TOP GRAMMAR MISTAKES

COUNTABLE NOUNS

A **countable** noun is something you can count: 30 books, many researchers, 100 apples, several PCs. Generally, if a countable noun is in the <u>singular</u> it must be preceded by *a* or *the*.

>I work as **a** researcher. She works in **a** bank. We did the tests in **the** laboratory.

UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

An **uncountable** noun is seen is a mass rather than as several clearly identifiable parts. You cannot use **a/an** or **one** before an uncountable noun.

Examples of uncountable nouns: research, information, feedback, English

You <u>cannot</u> say:

>*all the / three / several / many / informations*
>
>*an / another / one / each / every information*
>
>*an English / one English / three Englishes*

But you <u>can</u> say:

>a lot of information, some information, not much information

A VS AN VS ONE

1) **an** is used i) before *u* when the sound is like the u in *uncle, unpredictable*, and ii) before letters in acronyms which begin with a vowel sound. Compare:

*a university **an** understanding   a u-r-l (letters pronounced separately) **an** url (letters pronounced as one word) **an** s-o-s*

2) **an** is only used before an *h* in these words: hour, honour, honest, heir (erede)

3) Use **one** instead of **a/an** when it is important to specify the number:

>I need **two** books not **one**.
>
>I need **at least one** person to help me immediately.

And also in the following expressions:

>**one** way to do this ... from **one** place/problem etc to another ... I'll do it **one** day next week

EXERCISES

1) Which of these nouns are countable?

advice, behavior, damage, data, device, equipment, evidence, feedback, hardware, progress, research, software, traffic, work

2) Insert *a* or *an, some* or nothing (Ø)

1. Hydrogen is produced at _____ high temperature.

2. Hydrogen is produced at _____ high temperature<u>s</u>.

3. This gives ___ really useful information.

4. We have made ___ progress.

5. We used ___ particular software in our calculations.

6. We are doing ___ research into rats.

7. ___ analysis of the results shows that ….

8. I speak ___ good English.

9. You can't go there without ___ passport.

10. It travels at 90 km ___ hour.

11. I have _____ headache.

12. This is ___ evidence of how effective the system is.

3) Insert *a* or *an* or *one* or nothing

1. We need to use _____ LAN, i.e. _____ local area network.

2. This is designated with _____ L not _____ N.

3. There is _____ hierarchy.

4. We went to _____ hotel. It took over _____ hour to get there.

5. I went to _____ university in England.

6. He's _____ honest guy and has _____ understanding of X.

7. We used it as ___ input because it has _____ unique value.

8. It increased by ___ order of magnitude

9. We'll do it _____ day next week.

10. _____ after the other.

11. _____ way to do this is ...

12. If you make even _____ mistake you will fail the test.

13. We only did _____ test before the machine broke down.

14. All these lamps need just _____ bulb. For this lamp we need _____ 80 watt bulb and for this lamp _____ 60 watt bulb.

15. There were _____ hundred people not two hundred.

16. _____ EU directive.

17. _____ European Union directive.

ALLOW, ENABLE, PERMIT, LET

1) **allow, enable** and **permit** are neutral / formal. They can all be used in three ways.

active verb + object + infinitive with 'to' Use this form to specify who/what is performing the action.	**X allows Y to do Z.** This software **enables <u>one / you / users</u> to carry out tasks** more quickly.
active verb + object + passive infinitive (to be + past participle) Use this form when it's obvious who/what is performing the action.	**X allows Y to be done.** This software **enables <u>tasks</u> to be carried out** more quickly (by users)
subject + passive verb + infinitive with 'to' In this case this form stresses the 'users' rather than the 'software'.	**X is allowed to do Y.** With this software **users were enabled to carry out tasks** more quickly.

2) **let** is used more in the spoken language, but also in emails.

let + complement + infinitive <u>without</u> 'to'	**X lets X do Y.** This device **lets you learn** a language while you're sleeping.

3) Sometimes you may wish to use an alternative construction for the sake of variety.

> This device **allows you to speak** in any language.

> **With / Using this device you can speak** in any language. (neutral)
> **With / Using this device,** any language **can be spoken**. (formal)
> **It is possible to speak** in any language using this device. (formal)

EXERCISES

4 Complete the *second sentence* so that it means the same as the first.

1 With this system you can save a lot of time. *This system allows*

2 Under the new law shops can trade 24 hours a day. *The new law.*

3 The new law permits tax inspectors to check all tax returns. *Under the new law tax inspectors*

4 You can see for miles with these binoculars. These binoculars *let*

5 These results have enabled researchers to complete their investigation

These results have enabled the researchers' investigation

5 Tick the correct sentences, and correct those sentences with mistakes.

1 Their boss let them to go home early.

2 This will allow to make much progress.

3 This software enables calculations to make more quickly.

4 They were not permitted to leave the country.

5 The new equipment allowed them to finish the job on time.

AS VS LIKE VS HOW

like = similar to

as = has the role of

how = in the manner of

Bob acts **like** a manager (but he is only a <u>project leader</u>).

Bob is acting **as** the manager while the director is away (Bob <u>is</u> a temporary manager)

Bob doesn't act **how** I would like him to (in the way that)

6a Insert *as, like,* or *how*

1. ____ a prototype it worked well, but not in its final version.

2. This technique is ____ the previous one.

3. ___ I told you yesterday.

4. It doesn't matter ____ you do it.

5. It can be used ____ an alternative.

6. We used a piece of wood ___ a lever.

7. I'll tell you ___ to do it.

8. We will explain ____ it is done in the next section.

AS VS AS A

Note the difference between these sentences

He has taken over **as manager**. (there is only one manager in the company – do not use *a/an*. It would be possible to say *he has taken over as <u>our / their</u> manager*)

He works **as a manager**. (we are not referring to a specific company, the number of managers is irrelevant. You must use *a/an*).

Need rule for input

We use X **as input**.

AS VS AS IT IS

Note the difference:

as is = come (è)

This is not true, as it is evident from the figure.

This is not true, **as is** evident from the figure. = …come si evince dalla figura.

as it is = poiché, siccome (è)

This is not true, **as it is** impossible to prove that X=Y.

= poiché è impossibile provare che X sia uguale a Y..

6b Insert *as, as a,* or *as it*

1. ____ can be seen in the figure.

2. For three months I have been working as ___ Phd student and as ___ lab technician.

3. I work as ___ researcher.

4. We only did one test _____ would have been impossible to do two.

5. _____ is well known, this feature only works for certain procedures.

6. We do not to use this feature _____ is redundant for our purposes.

EVEN IF VS EVEN THOUGH

even though = sebbene

even if is only used in hypothetical cases.

also if doesn't exist!

> **Even though** our teacher Adrian **is** English, he hates the Queen.
>
> (real situation – Adrian is English)
>
> **Even if** Adrian **was** King of England, he would never ….
>
> (not real situation – Adrian is not the king)

7 Insert if *or* though.

1. **Even _____** war games fascinate me, I've never been a big fan of them

2. My email was rejected **even _____** I'm a member of the mailing list!

3. Was the war in Iraq justified, **even _____** weapons of mass destruction were not found?

4. I wouldn't do this **even _____** you paid me.

INFINITIVE VS GERUND

1) You must use the gerund (-ing) after every preposition.

After revising (= after I had revised) the document I sent it to my boss.

This is an aid **to verifying** whether x does y. (cf. This should be an **aid to** all people)

This study will be dedicated **to analyzing.** (cf. I **dedicate** this song **to** you.)

We look forward **to hearing** from you.

As you can see in the examples in some cases a preposition may be part of the infinitive of a verb. This explains the following:

We look forward *to* **seeing** you. (*to* is part of the infinitive of the verb *look forward to*).

We want *to* **see** you. (*to* is not part of the infinitive of the verb *want*)

2) As a general rule when in Italian you say 'per fare' (i.e. per + l'infinito) in English, we just use the infinitive with *to*.

To buy a house you need money.

I need money **to buy** a house.

After *used*, you can put either the infinitive or for + ing

It is used **to write** code with.

It is used **for writing** code with.

3) The difference between the infinitive and the gerund at the beginning of a phrase, is that the infinitive translates the Italian 'allo scopo di' o 'per fare'. The gerund simply translates the Italian infinitive in the sense of an activity.

To learn English you need to study. **Allo scopo di** imparare l'inglese bisogna studiare.

Learning English entails a lot of studying. **Imparare** l'inglese implica studiare tanto.

To make this cake you need two ingredients. **Per fare** questa torta ...

Making cakes is fun. **Fare** le torte è un attività divertente.

4) Note the construction of the negative infinitive (per non fare ...) and the negative gerund.

We studied hard **so as not to** disappoint our professor.

We studied hard **in order not to** disappoint our professor.

Not wanting to disappoint our professor we studied hard.

8 Underline the correct forms.

1. *Passing / For passing / To pass* this exam you need *to study / studying*.

2. *For not failing / To not fail / To don't fail / In order not to fail / So as not to fail* I suggest that you study as much as possible.

3. *To carry / Carrying* out this request entails doing ...

4. *To live / Living* in Italy is easier than *to live / living* in England.

5. *To live / Living* well in England you need a lot of money.

6. *Not to have / Not having* access to email would be a problem for most people.

7. I lived in England before *to live / living* in Pisa.

-ing form: advanced uses

SUMMARY

1 Use **by** before the –*ing* form to indicate how something is done.

> **By** clicking on the mouse you can open the window = **If** you click ...

2 Use **thus** to indicate the consequence

> We learn English **thus** enabling us to communicate with our clients.

3 Use **when** to mean *ogni volta che*

> **When** printing, instruct the printer to print on both sides.

4 Use **while** to indicate a duration

> We often work **while** listening to music.

5 Replace the –*ing* form with **and** when you are simply giving additional information.

> This document gives an overview **of X trying** to throw light on particular aspects.

> = of **X and throws** light on ...

FULL RULES

1) Use the –*ing* form at the beginning of the sentence when it is the subject of the <u>main verb</u>.

> **Learning** English <u>will help</u> you to pass the exam.

When something else is the <u>subject</u> of the main verb, then the –*ing* form must be preceded with **by** or replaced with an **if** clause.

> *Learning English <u>you</u> will pass the exam.*

> **By learning** English <u>you</u> will pass the exam. **If you learn** English you will pass the exam.

2) The –*ing* form is often preceded by *thus* (quindi) and *by* (per mezzo di), otherwise it's not clear what is happening. Look at the sentence below.

> *This will improve performance **keeping** clients satisfied.*

Does it mean:

   a) the way to improve performance is if clients are kept satisfied?

   b) as a consequence of improving performance clients will be satisfied?

We can show the true meaning if, before the –*ing* form, we insert **thus** or **by**:

… **by keeping** clients satisfied = if clients are satisfied performance will improve

… **thus keeping** clients satisfied = client satisfaction depends on performance

Often it is a good idea simply to break up the sentence or use **and**.

> *This will improve performance **keeping** clients satisfied.*

= This will improve performance and clients will (thus) be satisfied.

> *The Euro indirectly raised prices, **causing** inflation.*

= … raised prices. This **consequently / subsequently caused** inflation**.**

= … raised prices **and so/thus caused** inflation**.**

3) Replace the *–ing* form with **and** when you are simply giving additional information.

> *This document focuses on the reasons for choosing x, **trying** to explain the background to these choices.*

> This document focuses on the reasons for choosing x, **and tries** to explain the background to these choices.

4) The *–ing* form can also be preceded by *when* (ogni volta che), *while* (mentre, durante).

> **When** writing English you should use a dictionary. = every time you want to write English ...

> **While** loading the program look out for any virus alerts. = while you are loading ...

Compare the use of *–ing* form in these examples.

> **Burning** CDs now takes only a few seconds. = The activity of burning ...

> **By burning** CDs we deprive artists of royalties. = If we burn ...

> **When burning** CDs, the original must be in drive A. = Every time you want to burn ...

> **While burning** CDs, you can listen to them at the same time. = While you are burning ..

5) Prefer **who**/**which**/**that** when the <u>noun</u> that comes before the *–ing* form is the 'subject' of that *–ing* form.

> *Adrian teaches <u>students</u> **having** a good level of English.*

> Adrian teaches <u>students</u> **that have** a good level of English.

If the <u>subject</u> of the *first verb* is also the subject of the **second verb**, then the sentence should be rewritten.

> *<u>Adrian</u> teaches students **having** a good level of English.*

> <u>Adrian</u> teaches students **since he has** a good level of English.

9 Insert *by, thus, while* or *when* into the spaces.

1. You can improve your chances **_____ studying** every day.
2. You can study **_____ watching** TV**.**
3. You should study hard **_____ improving** your chances of passing the test.
4. **_____ studying** for an English exam try to do as much listening as possible.
5. **_____ doing** as much listening as possible you will also improve your pronunciation.

10 Correct these sentences where necessary.

1. **Watching** TV in English foreign students have improved their listening skills.
2. **Watching** TV for more than four hours a day can cause brain damage.
3. This is done **clicking** on the mouse.
4. Taxes will be lowered **creating** more jobs.
5. **Reviewing** programs and codes for further developments, always check the CFQ.

11 Rewrite the parts in italics using *by, thus* or *when*, + -ing.

1 *If we cancel* world debt, trade will increase.

2 *Every time you use* this apparatus, use sterile gloves.

3 They stopped using sprays *and this reduced* the pollution levels.

4 We can do this *in the following manner: reinforce* Y.

PREPOSITIONS

There are no rules that determine which preposition goes with which verb, noun, or adjective. Below are the most frequently misused prepositions in technical manuals.

1. access NO PREP
2. gain access to smth
3. accordance with, in
4. according to
5. act on
6. add X to Y
7. advantage of X over Y
8. allocate X to Y
9. as an alternative
10. apart from
11. associate X with Y
12. assumption, on the
13. average, on
14. to benefit from
15. capable of
16. change X into Y
17. choose from
18. compensate for
19. condition, on the
20. convert X into Y
21. definition, by
22. deliver X toY
23. depend on
24. discuss something with someone
25. except for
26. function of, as a
27. impose X on Y
28. an increase in cost
29. an increase of 10%
30. independent of
31. investigate NO PREP
32. investigation, under
33. irrespective of
34. occasion, on an
35. participate in
36. prepare X for Y
37. prevent X from
38. provide X with Y
39. random, at
40. regardless of
41. replace X with Y
42. respect to, with
43. responsible for
44. rule, as a
45. same as
46. same time, at the
47. sensitive to
48. similar to
49. suffer from
50. suitable for
51. suited to
50 transform X in

THAT VS WHICH (IN RELATIVE CLAUSES)

1) If you are making a distinction use **that ****

> Pisa university has many departments. I work for the departments **that** teach scientific subjects. The departments **that** have the most students are the IT departments.

2) If you are adding parenthetical / additional information use **which** (but if possible follow rule 6)

> English, which is the subject I teach, is very useful for Phd students.

3) If **che** is preceded by a comma use **which**

> I live in the center of Pisa, which is very convenient for my work.

4) If preceded by preposition use **which**

> I have several mobile phones many **of which** don't work.

5) **which** generally refers to the noun that it follows. So, in some cases, avoid using **which** and split the sentence and repeat the subject.

> *Each language is characterized by a set of common rules as reported in Table 2 **which** highlights the structure of that particular language.*

The position of *which* initially seems to refer to *Table 2*. But in fact it refers to *set of common rules*. The sentence should be rewritten.

> Each language is characterized by a set of common rules, as reported in Table 2. **This set** highlights the structure of that particular language.

6) In long sentences, if possible replace the **which** clause by beginning a new sentence. NB repeating the same word (in this case *institutes*) is not bad style.

> The CNR is the Italian National Research Council and has many institutes where innovative research is carried out and **which** are located in various parts of Italy such as Pisa, Turin and Rome.

> = has many institutes where innovative research is **carried out. These institutes** are located in various parts of Italy such as Pisa, Turin and Rome.

7) If you put an adjective after the noun it describes, then this adjective should be introduced by **that/which/who**

> I met a girl **who is** 25 years old   A document **which/that is** five pages long

** In scientific writing, the difference between *that* and *which* is important.

> The horse **that** wins the race gets the prize.

> That horse**, *which** I've owned for several years**,** has never won a race.*

> That horse usually wins**, *which** is why I have bet on it.*

In the first example, that wins the race is essential to understanding the sentence, it defines which horse I am talking about – you cannot logically say The horse gets the prize. In such cases, you should use **that** (though in non technical English, **which** is often used)

In the second and third examples, the parts in *italics* not essential to understanding the sentence. They could be omitted – e.g. you can say That horse has never won a race. In this case, **commas** must be used, and only **which** can be used not **that**.

If commas are needed and parenthetical / non-essential information is given, then **which** is used.

EXERCISES

12 Answer the questions.

a) My house that is in the country cost 350,000 euros.

b) My house, that is in the country, cost 350,000 euros.

c) My house, which is in the country, cost 350,000 euros.

d) My house which is in the country cost 350,000 euros.

e) My house cost 350,000 euros, that is a lot of money.

f) My house cost 350,000 euros, which is a lot of money.

1 In which sentence, b or c, is the use of commas correct?

2 Which sentence implies that I have more than one house?

3 Which sentence gives the idea that I have mentioned houses in a previous sentence?

4 Which sentence is ambiguous, i.e. it is not clear if I have one house or more?

5 Which is correct - e or f? Why?

13 Insert commas into these sentences where necessary.

1   That man over there whose wife left him last year is very depressed.

2   The English who are generally quite reserved don't always say what they think.

3   People that like dogs often don't like cats.

4   Dinosaurs which became extinct millions of years ago still fascinate us today.

5   I told him he was an idiot which is probably why he hit me.

14 Where necessary replace *that* with *which*. Insert commas where necessary.

1 The language **that** we use with our friends is not always the same as the language **that** we use with our family.

2 The English language **that** is now the international language of the world is spoken by about 500 million native speakers.

3 The English language is spoken in the USA **that** is probably why it has become so important.

4 This scientific English course **that** took me several months to prepare is designed to help students to improve their writing skills.

5 The lesson **that** we are going to do today is similar to the one **that** we did last week.

6 The results are shown in Figure 4 **that** reports the values regarding ...

7 The figure **that** we believe is the most illuminating is Figure 5.

15 Correct these sentences by:

a) adding *which* where necessary

b) removing *which* and starting a new sentence

c) replacing, <u>where necessary</u>, *that* with *which*

1. The following techniques, shown in Fig. 1, are …

2. We took a sample 2m long.

3. We used a procedure already known to be suitable for characterising the difficulties of particular languages.

4. These languages form the basis of our analysis, that is carried out using innovative techniques.

5. These results, published in a previous paper [12], highlight that ..

6. The reasons that lead to the reduction in complexity of a language are analogous to the ones that were reported for languages belonging to completely different groups, which is what is stated in the paper by Phillips published in 2004.

7. English is considered to be a very simple language, that is in fact a fallacy.

8. English is considered to be a simple language that as mentioned earlier is in fact a fallacy.

THE

1) **<u>Don't</u> use *the*** if you are talking about something

•   **in general**, and the noun is in the plural (eg *computers, books*)

•   or is **uncountable** (eg *software, information*)

•   or is **an** abstract noun (eg *love, imagination*),

Use *the* if you are specifying or talking about something that you have either already mentioned or which the reader/listener already know about. Examples:

All you need is **love**.   **The love** I feel for her is …

We produce **software**.   The **software** we used to do this analysis ...

This will help **students** to learn English. **The students** I teach in my courses are ..

2) In phrases with the following combination: **singular noun + of + noun**, the first noun is nearly always preceded by *the*

The language of love,   **The** university of Pisa,   **The** type of analysis

3) Use *the* when it would be possible to replace *the* with *these/those*, without changing the meaning of the sentence. (This 'rule' only works partially!)

The problems we had last week.

Those problems we had last week.

4) Don't use *the* with subjects of study

       We work in **fashion / website design**.

       I studied **history** at school.

       We are researchers in **engineering, medicine,** and **veterinary sciences**

       She is an expert in **history of art**.

But: In this paper we study **the design** of a new system to …

       We are researching into **the history** of England from 1939 – 1945.

5) When words such as **figure, table, column, item** are followed immediately by a number, *the* must not be used. Also, these words are often capitalized to make them stand out from the text. When they are not followed by a number, then *the* should be used.

       Note that **Figure 5** highlights that …

       Finally, all the terms involved in **Equation 4.1** are …

       The figure shows that ..   As can be seen in **the** figure ..

6) Don't use *the* with percentages.

       I teach many students – ~~the~~ 50% are either engineers or computer scientists.

7) *the* must be used with 'uncountable' nationalities that end in – h (eg English, French) and –ese (eg Chinese, Portuguese). Most other nationalities (Italians, Swedes etc) are countable.

       The English are not as tall as **the Dutch**.

       Italian**s** do it better than ~~Frenches~~ the French

The rule above does not apply if these words are being used as adjectives rather than nouns.

       English people are not as tall as **Dutch** people.

If a sentence contains both a countable and uncountable nationality it is best to use *the* in both cases.

       The English don't do it as well as **the Italians**.

Countries do not require the article: Italy, France, Russia. <u>Exceptions</u>: the UK, the USA

9) Note the difference between **last/next** and **the last/next** in time expressions.

       We did this exercise **last week**. (i.e. the week before the current week)

       I am going on holiday in **the last week** of August. (i.e. a specific week)

       I went to Spain **last year** (i.e. in 2006) and I'm going to Portugal **next year** (i.e. 2008)

       The next year the Olympics will be held in Europe will be 2012. (i.e a specific year)

10) Always use *the* in these cases: the Internet, in the literature, in the laboratory

16 Where necessary, insert the definite article (*the*) into the spaces.

1. This can be seen in _____ figure.

2. _____ Table 1 highlights that …

3. Please see _____ appendix for further details.

4. This is highlighted in _____ Results (_____ Sect. 4) and commented on in _____ Discussion (_____ Sect. 5).

5. This is _____ story of my life.

6. I work at _____ Dept. of X at _____ University of Pisa in _____ Italy. Before I worked in ___ UK.

7. We found that __ 15% of these samples were contaminated.

8. I was _____ best student in _____ class.

9. _____ pollution has significantly affected _____ environment.

10. _____ Italians are not very patriotic but _____ French are.

11. ___ most of ___ samples were tested using this method.

12. We carried out this research ___ last year.

13. There is a congress in ___ last week of September ___ next year.

14. We found this data on ___ Internet, but it is not referred to in _____ literature.

17 Where necessary, insert *the* into the spaces. You will need to decide in each case whether researchers <u>in general</u> **are being talked about or** <u>specific</u> **researchers.**

_____ [1] Researchers have a very privileged position as they are paid to do what they like doing. _____ [2] Researchers in industry tend to be paid more than _____ [3] researchers at university.

_____ [4] Researchers at Manchester University are studying ways to improve English as a language of international business communication: the project is called Bizglish. _____ [5] Only researchers in the project who are not being sponsored by the British government are those from abroad. _____ [6] Researchers who started the project have now all left the team.

There are two types of researchers involved in the project. ___ [7] Researchers who are studying the ways mother tongue speakers communicate and ___ [8] researchers studying the way non-native speakers use English. ___ [9] Researchers who are studying the way non-native speakers use English have provided the most interesting results so far.

_____ [10] Researchers that I met yesterday told me that the project was going very well.

18 Check your answers to Ex 2 by answering the questions below. If your answer indicates that the researchers in question are <u>specific</u> **researchers, then you must put *the***

1 Are we talking about **specific** researchers that we've already mentioned, or **all** researchers?

2-3 Are we talking about **specific** researchers that we have already mentioned, or essentially **all** researchers in industry and **all** researchers at university?

4 Are we talking about **specific** researchers at Manchester Uni that we have already mentioned, or just **some** researchers at Manchester Uni that we have not already mentioned?

5-6 Have these researchers already been mentioned in some way? Are they defined in some way? Are they **specific** researchers or simply researchers **in general**?

7-8 Have these researchers been **explicitly** mentioned before? Could we say: *some researchers are studying non verbal ways in which we communicate and **others** are studying the language*

we use? Could we say (in a similar way): *There are two types of researchers involved in the project: English researchers and Italian researchers?*

9 Have these researchers already been mentioned? So, are they **specific**?

10 Does this mean **all** researchers, **some** researchers, or very **specific** researchers?

VOCABULARY PROBLEMS 1

Below are some words that are often used incorrectly in scientific papers.

characteristic = tratto caratteristico, qualità peculiare

only = solo, unico

peculiar = strano, insolito

typical = peculiare, tipico, proprio, rappresentante

unique = unico nel suo genere

like = quale, come ad esempio (abbastanza informale)

such as = quale, come ad esempio (va bene per i paper)

e.g. = per esempio (per dare un esempio)

i.e. = cio'è (per specificare)

remarkable = ragguardevole, considerevole, quasi sorprendente

relevant = pertinente, inerente, attinente

significant = importante, notevole, degno di nota

sensible = sensato

sensitive = sensibile (for people, instruments)

different from, than = diverso da qualcos'altro

several = parecchi, più di due (può sostituito da un numero unico)

various = variato, numeroso (corrisponde ad un insieme di numeri)

few (+ plural), little (+ sing) = molto pochi/poco (quasi niente)

a few (+ plural), a little (+ sing) = alcuni, un po'

fewer (+ plural), less (+ sing) = meno

minor = poco importante

convenient = comodo, accessibile, sotto mano, a portata di mano (generally refers to timetables, places etc)

comfortable = confortevole

advisable = consigliabile

not advisable = sconsigliabile, non conveniente

economic = che riguarda l'economia

economical = a basso consumo, efficiente, a basso costo

efficient = efficiente, utile, che funzione nel modo migliore

effective = effettivo, reale, che fa quello che deve fare

medium = media (di misura), also *medium term (*but more common *mid term)*

mid = metà, also *mid term*

average = che segue la norma, media aritmetica [obtained by dividing sum]

mean = medio [number between smallest and largest value]

median = mediano [midway in series of odd number of items]

request = richiesta (for someone to do something for you eg to send you a document)

query = dubbio, domanda, quesito (when you want info eg where in a doc you can find smth)

19 Underline the correct word. If more than one is possible, underline both/all.

1. This very interesting feature is **peculiar to / unique to / typical of / characteristic of** X.

2. This is the **only / unique** way to do it.

3. Various features of the system, **like / such as** command menus, multiple windows.

4. The UK is made up of 4 countries **such as / e.g. / i.e.** England, Scotland, Wales, and N. Ire.

5. English is spoken in many countries **such as / e.g. / i.e.** Australia and Canada.

6. Learning a foreign language is not compulsory in the UK. This is **remarkable / significant** especially for businesses who sell products outside the UK, and it is **remarkable / significant** given the importance of languages in today's multicultural society.

7. Let us now see in more **detail** / **details** how this works.

8. There is a **sensible / sensitive / significant** difference between the two results.

9. It was **sensitive / sensible** to the environment.

10. There are **different / several** countries in Africa located at **various / several** distances from the equator.

11. **A few / Few / A little / Little** is known about the real nature of ghosts, though **a few / few / a little / little** people claim to have seen them.

12. There were **fewer / less / minor** problems in the second test than in the first, but in any case most of them were only **fewer / less / minor** problems.

13. This system is **no more used / no longer used** / **not used anymore**.

14. Do x and then y or **viceversa / vice versa / the other way round / y first and then x**.

15. **The most part / Most** of the experiments were successful.

16. It is not **convenient / advisable / comfortable** to do more than one test at a time.

17. Some Mercedes are quite **economic / economical** since they run on diesel engines.

18. An engine that uses the least fuel is considered to be the most **efficient / effective**.

19. In the **medium / mid** term there will be a/an **medium / average** of 30 students per class.

20. I have a **query / request** regarding the document you corrected for me: what exactly do you mean by 'x'? And re your **query / request** to send you the final version by Monday, this will ..

VOCABULARY PROBLEMS 2

last year = l'anno scorso

last years = gli ultimi anni di un periodo particolare

last few years = gli ultimi anni fino a quello in corso

actually = in realtà

currently, at the moment = attualmente

nowadays = oggigiorno, al giorno di oggi - sempre con un contrasto con il passato

for the moment, for now = per un certo periodo da ora in prossimo futuro

by now = a questo punto, ormai - come conseguenza di quello che è avvenuto prima

so far, as yet = finora

from now on = da ora in avanti (in senso temporale)

hereafter = di qui in avanti (all'interno di un documento)

yet = già (in frasi interrogative)

still = ancora

still not = non ancora (senso di persitenza o sorpresa)

not yet = non ancora (neutrale)

already = già

just = appena

again = di nuovo

at the end + of = alla fine di

in the end / eventually = alla fine, in conclusione

if necessary, if need be, if appropriate = eventualmente

since = da quando (inizio periodo)

for = da quanto tempo (durata periodo)

from = da .... a

both ... and = sia .. sia, cio'è tutti e due

either ... or = o ... o, cio'è o l'uno o l'altro, ma non tutti e due

20 Underline the correct word. If more than one is possible, underline both/all.

1.   During the **last years / last few years**, we have become ...

2.   **Nowadays / Currently / Actually** the use of wireless connections is undergoing a radical change.

3.   This product was once very expensive to manufacture. However **nowadays / currently / actually** it is much cheaper, **nowadays / currently / actually** it hardly costs anything at all.

4.   We wanted X but **by now / for the moment / so far** we will have to use Y.

5.   They should have received the package **by now / for the moment / so far.**

6.   We don't envisage any problems **by now / for the moment / so far.**

7. We haven't had any problems **by now / for the moment / so far.**

8. **At the end / In the end / Eventually** we decided to abandon the tests.

9. **Eventually / If necessary** a more expensive solution can be used.

10. I have been in this department **since / from / for** five years.   ... **since / from / for** 2003.

11. We can go to <u>two</u> places: **both / either** Lucca **and / or** Siena.

12. We can only go to <u>one</u> place: **both / either** Lucca **and / or** Siena.

13. I am afraid we can't go anywhere, so we <u>can't</u> go **both / either / neither** to Lucca **and / or / nor** Siena.

VOCABULARY PROBLEMS 3

login = sostantivo,   log in = verbo

carry on = continuare

carry out = eseguire

be composed <u>by</u> = essere composto / scritto da (musica), be composed <u>of</u> = essere costituito

consist of = essere formato o composto

made up of = essere formato o composto

be formed by = formarsi

check = verificare senza agire direttamente

control = controllare, regolare, comandare, agire direttamente

bring = portare verso chi parla / ascolta

take = portare lontano da chi parla / ascolta

lead to = condurre, causare, provocare

anticipate = aspettarsi, prevedere

bring forward = anticipare

postpone = rimandare

assist someone = aiutare qualcuno

take part in / participate in = partecipare in modo attivo

attend something = partecipare in modo passivo

turn out = risultare, riverlarsi

result <u>in</u> = avere come conseguenza, portare a   result <u>from</u> = derivare da

exclude = lasciar fuori, emarginare

rule out = scartare da un ipotesi

find = cercare per poi trovare, riuscire ad avere (scoprire da soli)

find out = venire a sapere (scoprire da qualcun'altro), informarsi, chiedere

be responsible for = essere (il) responsabile di   NB 'the responsible' non esiste

be in charge of = avere l'incarico di

rise / rose / risen (intransitivo) = alzarsi, incrementare, aumentare es. Taxes have risen.

raise (transitivo) = sollevare, aumentare es. The government have raised taxes.

arise / arose / arisen = presentarsi, insorgere es. Problems have arisen due to the rise in taxes

deal with = trattare (un argomento), avere a che fare, occuparsi di (lavoro) essere nella posizione di risolvere un problema

face = trovarsi davanti a, far fronte a, affronatare, fronteggiare

address = concentrarsi su, dedicarsi a, impegnarsi a

treat = trattare (con una cura medica)

care about = interessare (colloq., not suitable in technical docs)

be concerned about = interessare, studiare

21 Underline the correct word. If more than one is possible, underline both/all.

1. When you **login / log in** to your computer, a log file called ...

2. These steps can be carried **out / on** by the user.

3. The system **is composed by / consists of / is made up of / is formed by / has** 8 modules.

4. Can you look at the thermometer and **check / control** the temperature? What does it say? The thermostat is used to **check / control** the temperature.

5. However, using this in conjunction with that **brings / leads to** additional overheads.

6. The congress has been **anticipated / brought forward / postponed** from July to June.

7. I will be **assisting to / taking part in** the conference.

8. This method **resulted / resulted in / turned out** to be the best and **resulted / resulted in** us getting the best quality.

9. These results would seem to **exclude / rule out** the possibility of external interference.

10. We **found / found out** no differences between the two methodologies.

11. I am **the responsible of / responsible for / in charge of** technical aspects.

12. The proofreaders of the document have **risen / raised / arisen** some issues. These issues seem to **rise / raise / arise** from the fact that the English is poor. In fact the number of such complaints about our documents has **risen / raised / arisen** dramatically.

Irregular verbs

22 Correct the following.

1 They have **to chose** now

2 It is **splitted** into 2 parts.

3 Values **are showed** in all entries.

4 It is **broadcasted** to X,

5 Have you **setted** the X?

6 They **founded** a solution.

7 It has **became** possible.

8 In 2006 this **leaded** to a new kind of problem.

APOSTROPHES

1 Do <u>not</u> use with acronyms and dates.

CD's became common in the late 1980's.

CDs became common in the late 1980s.

Avoid contracted forms in formal papers.

Let's assume that ... = Let us assume that ...

This doesn't happen if = This does not happen

2 Apostrophes may be needed with symbols or letters to show plurals.

Three **Ω's** are required.

There are two c's in Lu<u>cc</u>a.

3) be careful of the position of the apostrophe in genitives

Homer Simpso**n's** brain. = the brain of Homer Simpso**n**

Tes**s's** dilemma. = the dilemma of Tes**s**

Ba**rt** and Home**r's** lifestyle = the lifestyle of Bart and Homer

The Simpson**s'** house. = the house of the Simpson**s**

genitive

1 indicates human possession (including nations, institutes, companies etc),
and also animals or personified objects
*The **PC's** screen.*

The **user's** PC.

The European Space **Agency's** Giotto probe was reactivated in 1992.

Italy's gold reserves

Prefer the use of 'of' to a genitive in cases like these:

IBM's Chairman.   The IBM Chairman.

The Chairman of IBM.

The plane's pilot   The plane pilot.

The pilot of the plane.

The genitive is better not used here because the Chairman doesn't really belong
to IBM and the pilot certainly doesn't belong to the plane.

Inanimate entities do not usually take the genitive:

*Mathematic**s'** rules.*

The rules of mathematics.

*Malari**a's** effects.*

The effects of malaria.

2 The genitive can be used with time periods.

I'm taking three wee**ks'** vacation next month. = three wee**ks** of vacation

But not when these are preceded by *a / the*.

*He's on a three week**s'** vacation.*

He's on a 3-wee**k** vacation.

3 No article before names unless referring to a family:

*That is **the Homer** Simpson's car.*

That is **Homer** Simpson's car.

That is **the Simpsons'** car = the car of the Simpson family.

*That is **the Anderson's** car.*

That is **Anderson's** car. (Anderson is one person not a family)

GENITIVE OR NO GENITIVE
1 Use the construction: **the + name of person + noun** when focus on the **noun** rather than the person, i.e when we are considering a single entity.

eg The Bush administration. (here we are thinking of all the people seen as a whole)

Use the construction: **name of person + 's + noun** when focus on the **person**, i.e. when we are considering two separate entities

eg Bush's administration.(i.e. Bush's admin rather than Clinton's, here we are thinking of Bush and all his people – thus two entities)

Similarly:

I never buy **Benetton** clothes.

Benetton's decision to raise prices …

2 Use the construction: **the + university + of + town** when we see things from the university's (eg the rector's, the website, the prospectus) point of view – this tends to be in formal situations

The University of Pisa is organizing a series of seminars on Scientific English.

Use the construction: **town + university** when we see things from the student's point of view, less formal

I studied mathematics at **Pisa** University.

3 The genitive is not usually used with towns.

*I studied mathematics at **Pisa's** University.*   (completely wrong)

***Pisa's** three universities are world famous.*   (not wrong, but unlikely)

The three universities **in Pisa** are world famous.

Paris's metro.

 The Paris metro.

London's university.

(London's University would imply that there is only one university in London, whereas there are several).

However, for some reason, the genitive can be used in the construction:

town/country + adjective/noun + noun

London's new airport.

America's foreign policy.

London's traffic problems.

THE GENITIVE IN SCIENTIFIC PAPERS
1 Formal definitions:

The Newton's theory of gravity states that only massive particles and bodies participate in interactions: E = -Gm 1 m 2 r , (1) where E, G ...

The Newton theory of gravity states that **...**

2 References to the theory rather than definitions of the theory:

Mercury's orbit is elliptical, as predicted by __the Newton theory__ of gravity, but the ellipse ...

Mercury's orbit is elliptical, as predicted by __Newton's theory__ of gravity, but ....

3 Focus on the scientist as well as his/her theory:

Does this mean that **Newton's theory of gravity** is now wrong?

4 Only use name + theorem/analysis/method if the scientist is well established. Wallwork (i.e. your English teacher) is not famous enough!

We used Wallwork analysis to do X.

We used **Wallwork's analysis** to do X.

The Wallwork analysis of this situation is …

Wallwork's analysis of this situation is …

NOUN STRINGS
1 Don't use strings of nouns or noun + adjective + noun constructions

Italians seem to think that you can indiscriminately put nouns in front of each other. You can't! It makes the sentence hard to understand and often leads to ambiguity.

To avoid misunderstanding on the part of your reader, use:

of = which belongs to

* Pisa streets

The streets of / in Pisa

for = for the purpose of

* Potatoes boiling instructions

Instructions **for** boiling potatoes

by = how something is done

Silicon wafer mechanical strength measurement for surface damage quantification

Quantifying surface damage **by measuring** the mechanical strength of silicon wafers.

2 Occasionally using nouns as adjectives may be wrong in certain cases (as in the first example below), but not in others.

* A nature law.   A life law

A law of nature. A law of life

A scientific law. An international law

3 You <u>cannot</u> put an adjective

a) between two nouns

** The editor **main** interface*

The **main** interface of the editor

** The algorithm **computational** complexity*

The **computational** complexity of the algorithm

b) before a noun that it does not describe

** The **main document** contribution*

The **main contribution** of the document

4 The secret is to only use *noun + noun* combinations that you are certain already exist.

a software program, a hardware device

5 However, strings of nouns and adjectives must be used if they are names of pieces of equipment or methods. For example:

An Oxford Link SATW ultra-thin window EDX detector

A Hitachi S3500N environmental scanning electron microscope

A recently developed reverse Monte Carlo quantification method

EXERCISES

23 Insert *apostophe s* into the correct places.

1. IBM first computer.

2. Manchester United 100th win against Juventus

3. Bill Gates philosophy

4. Alvarez document on X.

5. Andress document on X.

6. Burger and Wilmar document on X.

7. The Italians ideas about pasta making.

8. The dog bone.

9. These are the results of ten years studying, which was divided into two five year periods.

10. A mile walk.

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1.	The Ring's Lord	The Lord of the Rings
2.	The List of Schindler	Schindler's list
3.	One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest Cuckoo	One Flew Over the Nest of the
4.	The Silence of the Lambs	The Lambs' Silence
5.	Taxi's Driver	Taxi Driver
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1. How do you measure a) a circle's area b) the area of a circle?

2. I have just been studying a) the fundamental theorem of integral calculus b) the integral calculus fundamental theorem

3. I think that a) the sum of the angles of a triangle is ... b) the triangle angles sum is ...

4. Let us look at a) Pascal's hexagon theorem b) Pascal hexagon theorem c) the Pascal's hexagon theorem

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6. Have you ever studied a) the binomial theory b) the bionomial's theory c) the bionomials theory

7. Can you explain the a) large numbers law to me b) the law of large numbers to me?

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KEY

1

They are all <mark>UN</mark>countable. Except for: behavior (only in scientific English), damages = risarcimento (dei danni), data (this data is / these data are), work (but only in the sense of *opere* eg works of art)

2

1 a 2 - 3 (some) 4 (some) 5 (some) 6 (some) 7 an 8 - 9 a 10 an/per 11 a 12 -

3

1 a, a 2 an, 3 a 4 a, an 5 a 6 an, an 7 - / an, a 8 one 9 one 10 one 11 one 12 one 13 one 14 one, an, a 15 one 16 an 17 a

4

1 This system allows you to save a lot of money 2 The new law permits / allows shops to trade .. . 3 Under the new law tax inspectors are permitted / allowed to check 4 These binoculars let you see 5 These results have enabled the researchers' investigation to be completed

5

1 Their boss let them go home early. 2 This will allow us / you etc to make much progress. 3 This software enables calculations to be made more quickly. 4-5 OK

6a

1 as 2 like 3 as 4 how 5 as 6 as 7 how 8 how

6b

1 as 2 as a, as a 3 as a 4 as it 5 as is 6 as it

7

1 though 2 though 3 though 4 if

8

1 to pass, to study 2 in order not to fail, so as not to fail 3 carrying 4 living, living 5 to live 6 not having 7 living

9

1 by 2 while (when) 3 thus 4 when 5 by

10

1 by watching 2 ok 3 by clicking 4 thus creating 5 when reviewing

11

1 by cancelling 2 when using 3 thus reducing 4 by reinforcing

12

1 c 2 a 3 a 4 d 5 f (*which* introduces additional info)

13

1   That man over **there, whose** wife left him last **year, is** ..
2   The **English, who** are generally quite **reserved, don't** ..
3   People that like dogs often don't like cats.
4   **Dinosaurs, which** ... of years **ago, still** fascinate us today.
5   I told him he was an **idiot, which** is probably why he hit me.

14

1 The language **that** we use ... language **that** we use with our family.
2 ... language, **which** is now the language of the world, is spoken ...
3 The English language is spoken in the USA, **which** is probably ..
4 ... course, **which** took me several months to prepare, is ...
5 The lesson **that** we ... to the one **that** we did last week.
6 The results are shown in Figure 4, **which** reports the values regarding ...
7 The figure **that** we believe is the most illuminating is Figure 5.

15

1.   The following techniques, **which are** shown in Fig. 1, are … // **The following techniques (Fig. 1) are ...**
2.   We took a sample which was 2m long. /// ... a 2m long sample
3.   We used a procedure **which/that** is already ...
4.   These languages form the basis of our analysis, **which** is ...
5.   in a previous paper [12] **and** highlight that .. //// **These results,** which were ....,
6.   .. groups. **In fact, this** is what is stated in the paper by Phillips published in 2004.
7.   a very simple language, **which** is in fact a fallacy.
8.   language**, which** as mentioned **earlier,** is in fact a fallacy.

16

1 the 2 – 3 the 4 the, - the, - 5 the 6 the, the, -, the 7 – 8 the, the 9 -, the 10 (the), the 11 -, the 12 – 13 the, - 14 the, the

17

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 the 6 the 7 – 8 – 9 the 10 the

18

1 all 2 – 3 all 4 some 5-6 they have been mentioned and are thus specific 7-8 not explicitly mentioned, yes, yes 9 yes, specific 10 specific

19

1 typical of / characteristic of 2 only 3 such as 4 i.e. 5 such as, e.g. 6 remarkable, significant 7 detail 8 significant 9 sensitive 10 several, various 11 little, a few 12 fewer, minor 13 no longer used / not used anymore 14 vice versa / the other way round / first y and then x 15 most 16 advisable 17 economical 18 efficient 19 medium/mid, average 20 query, request

20

1 last few years 2 currently 3 nowadays, actually 4 for the moment 5 by now 6 for the moment 7 so far 8 in the end, eventually 9 if necessary 10 for, since 11 both .. and 12 either .. or 13 either .. or

21

1 log in 2 out 3 consist of, made up of, has 4 check, control 5 leads to 6 brought forward 7 taking part in 8 turned out, resulted 9 rule out 10 found 11 responsible for, in charge of 12 raised, arise, risen

22

1 choose 2 split 3 shown 4 broadcast 5 set 6 found 7 become 8 led

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