs no action, hence, we use a singular verb.

But;

2) **Our Club** **are** (not is) going on a vacation tomorrow.

You can see that, the above sentence is different from the first sentence, here **the club** is performing an action which is **going**, hence, we will use a plural verb (**are**) in compliance with the rule.

3) **The audience** **are** (not is) partial in their judgment of the winner.

The answer is '**are**' because the collective noun (audience) performs an action "judgment".

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Rule 8

Parenthesis

Parenthesis statement is additional statement to what has already been said before.

Note: A parenthetical statement should not be considered in choosing the verb that will follow.

E.g.

1) **The teacher**, not her students **is** in the class.

The correct answer is, **is** because (not her students) is just parenthesis, and parenthesis has nothing to do with choosing the verb.

2) **The manager**, not many of his workers, **is** (not are) here now.

not many of his workers is just a parenthesis, therefore, the parenthesis should be totally ignored. The manager is a singular noun, hence a singular verb.

Rule 9

Accompaniment Concord

When any of the following words is used, the subject of the clause would be the noun and pronoun that comes before the marker of accompaniment.

Words like, **as much as, alongside, as well as, together with, no less than, in association with, including, like, with, and in collaboration with, etc**

Example 1

Mary, **as well as** her friends **is** (not are) beautiful.

The answer is, **is** because **Mary** is the noun that comes before **as well as**, hence Mary is the subject and it is a singular noun hence a singular verb.

Example 2

The little kids **alongside** their parents **are** (not is) here.

The answer is **are** not **is** because **the little kids** comes before **alongside**. The subject is plural hence a plural verb.

Rule 10

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More than concord

When **more than** is used, the word or number that comes after **more than** will determine the next verb.
For example

- 1) More than **two apples** are (not is) here.
- 2) More than **one orange** is (not are) here.

In the first statement, the answer is **are** not **is** because two attracts are but in the second statement, the correct option is, **is** not **are** because one attracts is.

Rule 11

Indefinite pronoun concord

When any of the following words is used, you should use a **Singular verb**

Such words as;

Everybody, everything, everyone, everywhere, no one, nothing, nobody, nowhere, something, someone, somebody, anyone, anything, anybody, anywhere and each. The next verb must be singular.

For example

- 1) Nothing **goes** (not go).
- 2) Everybody **likes** (not like) him.
- 3) Everybody **thinks** (not think) he stole the money.

Rule 12

Relative Concord

When **who, whose, which and that** refers to a previously mentioned noun or pronoun, such noun is a **Relative noun**

E.g

One of the farmers who **plant** (not plants) on the farm **has** (not have) been asked to withdraw.

Rule 13

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Uncountable nouns of concord

Countable nouns are nouns that can be quantified in units and numbers, that is, are nouns that can be counted.

E.g. chairs, tables, phones etc.

Uncountable nouns are nouns that cannot be quantified in units and numbers. E.g. water, information, equipment etc.

Note: All uncountable nouns will avoid 's' at the back.

It is very wrong to use any of these words below;

E.g. **informations, clothes, equipments, furnitures, machineries, datas, advices, evidences, wealths, etc.**

Instead, you say **a piece of, information, evidence, data, cloth, equipment, advice, etc** It is wrong to say **machineries** instead, you say a machine or two machines.

Other examples of nouns that attract plural verbs are;

- 1) The police **work hard** (not works), but, that **policeman** (not policemen) **works** (not work) hard. **Police and policemen** are collective nouns and that is why they attract a plural verb from the seventh rule. But **policeman** is not a collective noun but a singular noun, hence a singular verb.
- 2) The **headquarters look** (not looks) palatial.
- 3) **Cattle give** (not gives) bad odour, and **a cow gives** bad odour.
- 4) **Aircraft make** (not makes) travelling easier but, that **chopper, airbus, or aeroplane makes** travelling easier.

All the four examples attract plural verb because the subject in each example is a collective noun.

Rule 14

Pluralia tantum

Pluralia tantum are nouns that come in plural forms.

Some of these words have final 's', while some do not. However, whenever any of the following forms appears, it must be followed by a singular verb.

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a) **School Subject: Mathematics, Economics, Physics, Statistics** etc. you can see that all of them end with s but it does not show plurality.

b) **Games: Darts, Snakes and Ladders, Draughts, Billiards, Bowls and Skittles** etc., all end with s but do not show plurality.

c) **Diseases: Measles, Tuberculosis, Shingles, Mumps** etc., all end with s but do not show plurality. d) **Others : titles, news, series means** E.g.

1) The **series** of **incidents** **makes** (not make) me shudder.

2) The **means** of transport **hastens** (not hasten) travelling.

Note: There are some nouns that do not appear as singular at all but as plurals and they often attract plural verbs.

Such words are: **Funds (money), annals, spirits, surroundings, guts, earnings, arms (weapons), auspices, the middle ages, entrails, bowels, quarters (headquarters), banns, means, holidays, stars, suds, wages, thanks, riches, writs, savings, remains, ashes, goods (product), arrears, outskirts, pains, particulars, fireworks** etc.

All these **nouns not verbs** cannot appear without s and, hence they attract **plural verbs**

E.g.

1) His **manners are** (not is) good

2) **The remains** (corpse) of the boy **have** (not has) been buried.

Rule 15

Double title subject concord

When two subjects are joined together by **and** but the two subjects refer to **only one person or thing**, a **singular verb** should be used.

E.g.

Our principal and Mathematics teacher knows me.

In this statement, **our principal and Mathematics teacher** is not two different people but, **our principal is also our Mathematics teacher**, hence the subject is our principal, and it is a singular noun, hence, singular verb.

Consider this example:

Our principal and the Mathematics teacher

This is quite different from the first statement, because the principal and the Mathematics teacher are two different subjects because of the use of **the Mathematics teacher**. Hence, in this statement you use a plural verb.

Rule 16

Co-ordinate concord

When two subjects are joined together by **and**, the verb to be used should be plural, e.g.

- 1) James and John **are** (not is) here.
- 2) Elizabeth and Johnson **know** (not knows) me.

Rule 17

Categorization concord

When a **collective name**, denoting category (**not a collective noun**) is used, the verb to be used must be plural.

Categories like: **the poor, the rich, the wealthy, the successful, the gifted, the weak, the young in spirit, the handicapped, the helpless etc.** The verb to be used should be plural.

For example

- 1) The poor **need help** (not helps or needs) from the government.
- 2) The young **are** (not is) disobedient.
- 3) The weak **are** (not is) left to their fates.

Rule 18

Plural number concord

When amount or unit is mentioned in a statement, unit like, five thousand, three hundred, percent, twenty meters, five times, etc. The next verb must be singular. E.g.

- 1) Two pounds of flour **is** (not are) too few to bake a cake.
- 2) Ten percent of my earnings **goes** (not go) to my wife.

Rule 19

Mathematical facts

When mathematical facts are used, such as subtraction, multiplication, addition, division, etc. are used, the verb will be any of **Singular and plural**, that is, a singular or plural verb can be used when mathematical facts are used.

For example

- 1) Ten plus ten **is or are** (are and is are both correct) twenty.
- 2) Ten multiplied by two **is or are** twenty.

Both singular and plural are correct.

Rule 20

Every + plural number concord

When **every** precedes a plural, the next verb is plural. E.g.

Every ten litres of oil bought **come** (not comes) with a bonus of an extra litre.

But when **every** appears without any plural number, the verb is singular. E.g.

- 1) **Every boy** (not boys) likes girls.
- 2) **Every man** (not men) likes football.

When **and** joins two or more subjects with **every or each**, the verb should be singular. E.g.

- 1) Every man and woman **speaks** (not speak) good English here.
- 2) Every student and teacher **comes** (not come) to school early.

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Rule 21

Most or much concord

When **most** is used, the verb will either be singular or plural, depending on whether the referent is a **countable or uncountable noun**,

E.g.

- 1) Most of the boys (countable noun) **are** tall.
- 2) Most of the time (uncountable noun), John **has** (not have) always been there for her.

When **Much** is used in a statement, the verb to be used must be singular.

E.g.

- 1) Much of the water **has** (not have) been spilled.

Rule 22

All concord

When **all** appears, it means either everything or all the people.

When all means everything, the verb to be used should be **Singular** but when all means all the people, the verb to be used should be **plural**. E.g.

- a) All **are** already seated in the hall.

In the above sentence, All means **all the people are already seated in the hall** hence a plural verb.

But;

- b) All **is** well with me.

In the above sentence, All means **Everything is well with me** hence a singular verb.

When **all but** is used, the following verb should be **plural** E.g.

- 1) All but John **are** (not is) in the bus. That means, only John is absent.

Rule 23

Either or neither concord

When **either or neither** joins two singular nouns together, the following verb should be **Singular** E.g.

- 1) Either John or Jackson **knows** (not know) me.
- 2) Neither Mary nor her friend **was** (not were) here.

But, when **either or neither** joins two subjects (one singular and the other plural), the verb should be chosen by considering the nearer of the two subjects. E.g.

- 1) Either James or his friends **know** me.

You can see that **friends** is nearer to the verb gap.

These rules is also applied when **but or but even** joins two subjects. E.g.

- 1) Not only Sola but even teachers **laugh** in school.

- 2) Not Lawrence but James **speaks** good English.

You can see that James is nearer to the verb gap than Lawrence, hence, you use singular verb.

Rule 24

Each and one of concord

When **each** appears in a concord, **a singular noun + a singular verb** will be chosen. E.g.

- 1) Each **boy** (not boys) has a car.

But, when **each of or one of** appears, the next noun should be plural but the next verb should be singular. E.g.

- 1) **Each** of the candidates (not candidate) **stands** (not stand) a good chance to win a scholarship.

EXCERPTS FROM PROFESSOR ADELEKE A. FAKOYA'S *MAPPING THE BABBLER'S BRAINS*

Confirming if you don't babble

Select the most appropriate answers, according to Standard/International English

1. Our newspapers always publish short extracts from new novels to _____ your appetite. (a) wet (b) weight (c) whet
2. Our host told us that everybody would have to fend for _____. (a) him or herself (b) his or her self (c) himself or herself
3. That woman must have been a beauty queen in her _____. (a) heyday (b) hay days (c) hey days
4. X: When last did you see your dad?
Y: Well, I haven't seen him for _____. (a) donkey years (b) donkey's years (c) donkey year's
5. I can't visit him again when his wife is there with him; you know what they say, _____. (a) once bitten, twice shy (b) once beaten, twice shy (c) one beaten, two's shy
6. The former chairman did not do a proper _____ of relevant documents. (a) handover (b) handing over (c) handling over
7. The new road is so smooth you'd think you're driving on glass. It was _____ early this morning by the First Lady. (a) commissioned (b) contracted (c) opened
8. Our party is only fighting _____; it can never win in this state. (a) a lost battle (b) a losing battle (c) a loss battle
9. Never mind, _____. (a) nobody above mistakes (b) we all make mistakes (c) nobody is above mistakes
10. We were all disqualified; our scores were _____ the mark. (a) wide of (b) wide off (c) wide off of
11. I'm not surprised at his conduct; you know, he's a _____ the old block. (a) chip of (b) chip off (c) chimp of
12. I have disowned my three sons. I can't have any _____ under my roof. (a) ruffians (b) roughians (c) rouffians

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13. All my _____ are in one shady business or another. (a) brother-in-law (b) brothers-in-law (c) brothers-in-laws

14. The manager gave all of us _____. (a) twenty thousand naira per each person (b) twenty-twenty thousand naira each (c) twenty thousand naira each

15. Have you ever _____ for anyone? (a) babysit (b) babysitted (c) babysat

16. Okay, let's shake hands and _____. (a) let bygones be bygones (b) let bye-gone be bye-gone (c) let bygones be bygones

17. _____ Chief Patrick Jabber the First. (a) My names are (b) My name is (c) What's my name is

18. I'm told your husband is the _____ behind the Boko Haram. (a) brains (b) brain (c) brain box

19. Sir, I think 'paddle your own canoe' means '_____'. (a) don't meddle with anyone else's business (b) provide what you need by yourself (c) don't pokenose

20. Stop blaming your boss; the reason you were sacked is _____. Think about it, how could you _____ into the MD's office like that? (a) not so far-fetched/badge (b) self-evident/bardge (c) too apparent/bardge

21. Have you heard? Our friend has _____ to APC. (a) decamped (b) cross-carpeted (c) defected

22. _____, _____ nobody in this office has ever been dismissed for bad English. (a) I stand to be corrected/as at today (b) I stand corrected/ as of now (c) Correct me if I'm wrong/as of today

23. **Pastor:** Brothers and sisters, our God is _____. (a) omniscience (b) a reknown god (c) omniscient

24. Darling, have you _____ a little time? (a) got (b) gotten (c) get

25. Weren't you _____ some minutes ago? (a) on casual wear (b) on casuals (c) in casual clothes

26. He confirmed that my wife had not been _____. (a) sexed before (b) disvirgined (c) deflowered

27. _____, the goods will be here tomorrow. (a) Rest assured (b) Be rest assured (c) You can be rest assured

28. **Waiter:** Sir, would you like some coffee?

Guest: _____. (a) No, thanks (b) I prefer beverage (c) At all

29. The mechanic says the carburettor is _____. (a) overflowing (b) doing overflowing (c) flooding

30. I was greatly _____ last night when I saw my wife kissing the gardener. (a) embarased (b) embarrassed (c) embarassed

31. I haven't even _____ the last bottle of beer when my wife came into the pub. (a) drank (b) dranked (c) drunk

32. _____ are too large for my face; I need to replace _____. (a) this frame/it (b) these frames/it (c) these frames/them

33. I promise to repay the loan _____. (a) small small (b) in instalments (c) instalmentally

34. We're suing the FG for not giving us _____ water. (a) pottable (b) portable (c) potable

35. The lawyer will need to _____ his time if he hopes to catch the witness _____. (a) bid/telling lies (b) bide/lying (c) bead/lyeing

36. Let's ask that lunatic; she knows _____ of the town. (a) the ins and outs (b) the nooks and corners (c) the in and out

37. The new law will enable Nigerians _____ to other countries more easily. (a) travelling (b) travel (c) to travel

38. I visited his office _____ but he wasn't there. (a) severally (b) numerous times (c) over one time

39. Your hair looks _____; you need to _____. (a) unkept/barb it (b) unkempt/have a haircut (c) unkept/barb

40. Please type the letter on the company's _____. (a) letterheading (b) letterheaded paper (c) letterhead

41. A toast to the Authorities for this programme _____. (a) Hip, Hip, Hip, Hurray! (b) Hip, Hip, Hurray! (c) E.P.P. Hurray!

42. You'd best stay with your husband and forget that neighbor. As they say, _____. (a) the devil you know is better than the angel you don't know (b) choose the devil you know and not the angel (c) better the devil you know than the devil you don't know

43. If the topic isn't clear to you, ask the teacher to _____ on it. (a) expanciate (b) expantiate (c) expatiate

44. _____ last week, it was reported that the man fell out of his chair and broke his neck. (a) Sometimes (b) Sometime (c) Some times

45. Madam, shall I get you some salad or _____? (a) cold slaw (b) coleslaw (c) Cole's law

46. _____, do you think I should leave my husband and elope with the houseboy? (a) Between I and you (b) Between you and I (c) Between you and me

47. _____, I wonder if life in this country is really worth anyone's while. (a) Many a time (b) Many a times (c) Many at times

48. All you ever do in this office is gossip: _____ did such and such. (a) so and so person (b) so so person (c) so and so

49. My house is within _____ from here. (a) a stone throw (b) a stone's throw (c) stone throw

50. Your wife is so happy. She seems to have life handed to her _____. (a) on a silver platter (b) on a gold platter (c) on a platter of gold

51. No one could finish the food served at the party. In fact, it was _____. (a) an apology (b) apology (c) an apology for a meal
52. She's determined to have a car this year _____. (a) by hook or crook (b) by hook or by crook (c) by hook and crook
53. General Koleoso has promised to defend the people _____ he can. (a) as best as (b) as best (c) as best as he possibly
54. Now she knows she's _____ than she can chew. (a) beaten more (b) bitten more (c) bitten off more
55. As the teacher _____ if you want to pass the exams, you must study hard. (a) mentioned earlier (b) mentioned earlier on (c) mentioned earlier before
56. The man won't resign _____ he's forced to do so, _____ since he's the MD's son-in-law. (a) whereas/hence (b) unless/especially (c) except/more so
57. Jesus came to save sinners, _____ all of us. (a) which includes (b) who include (c) which and who include
58. This is the most _____ job I've ever had. There's just no room to enjoy oneself. (a) taxing (b) tasking (c) tackling
59. Dad says he'll see you soon as soon as he's _____. (a) opportuned (b) chanced (c) able to
60. Bayo told us that his wife _____ yesterday. (a) put to bed (b) born (c) was delivered of a baby
61. The foreman is a _____. He knows nothing about welfare. (a) a cog in the wheel of progress (b) sadist (c) wicked
62. Don't do any business with that handsome guy; he's a _____. (a) dupe (b) duper (c) con artist
63. **Teacher:** We say a person was killed in cold blood if _____. (a) he was killed in his sleep (b) his killer was not under any influence (c) the victim was unable to defend himself
64. The _____ for the dead man is this evening. (a) Christian wake-keep (b) wake-keeping (c) wake
65. She looks so gorgeous in her _____ dress. (a) lemon yellow (b) lemon green (c) lemon and green
66. Hello, _____? (a) may I be on to the CEO (b) may I speak with the CEO (c) may I gain access to the CEO
67. It looks rather primitive to put kola nuts on the _____. (a) centre table (b) central table (c) coffee table
68. None of us can go abroad without a valid _____. (a) international passport (b) passport (c) travelling passport
69. My neighbour's husband eloped with the _____ two weeks after the girl was employed. (a) home help (b) house help (c) domestic helper
70. I saw a dead _____ in the room. (a) gecko (b) wall gecko (c) house gecko

71. We're going to make so much money that N50, 000 will look like _____. (a) chicken change (b) chicken sauce (c) chicken feed
72. I usually hang out with friends at the _____ down the street. (a) barber's (b) barbing saloon (c) hair-port
73. What's the meaning of this letter? Tell the secretary to see me _____. (a) at once (b) in a jiffy (c) now now
74. This sort of thing cannot happen in this country; not by _____. (a) any manner or means (b) any manner and means (c) any manner of means
75. Ok, here's my _____. Cal me whenever you're broke. (a) business card (b) complimentary card (c) call card
76. I didn't need to get a lawyer; the police released me on _____. (a) personal recognition (b) my own recognition (c) my own recognizance
77. Amina, bring the _____ to dispose of these bits of tissue paper. (a) dustpan (b) packing tool (c) packer
78. Someone has lost the key and mum is _____ at me. (a) giving me the finger (b) pointing accusing fingers (c) pointing an accusing finger
79. Now is the time for the government to evaluate these _____. (a) mushroom private universities (b) mushrooming private universities (c) private mushroom universities
80. I'm disappointed in you. You _____ so uncaring. (a) didn't used to be (b) didn't use to be (c) weren't used to being
81. I need someone that can sing all the three stanzas of the National Anthem. (a) offhead (b) offheart (c) by heart
82. The governor pleaded with us to consider the N25,000 as _____. (a) his widow's mite (b) all he could contribute (c) free gift
83. Today is Monday. Let's meet again on Wednesday; that's _____. (a) two days' time (b) next tomorrow (c) day after tomorrow
84. Her stepfather is only _____ years old! (a) twenty and half (b) twenty and the half (c) twenty and a half
85. In any quarrel between a husband and wife, it's usually _____. (a) six and half a dozen (b) six of one and half a dozen of the other (c) six and half a dozen – what's the difference
86. Shortly after the church ceremony, _____ quickly got into their car and drove off. (a) the couple (b) the two couple (c) the couples
87. The company has to increase wages _____. (a) across board (b) across boards (c) across the board
88. The meeting will be held at the red house near the _____. (a) burial ground (b) symmetry (c) graveyard

89. _____, my father wanted me to marry a lady that lived in that house. (a) Funnily enough (b) Funny enough (c) So funny enough
90. The UN expects former leader to explain his country's foreign policy _____. (a) in details (b) in detailed (c) in detail
91. Sir, the MD would like you to give _____. (a) a self-written note (b) a written note (c) a note
92. She woke up rather late. So she quickly _____ and ran out of the house. (a) dressed up (b) got dressed (c) got dressed up
93. The party is trying hard to keep its supporters within the brackets of civility, _____. (a) so to say (b) so to talk (c) so to speak
94. She has not been _____ with her mother for twenty years. (a) on talking terms (b) on chatting terms (c) on speaking terms
95. Olamide is a musician with real _____. (a) potentials (b) potentialities (c) potential
96. The former President _____ and told me about some of the problems he was facing with the people around him. (a) took me into his confidence (b) took me to confidence (c) put me into confidence
97. The Principal is rather short tempered; so, _____ whenever you're with him. (a) be careful (b) take your time (c) take time
98. The driver leaned out of the window and shouted at the lady, _____ twice, and drove on. (a) horned (b) pressed the horn (c) sounded his horn
99. When my father was in the army, his batman _____ his shoes until the shoes _____. (a) shined/shone (b) shined/shined (c) shone/shone
100. The lady put some _____ in the teacher's meal to make him fall in love with her. (a) portion (b) potion (c) concussion
101. My _____ left yesterday, so I have to do all my cleaning myself. (a) housegirl (b) housemaid (c) house servant
102. The bell had _____ ten times before we heard. The teacher then brought out the register and _____ latecomers names in red. (a) rang/rang (b) rung/ringed (c) ringed/ringed
103. Don't run away with your servant; it's not _____ at all. (a) dignifying (b) dignified (c) respective
104. To make your fingernails look good, you need _____ - not your teeth. (a) a nail-cutter (b) a nail-trimmer (c) nail clippers
105. Alhaji Seriki could not enter the mosque to pray because he had not done his _____. (a) ablutions (b) ablution (c) motions
106. The manager walked into the office and ordered all of us to _____. (a) buckle down (b) buckle up (c) buckle
107. Thanks for your help. _____. (a) Appreciate (b) I appreciate (c) I appreciate it
108. Policeman: Are you ready to talk now?

Accused: I have been ready _____. (a) since (b) since long time (c) all along

109. Within a year from now, I'll be getting married to my _____ (a) heart-throb (b) sweetheart (c) hubby

110. It's public knowledge that many of our politicians are _____ (a) indisCIPLINED (b) under-disciplined (c) undisciplined

111. The new government is making _____ into corruption in Nigeria. (a) a huge inroads (b) huge inroads (c) huge inroad

112. The former boss had trouble making _____ because of the corruption of his key advisers. (a) headway (b) a headway (c) headways

113. The burial arrangements are _____. (a) as follow (b) as following (c) as follows

114. Soldiers, policemen, _____ were all called in to help deal with the Boko Haram menace. (a) and the likes (b) and such like (c) and the like

115. The discussion was on _____ like drugs, prostitution and teenage pregnancy. (a) stuff (b) stuffs (c) cogent stuffs

116. Now, I want you all to recite _____. (a) the alphabets (b) the alphabet (c) all the alphabets

117. You need to buy _____ for that interview. (a) a brand new shoe (b) a new shoe (c) new shoes

118. Dear Sir,

Thank you for considering me for the post of Senior Personal Assistant. As required, I will declare all bribes from time to time.

_____,

Mr. Smart Alec

(a) Yours faithfully (b) Yours obediently (c) Yours sincerely

119. I'm upset because last week during the promotion exercise, my boss _____ me and promoted my assistant. (a) sidetracked (b) bypassed (c) avoided

120. **Josh:** My father doesn't like junk food any bit.

Janet: _____ (a) My father, too (b) My father doesn't either (c) My father also

Answers

1. C
2. C
3. A
4. B
5. A

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6. A
7. C
8. B
9. B
10. A
11. B
12. A
13. B
14. C
15. C
16. C
17. B
18. A
19. B
20. B
21. C
22. C
23. C
24. A
25. C
26. C
27. A
28. A
29. C
30. B
31. C
32. C
33. B
34. C
35. B
36. A
37. C
38. B
39. B
40. C
41. B



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- 42. C
- 43. C
- 44. B
- 45. B
- 46. C
- 47. A
- 48. C
- 49. B
- 50. A
- 51. C
- 52. B
- 53. B
- 54. C
- 55. A
- 56. B
- 57. A
- 58. A
- 59. C
- 60. C
- 61. B
- 62. C
- 63. B
- 64. C
- 65. A
- 66. B
- 67. C
- 68. B
- 69. A
- 70. A
- 71. C
- 72. A
- 73. A
- 74. C
- 75. A
- 76. C
- 77. A



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78. C
79. B
80. B
81. C
82. B
83. A
84. C
85. B
86. A
87. C
88. C
89. A
90. C
91. C
92. B
93. C
94. C
95. C
96. A
97. A
98. C
99. A
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- B
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A
C



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114. C
115. A
116. B
117. C
118. A
119. B
120. B

Thanks for reading

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Further Readings

- Professor Fakoya's Mapping the Babblers's Brains
- Paul Anko's English in Use
- GNS Textbook, etc.

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