Grammar for English Language Teachers

With exercises and a key

WINNER
ENGLISH-SPEAKING UNION
Duke of Edinburgh's English Language Award 2000
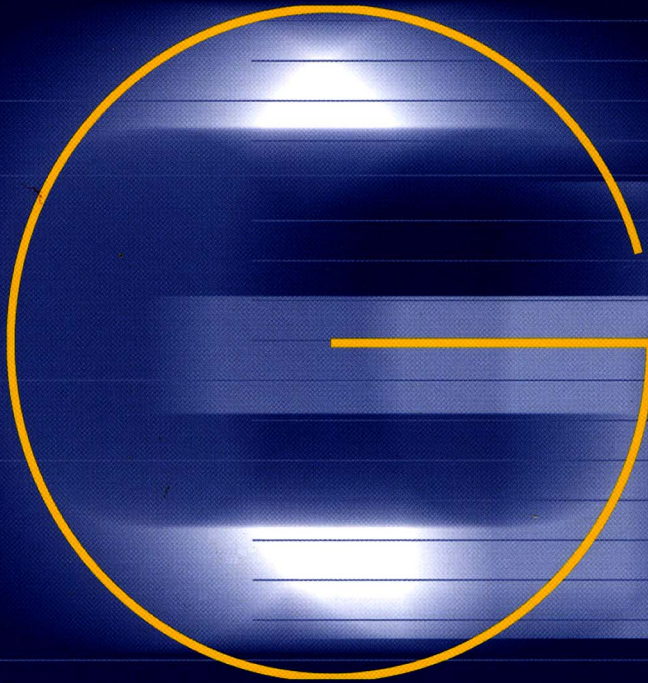
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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Second edition

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PART D Complex sentences

PART E Researching language

Thanks

The following people have all provided me with either support during the writing of this book or with data that I have used in the examples of spoken English. My thanks to all of you and to anyone I have forgotten to mention here.

Susan Barduhn; Sue Collins; Frances Eales; Diana England; James Grindley; Nick Hamilton; Erika Kirwan; Alice Lester; Jenny McAslan; John Malham; Geraldine Mark; Lindsay Nash; Albert and Beth Neher; Diane Nicholls; Valdemar Paradise; Barbara, Brian, Chris, Nick and Pamela Parrott; Jean-Marc Pedezert; Colleen, Jack, Lauren and Pete Sheldon; Sybil Spence; Jon Tennant; Olivia Thorne.

My thanks also to Jeanne McCarten, Alison Sharpe and Lynn Dunlop at Cambridge University Press for editorial support and help. My special thanks go to the eagle-eyed Helen Forrest, whose rigour and professionalism as an editor have contributed much to the improvements in this edition.

Acknowledgments

Cambridge International Corpus

The Cambridge International Corpus is a vast database of over one billion words of real English gathered from a wide selection of sources, such as newspapers, books, conversations, radio and television. It has been built up by Cambridge University Press over the last ten years and continues to grow. It includes written and spoken English, and both British and American English, which means we can analyse the differences and produce books based on either variety of English.

The Cambridge International Corpus gives us a representative picture of how the language is used and because it is *real* English, Cambridge ELT materials developed with the corpus teach English as it is really being used today.

The Cambridge Learner Corpus is a unique collection of over 30 million words written by students taking Cambridge ESOL exams all over the world. It forms part of the Cambridge International Corpus, and has been developed by Cambridge University Press and Cambridge ESOL.

In addition, Cambridge University Press has developed a unique system called 'error coding' for highlighting the mistakes made by students in these exam scripts. This system is used in the Cambridge Learner Corpus to identify which words, grammar patterns, or language structures cause the most problems for students learning English. This 'error coding' system shows us, for example, typical mistakes made by Brazilian students at CAE level or by Italian students at PET level. This means that Cambridge books can highlight the most frequently made mistakes and give students extra help in avoiding them.

The information derived from the Cambridge Learner Corpus is used in a wide range of Cambridge ELT books to ensure that areas of English that students find difficult are fully covered.

Introduction

Aims

Grammar for English Language Teachers has two primary aims:

- to help you develop your overall knowledge and understanding of English grammar
- to provide a quick source of reference in planning lessons or clarifying learners' problems.

The book provides a broader perspective of grammar than that presented to students in course materials. It encourages you to appreciate the complexity (and, where relevant, the ambiguity) of grammatical description, and to recognise the limitations of the 'rules of thumb' presented to learners in course materials.

It also seeks to nourish a love for and fascination with English grammar.

Who this book is for

This book is intended for:

- prospective and practising teachers studying language as part of a degree in English or on courses such as those leading to teaching certificates and diplomas
- teachers who want to continue learning and exploring the grammar of English on their own
- teachers who do and teachers who do not speak English as a first language.

Content and organisation

People sometimes associate the term 'grammar' with the different parts of speech or 'word classes' that words can belong to (adjective, noun, preposition etc.). Materials produced for studying English over the last three decades have, however, reflected and promoted an obsession with another aspect of grammar – the verb phrase (tenses, conditionals, etc.).

The chapters in Part A look at grammar from the starting point of word class, and those in Part B deal with the verb phrase. Parts C and D, however, look at more neglected aspects of grammar, and you may want to take more time to work through these parts of the book progressively and systematically. Each of these four parts begins with a general introduction to the topic.

1

Each chapter in Parts A–D begins with a review of 'Key considerations' relating to its topic. It explores the topic in depth in the subsequent sections, including the 'Typical difficulties for learners' that this area of grammar causes.

Each chapter ends with exercises to help you consolidate what you have learned. These 'Consolidation exercises' use real texts, transcriptions of conversation and examples of learners' writing; possible answers to each of the exercises are also suggested. Part E ('Researching language') encourages you to research how language is used in different contexts, and to evaluate classroom and reference materials. More detailed chapter-by-chapter 'Extension exercises' (and comments on these) can be found on the Cambridge University Press Website http://www.cambridge.org/elt/gelt/extension/.

The second edition

The second edition of *Grammar for English Language Teachers* incorporates a number of innovations, additions and changes.

Access to The Cambridge International Corpus has enabled the author to modify many of the explanations given and to provide new examples. The Cambridge Learner Corpus, similarly, has led to modifications and additions to the 'Typical difficulties for learners' sections of each chapter, and has again furnished additional examples.

Thanks to the invaluable feedback from users of the first edition, substantial changes have been made to the organisation of material in the book: the index has been extended and definitions of all key terms have been incorporated into the text. Cross-referencing within the text has been substantially expanded. In recognition of recent changes in emphasis in linguistics and teaching, Chapter 9 is entirely new. New sections have also been added within several chapters.

Language varieties and language change

The pronunciation and vocabulary of English vary both from region to region of the English-speaking world, and between communities within the same region. To some extent the grammar also varies.

In this book, the main model used is that of educated speakers in the southeast of England. However, this choice is a pragmatic one and is not based on an assumption that this variety of English is superior to others. Without wanting to burden or confuse the book's users, reference is made to other varieties of English (social or geographical) where this seems to be useful.

Like all languages, English is in a constant state of evolution. It is easy enough to look back over the past and to identify which changes were lasting and

significant, and which were ephemeral. However, it is much harder both to identify changes taking place at the present, and to identify how lasting and significant they may be.

As far as possible we have tried to reflect contemporary usage, but a health warning is perhaps necessary. Many people dislike language change and regard innovations in a negative light. In teaching for written examinations, it is generally advisable to avoid recommending learners to adopt recent changes. Thus we will probably teach that *criteria* is a plural form (singular: *criterion*) (see p 13) even though learners may come across *criteria* used as a singular noun. Where such a conservative approach may be the safer option, this is flagged up in the text.

Asterisks

Throughout the book a single asterisk at the beginning of a word, phrase or sentence is used to show that it is an example of incorrect use (e.g. *a rubbish's pile*, *I don't know how you to respond*). An asterisk in brackets is used to show that something is unnatural, unidiomatic or of dubious correctness.

(*) *Have you lunched yet?*

PART A

Words

Introduction to Part A

Words and grammar are often thought of as being separate entities. In fact, in learning any word we are also learning something about its grammar.

Words belong to different grammatical classes (e.g. noun, verb, preposition), and the class of a word determines:

- what other kinds of words we can combine with it.

  Example: *a beautiful day* NOT **a beautifully day*

  Explanation: We use adjectives not adverbs to qualify nouns.

- the order in which we combine words.

  Example: *a beautiful day* NOT **a day beautiful*

  Explanation: We normally put adjectives before the nouns they qualify.

Grammar also determines, for example:

- which form of a word we choose.

  Example: *two days* NOT **two day*

  Explanation: After numbers greater than one we use a plural form of the noun.

  Example: *more beautiful* NOT **beautifuller*

  Explanation: We use *more* to make the comparative form of long adjectives and add *er* to make the comparative form of short adjectives.

As teachers we need to know and to be able to explain and illustrate:

- the grammatical class of words: *beautiful* or *beautifully*?
- the grammar of words: *day* or *days*?
- the implications of 'word grammar': We can't say: **a beautifully day, *a day beautiful, *two day, *beautifuller.*

In Chapters 1–8 we look at words that belong to the following grammatical classes:

	Examples	Chapter
Nouns	*book(s), child(ren), information, life*	1
Articles	*a, an, the*	2
Quantifiers	*any, every, a few, some*	3

	Examples	Chapter
Adjectives	*easy, old, open-ended, possible*	4
Adverbs	*easily, sometimes, very*	5
Comparative forms	*more beautiful, easier, fewer*	6
Superlative forms	*most beautiful, easiest, fewest*	6
Prepositions	*at, in, on top of, since*	7
Verbs	*speak, go, can, will, drinking, been*	8

We look at pronouns in Part C (pp 304, 371–2) not Part A. This is because learners' difficulties are closely related not only to decisions about number and gender but also to:

- judgements about how much information needs to be stated explicitly, and how much can be left out.
- issues of grammatical function (e.g. subject or object).

Chapter 9 focuses on the ways in which words of different grammatical classes combine in use.

Recognising word classes

In some languages the word itself tells us a lot about what class it belongs to (for example, the spelling and pronunciation of the end of a word may show that it is a noun). In English there are very few clues in the word itself, and we usually have to look at the context. The following gives examples of different parts of speech:

adjective   noun   preposition

The   old   woman   walked   slowly   up   another   hill.

verb   article   adverb   quantifier
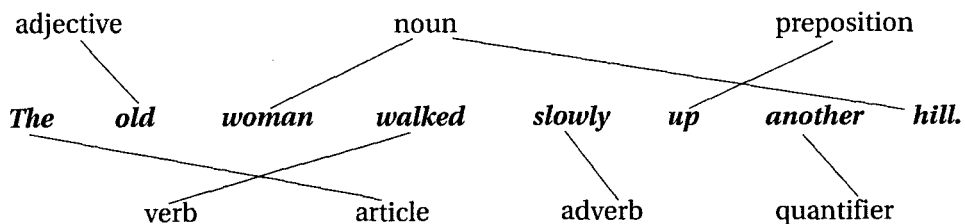
Words that belong to more than one word class

A lot of words can function as a member of one word class in some contexts and as a member of another word class in other contexts.

Examples	Word classes
abstract, adult, antique, green	nouns, adjectives
wonder, rupture, sequence, drive, play, function	nouns, verbs
fast, hard	adjectives, adverbs
around, down, up	adverbs, prepositions
come, given, considering	prepositions, verbs
boring, open, locked	adjectives, verbs

All quantifiers apart from *no* can also function as pronouns.

Quantifier	Pronoun
I saw *several* kangaroos.	He asked for a volunteer and got *several*.
I don't know *many* girls.	Teachers are poorly paid … *many* leave the profession.

Single words and multiword items

The simplest way to define a word is by looking at the written language. If there is a space before and after a group of letters, this group of letters constitutes a word.

If we look at meaning rather than at form, we see that some combinations of two or more words are equivalent to single words. These are multiword items.

fed up (adjective = *unhappy*)

give up (verb = *stop*)

with regard to (preposition = *about*)

Grammar in course materials and in academic grammars

Theoretical or academic grammars use different terms, classes and distinctions from those found in most course materials. While most academic grammars consider articles and quantifiers within the wider class of determiners, and adverbs within the wider context of adverbials, in this book we follow the pragmatic approach of course materials. Thus articles and quantifiers are dealt with separately, in Chapters 2 and 3. We look at single-word adverbs in Chapter 5 but at longer phrases (adverbials) in Chapter 20.

1 Nouns

cat   cats   elite
capacity   dustbin   steak
people   Wednesday

Key considerations

Most learners are more concerned with the meaning of nouns than with their grammar. However, in learning to use a noun, they need to pay attention to a variety of grammatical factors. In particular they need to know whether a noun is countable or uncountable, and if countable, what its plural form is. More generally, learners also need to be able to:

- use nouns to modify other nouns.
- choose and construct appropriate possessive forms.

What are nouns?

What do they do?
The popular definition of a noun is that it 'describes a person, place or thing'. In fact we use nouns to express a range of additional meanings such as concepts, qualities, organisations, communities, sensations and events. Nouns convey a substantial proportion of the information in most texts.

In the previous paragraph, the following words are nouns:

definition, noun, person, place, thing, fact, nouns, range, meanings, concepts, qualities, organisations, communities, sensations, events, Nouns, proportion, information, texts.

What do they look like?
Endings
A small proportion of nouns have identifiable 'noun endings'. These include:

*tradi**tion**, abil**ity**, excell**ence**, signific**ance**, fact**or**, rig**our**.*

Many plural nouns end in *s*, e.g. *cats*.

Proper nouns and capital letters
Words which begin with capital letters and are not at the beginning of sentences are often the names of people, places (towns, countries, etc.) or institutions. These are also called 'proper' nouns.

Lauren and Jack   *Africa*   *International House*

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We also use a capital letter in days of the week, months of the year and the names of nationalities, ethnic groups and languages.

Tuesday   *August*   *Swahili*

Where do nouns come in sentences?

Nouns can:

- act as the subject of a verb: ***Cats** kill mice.*
- act as the object of a verb: *Cats kill **mice**.*
- act as the complement of a verb: *They are **men**.*

They often end a phrase which begins with an article such as *a(n)*, or a quantifier such as *either, any,* or *many.* They also often follow adjectives.

a drunk   *either **way***   *a much older **elite***   *large **mice***

Countable and uncountable nouns

What are countable and uncountable nouns?

Countable or 'unit' nouns ([C]) have a singular and a plural form, e.g. *book* $\Rightarrow$ *books.* Uncountable or 'mass' nouns ([U]) have only one form, e.g. *furniture* NOT **furnitures.*

[C]		[U]
Singular	**Plural**	
*another **biscuit***	*three **apples***	*not much **success***

The distinction between countable and uncountable is based on whether or not we can count (*1, 2, 3, 4 ...*) what the nouns describe. Nouns which describe separate and separable objects (e.g. *book(s), centre(s), computer(s)*) are usually countable, while those which describe liquids, materials, substances and abstract qualities (e.g. *milk, marble, putty, success*) are characteristically uncountable.

Although the distinction between countable and uncountable is based on the reality of what the nouns describe, the distinction is a grammatical one rather than a real one. Some learners of English are surprised to discover that, for example, the following are uncountable:

accommodation, bread, hair, information, money, news, rubbish, spaghetti, travel, weather

Closely related countable and uncountable nouns

Some uncountable nouns have a countable equivalent which is a different word. In this case the countable noun usually describes something more limited or defined.

work [U]: *job* [C]   *travel* [U]: *journey* [C]

The things some uncountable nouns describe can be 'broken up' into countable components.

[U]	[C]
money	pounds, dollars, yen
time	hours, minutes, seconds
furniture	table, chair, desk

With some uncountable nouns we can use particular words to itemise or count what they describe.

three **blades** of grass   an **item** of news

Nouns which can be countable as well as uncountable

Some nouns are countable with one meaning, and uncountable with a different meaning.

*We got lost in a **wood**.* [C]   ***Wood** burns more easily than coal.* [U]

Sometimes countable and uncountable forms represent two closely connected uses of one word.

*I told her a few **truths** about herself.* [C]   *We'll never learn the **truth**.* [U]

Some nouns that were originally plural are becoming uncountable.

the **data** are ⇒ the **data** is   the **media** are ⇒ the **media** is

We can use a lot of generally uncountable nouns as countable nouns, for example, to describe:

- a kind/type of something.

  *a new French **cheese**   a fresh orange **juice***

- a quantity/unit of something.

  *a **beer**   two **sugars***

Words which come before and after countable and uncountable nouns

Whether a noun is singular (countable), plural (countable) or uncountable determines, among other factors, which words we use before and after it.

Before the noun	[C] Singular	[C] Plural	[U]
indefinite articles *(a, an)*	*a* book	—	—
numbers	*one* book	*two* people	—
certain quantifiers	*each/either* book	*both/many* people	*much/a little* interest

After the noun	[C] Singular	[C] Plural	[U]
singular verb forms	a child *has*	—	information *is*
plural verb forms	—	insects *are*	—

Choosing a singular or plural verb form according to the kind of noun which precedes it is an aspect of agreement. It is sometimes confusing for learners that plural nouns end in *s* and that singular verbs also end in *s*.

Regular and irregular plural forms

Regular forms

Most countable nouns have a plural form that ends in *s*.

Irregular forms

Many irregular plural forms involve a change in vowel.

$man \Rightarrow men$ $tooth \Rightarrow teeth$ $foot \Rightarrow feet$

Learners sometimes find it difficult to remember which form is singular and which is plural.

Some nouns have the same singular and plural forms.

a sheep $\Rightarrow$ *two sheep*   *a series* $\Rightarrow$ *two series*

Several nouns which end in *s* fall into this category, e.g. *a/various **means*** of *doing something, a/some **crossroads***.

A few irregular plural forms are very different from the singular form. The most common and problematic example is *person* $\Rightarrow$ *people*.

Nouns which have been absorbed into English from other languages sometimes keep their original plural form.

plateau $\Rightarrow$ *plateaux*   *cherub* $\Rightarrow$ *cherub**im***   *mafioso* $\Rightarrow$ *mafiosi*

A few words can be treated as either uncountable or plural.

> *Politics **is** about people./Nobody knows what his politics **are**.*

In these cases different shades of meaning may be involved. *Politics*, for example, is more often uncountable when the word refers to the general science of politics, and plural when it has a more specific reference.

A few nouns exist only in a plural form (e.g. *arms* (in the military sense), *arrears, clothes*).

Language change

The standard plural form of some words, usually with a Latin or Greek root, is changing from its original form to an anglicised one.

> *foci* ⇒ *focus**es***   *syllabi* ⇒ *syllabus**es***

The original plural form of some words is coming into use as singular, although not everyone is comfortable with this change and it should, perhaps, be avoided in formal examinations.

> *a criteri**a***   *a phenomen**a***

Using dictionaries

Because there is no way of telling whether a singular noun has a regular or an irregular plural form, we need to encourage learners to use a dictionary as a matter of course to check and learn the plural spelling and pronunciation of words that they come across.

Quantifying phrases

A number/range/variety of …

We use these expressions before plural nouns to express something about quantity or diversity, e.g. *a variety of issues.* If the expression is followed by a verb, this is also often in a plural form.

> *A wide range of people **were** invited.*

However, some people prefer to use a singular form of the verb, particularly in formal written English.

> *A variety of issues **was** raised.*

Phrases which specify a container or grouping are usually followed by a singular verb.

> *A bunch of flowers **is** like a kiss.*

A (small/large etc.) amount of …

We use this phrase only before uncountable nouns. We usually qualify *amount* with an adjective such as *large* or *considerable*. Phrases including *amount* are followed by singular verbs.

> *the right amount of pasta*

A (small/large etc.*) quantity/proportion/majority of …*

We can use these phrases before uncountable or plural nouns. We usually qualify *quantity* with an adjective such as *large* or *considerable*.

A pair of …

Some nouns which exist only in a plural form can be qualified by *a pair of* (e.g. *a pair of trousers/scissors/glasses*).

Collective nouns

Collective nouns are words which represent groups of people, e.g. *the **team**, the Conservative **Party***. These nouns are singular in that we can talk about *an awful government* or *a big staff*.

Some people believe that these nouns should always be followed by singular verb forms (e.g. *the staff **was** happy*) and that singular pronouns should be used (e.g. *the team won **its** first match*). However, many people use plural verb forms and pronouns.

> *The management team **want** to make **themselves** more accessible.*

People sometimes choose either singular or plural verb forms according to whether they are thinking in terms of a unified 'body' or of the various people who make it up.

> *The army provid**es** an excellent career.*
> *The army **are** investigating the incident.*

The names or initials of many organisations (e.g. *West Hatch High School, NATO*) also function like collective nouns.

> *Coca Cola are rapidly expanding.*
> *The UN are sending in peace-keeping troops.*

Combining nouns

Using nouns to modify nouns

We frequently use two nouns together.

> *an insect repellent*   *a computer virus*   *a daffodil bulb*

The first, 'modifying', noun, or 'modifier', usually tells us what kind of a thing the second noun describes (an *insect repellent* is a kind of repellent; a *computer virus* is a kind of virus). Teachers sometimes refer to the modifying noun as an adjective, but this may confuse learners. Modifying nouns often end in -*ing* (e.g. *drinking fountain*) and the second noun often ends in *er* (e.g. *office manager*).

> ⋯⋰
> modifiers
> p 295

When two nouns are frequently used together, they may be separated by a hyphen (-), e.g. *a battle-ground*, or written as a one-word compound noun (e.g. *weekend, dustbin*). Learners may want to use a dictionary to check this.

We normally stress the first, modifying, noun in these noun–noun combinations.

Combinations of more than two nouns also occur, frequently, for example, in newspaper headlines.

> *London tax increase shock*

Possessive forms

Possessive *'s*

We add *'s* to nouns or noun phrases (groups of words containing a noun that can replace a single noun) to show that what follows belongs to them (e.g. *the teacher's car*).

The last word in a noun phrase is not always a noun. However, we can still attach *'s* to the last word in the phrase.

> *It's that girl I told you about's book.*

Although we call this form the 'possessive *'s* ', we add *'s* to the end of nouns and noun phrases to express a number of relationships as well as possession.

Possession:	*Jackie's disk*
Family relationships:	*the other girl's twin*
Parts of the body:	*the patient's leg*
Creation:	*Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers', Einstein's theory*
Places:	*Asia's largest capital cities*
Time:	*two days' holiday*
Category:	*children's shoes*
Attribution:	*John's decision, the parents' fault*

Native speakers as well as learners often have difficulty in determining the position of the apostrophe (') in writing.

We place an apostrophe before the possessive *'s* on singular nouns (e.g. *a girl's book, a man's best friend*), and on irregular plural nouns (e.g. *The People's Republic, women's clothes*).

We generally add *'s* to singular nouns which already end in *s* (e.g. *Bridget Jones's Diary*, *St James's Palace*). However, some people prefer to add just an apostrophe after the final *s* (*James' book*). This is also correct.

The pronunciation rules for *'s* are the same as those for regular plural endings.

'Something of something'

We can use the 'something of something' structure as an alternative to *'s*, to express family relationships, creation and place.

Family relationships: *the twin of the other girl*

Creation: *the fifth symphony of Beethoven*

Place: *the largest capital cities of Asia*

We generally choose this alternative when we want to draw attention to what we put at the end of the phrase (e.g. *Beethoven, Asia*). It is also more common in formal and written English.

When we are concerned with abstract and inanimate things, we can't use *'s* – we say *the depths of despair* and *a pile of rubbish* or *a rubbish pile*, NOT **the despair's depths* or **a rubbish's pile*.

We also use this structure in expressions of position (e.g. *at the side of the house*) and quantity.

We generally don't use this structure to express possession (e.g. *Jackie's disk* NOT **the disk of Jackie*).

> ···⋮·
> quantifying phrases
> pp 13· 14

Pronunciation and spelling

Pronunciation

Regular forms

The regular plural ending has three possible pronunciations.

+ /ɪz/

We add /ɪz/ to singular nouns which end in the following sounds.

/tʃ/ *churches*   /dʒ/ *judges*   /s/ *passes*   /z/ *mazes*

/ʃ/ *wishes*   /ʒ/ *rouges*

+ /s/

We add /s/ to singular nouns which end in the following sounds.

/p/ *lips*   /t/ *parts*   /k/ *locks*

The sounds /p/, /t/, /k/, /θ/ and /f/ are all voiceless, i.e. we say them without making a 'humming' noise in the throat.

+ /z/

We add /z/ to words which end in all other sounds.

/n/ *tons*   /g/ *frogs*   /v/ *waves*   /əʊ/ *toes*

At some point everyone needs to learn when we pronounce regular endings as /ɪz/ (e.g. *oranges*).

Words that end in /f/ and /θ/

Singular nouns which end in /f/ or /θ/ have a tendency to change their pronunciation in plural forms. Sometimes this is optional.

/f/ ⇒ /v/   *roofs:* /ru:fs/ or /ru:vz/
/θ/ ⇒ /ð/   *baths:* /bɑ:θs/ or /bɑ:ðz/

However, some words that end in /f/ and /θ/ never change their pronunciation in the plural form. This includes all singular nouns that end in *ff*.

puff ⇒ *puffs:* /pʌfs/
cloth ⇒ *cloths:* /klɒθs/

Teaching

Although course materials often also pay attention to the distinction between /s/ and /z/, many learners automatically make this distinction. Even if they don't, this rarely leads to misunderstanding – teachers sometimes choose to gloss over this distinction in practice.

Using dictionaries

Learners need to use a dictionary to check the pronunciation of plural forms of words that end in *th* and *f*.

Spelling

Regular plural forms end in the letter *s*. Sometimes we just add *s* to the singular form (*pen* ⇒ *pens*), but we also sometimes add *es* and we change the spelling of some singular words which end in *y* to *ies*.

+ es

We add *es* to singular nouns which end in the following letters or combinations of letters.

ch: churches   *s: passes*   *x: boxes*   *sh: wishes*   *z: buzzes*

We also add *es* to some singular nouns which end in *o*.

potatoes   *tomatoes*

y + i + es

We change *y* to *i* and add *es* to singular nouns which end in a combination of consonant + *y*.

party ⇒ *parties*   *lady* ⇒ *ladies*

f(e) + v + es

Some singular nouns which end in *f* end in *ves* in the plural form.

loaf ⇒ *loaves*   *leaf* ⇒ *leaves*

Most singular nouns which end in a combination of vowel + *fe* end in *ves* in the plural form.

wife ⇒ *wives*   *life* ⇒ *lives*

Using dictionaries

Learners need to use a dictionary to check whether we add *s* or *es* to any particular words ending in *o*. They also need to check the plural form of singular words that end in *f* or *fe*.

Typical difficulties for learners

Comprehension

For many learners, not knowing the meaning of specific nouns they come across is a major problem. Problems with the grammar of nouns, however, rarely impedes understanding.

Speaking and writing

Word endings

Many adjectives have related noun forms (e.g. *beautiful: beauty, cautious: caution*). Learners sometimes make plausible and intelligent guesses about the form of these nouns, but their guess may be mistaken (e.g. **jealousness, *angriness, *youngtime*).

Capital letters

Mistakes vary and are often influenced by whether or not the learners' languages use capital letters and how these are used. Learners whose first language uses the same script as English often transpose rules from their own language to English (e.g. **I speak french*).

Countable and uncountable nouns

Learners sometimes use uncountable nouns as though they were countable (e.g. *an information, *a good weather, *two inputs, *How many money?). Uncountable nouns that end in *s* are particularly prone to being treated as plural (e.g. *The news are good.).

Learners may be misled by their own language, e.g. the equivalent of an uncountable word in English such as *money* may be countable, or something may simply seem logical to them (e.g. *information* 'ought' to be countable).

They sometimes use plural nouns as though they were singular (e.g. *The people is kind.).

With *people* there are the additional problems that:

- the word doesn't look like its singular equivalent (*person*).
- some languages have a very similar word which is singular (e.g. French *peuple*).
- with a different but related meaning, *people* can be singular in English (e.g. *The French are a people who enjoy good food.*).

They sometimes use plural nouns as though they were uncountable (e.g. *Her clothes was torn.).

Choosing the wrong plural form

Learners may make regular plural forms of nouns that are irregular (e.g. *a lot of womans, *three childrens).

Using nouns to modify nouns

Many learners avoid placing two nouns together in any circumstances, preferring to create (inappropriate) alternatives.

They sometimes over-use 's (e.g. *a computer's keyboard, *a wine's glass). They sometimes use 'something of something' (e.g. *a siren of ambulance).

Learners who do use nouns to modify other nouns may make the modifying noun plural (e.g. *some pencils sharpeners) when in fact (like adjectives) they always remain singular.

Learners may construct these noun–noun combinations correctly but place the stress on the second word of the pair. The listener will have to work harder to understand and, in some cases, may fail to do so.

Choosing the wrong possessive form

Learners often avoid the 's form (e.g. *the book of my friend).

The form this learner has chosen is used to express other kinds of relationship in English (e.g. *glass of water*) and may be a translation of how possession is expressed in her own language.

Unusual cases

Learners are sometimes puzzled by the very irregular forms and either are reluctant to use them or make mistakes. An obvious example of this is the word *news*. Because *news* ends in *s*, they assume that it is countable and plural (e.g. **the news are ...*).

Quantifying phrases

Native speakers sometimes use *amount* with plural nouns but this is generally considered to be incorrect (e.g. **amount of people*). We usually tell learners to use *amount* only with uncountable nouns.

Consolidation exercises

Pronunciation

1 Divide the following nouns into two categories:

   a Those whose plural form is pronounced /s/ or /z/.

   b Those whose plural form is pronounced /ɪz/.

   knife   lunch   move   orange   top   wedge   wish

2 What rule underlies your choices?

3 Divide the following nouns into three categories:

   a Those whose plural form is pronounced /z/.

   b Those whose plural form is pronounced /s/.

   c Those whose plural form can be pronounced either /s/ or /z/.

   bath   cough   hearth   mouth   pin   room
   cloth   growth   lock   pillow   pit   scruff

4 What rule underlies your choices?

Language in context

Many nouns that are generally uncountable can often also be used as countable nouns,
e.g. *Would you like a coffee?*

1 Look at the nouns in the two boxes below.

fish, exposure, meat, steak, breast, lamb	*unhappiness, dissatisfaction, society, life, understanding, misunderstanding, soil*

   a For each noun decide whether it is: generally countable [C], generally uncountable [U], or both [C, U].

   b If you answered *both* for any of these words, how is the meaning affected by whether the use is countable or uncountable?

2 Two texts follow. The first is from a cookery book and the second text is from a book that is critical of psychotherapy. Read the texts and then answer the questions below.

> Grilling is a fierce and uncompromising technique, since the food is cooked by direct exposure to intense heat. Only prime cuts of meat can stand up to this barrage of heat and still emerge tender and juicy. Thus steaks, chops and cutlets are the obvious choice, although a cheaper cut like breast of lamb can be braised first, then grilled, to give a crisp exterior.
>
> Fish presents no such problems, however, since it is never tough. Even the cheaper, oily fish such as sardines and mackerel are good cooked in this way.

> Most therapists believe that the unhappiness over which patients come to therapy is not socially caused, but is self-created, that the patients are at least partially responsible for the dissatisfaction that is felt. The therapist will often state that he or she is not in a position to alter society, to change a patient's past, or to intervene in the life of the patient. What the therapist claims to offer is understanding. But implicit in this offer is the belief that the understanding is an internal one, an understanding of what the patient has brought to the situation to create unhappiness or at least to intensify it. Here we have a rich soil for creating deep and lasting misunderstandings, and even greater misery.

a Check your answers to **1 a** to see if you predicted the countable or uncountable uses of the same words here.

b Explain any uses you didn't predict.

c Underline all the nouns in the texts.

d Identify nouns which are used here as countable nouns.

e Identify nouns which are used here as uncountable nouns.

Changing attitudes

Look at the following and answer the questions about the underlined words.

(i) The <u>media is</u> becoming very interested.
(ii) <u>Ipswich Town FC have</u> finally made the top rank.
(iii) My <u>criteria</u> for making this decision is personal.
(iv) They have produced several <u>syllabuses</u>.

1 Do you use this form yourself?

2 Would you consider the form a mistake if produced by an educated native speaker?

3 Would you correct the form if produced by a learner of English?

Possessive forms

Study the student's composition on p 311 ('James knew very well …')

a Identify two instances where the writer has used a possessive form oddly or incorrectly.

b Write out the correct forms.

Answers to consolidation exercises

Pronunciation

1 **a** *knives, moves, tops*

   b *wedges, oranges, wishes, lunches*

2 The singular form of the words in **b** above all end in one of the sounds which is followed by /ɪz/ in the plural form: *wedge, orange:* /dʒ/; *wish:* /ʃ/; *lunch:* /tʃ/.

3 **a** *pins, pillows, rooms*

   b *locks, pits, coughs, cloths, scruffs, growths*

   c *hearths, mouths, baths*

4 The singular form of the words in **a** ends in a voiced sound (i.e. one which is accompanied by 'humming' in the throat), and those in **b** end in a voiceless sound. The singular form of the words in **c** end in /θ/. Some words which end in /θ/ have two possible plural pronunciations: /θs/ or /ðz/.

Language in context

1 **a** The following is a possible answer to this question.

Generally countable	Generally uncountable	Both
breast	unhappiness, dissatisfaction, understanding, soil, meat	society, life, fish, exposure, lamb, steak, misunderstanding

   b The meaning of *life, fish, lamb, steak* and *misunderstanding* as countable nouns is closely related to the meaning of the words as uncountable nouns. On the other hand *a society* is quite different from *society*, and *an exposure* is different from *exposure*.

2 **a** *Understanding* (second and third uses), *misunderstanding* and *soil* are all used as countable nouns in the second text. *Understanding* and *soil* are countable to suggest a *kind* of understanding and a *kind* of soil.

   Misunderstandings is plural (countable) to suggest particular instances of misunderstanding.

Countable nouns	Uncountable nouns
technique, cuts, barrage, steaks, chops, cutlets, choice, cut, exterior, problems, sardines, fish (second instance), *way*	*grilling, food, exposure, heat, meat, heat, breast, lamb, fish* (first instance), *mackerel*
therapists, patients, therapist, position, patient, past, life, patient, therapist, offer, belief, understanding (x 2), patient, situation, soil, misunderstandings	*unhappiness, therapy, dissatisfaction, society, understanding, unhappiness, misery*

Some of the nouns in the 'countable' column are clearly countable (for example, they are used in a plural form like *problems* or are preceded by *a* or *an* like *a cut* and *an understanding*). Some of the nouns in the 'uncountable' column are clearly uncountable (for example, they are followed by a singular verb but are not preceded by *a* or *an*).

However, in other cases the text offers no conclusive evidence (and it makes no difference to the meaning), e.g. *the food, this barrage, this offer*. The second instance of *fish* and *belief* have been classified here as countable but it could be argued that they are *un*countable.

Changing attitudes

(i) Few people use *media* as the plural form of *medium*. We generally use it as an uncountable noun meaning *the press* (particularly TV and radio).

(ii) This use is quite normal among native speakers, even in formal contexts. However, learners preparing for conservative (written) examinations should consider the names of companies and organisations to be singular.

(iii) Although this is often heard, many people still consider this to be incorrect (we generally still use *criterion* as the singular form, and *criteria* as the plural).

(iv) Most people consider this the standard and correct form. Some people use *syllabi* as the plural of *syllabus*.

Possessive forms

a the character of Peter; the help of James

b Peter's character; James' help

2 Articles

Key considerations

Every time we use a noun we have to decide whether or not to use an article, and if we decide that an article is necessary, we then have to decide which one. We base these choices on a complex interaction of factors including meaning, shared knowledge, context and whether the noun is singular, plural or uncountable.

In many cases, however, fixed expressions and idioms require us to use a particular article (or not to use an article at all), apparently contradicting these 'basic rules'. Knowing these expressions is a significant factor in using articles correctly.

In helping learners to understand and use articles (particularly if their first language is a non-European language and does not have a broadly equivalent article system), we need to focus their attention constantly on how articles are used in texts they read, beginning with the most accessible and generalisable principles. There is little point in correcting mistakes and giving learners practice exercises and activities until they have developed a good awareness of how we use articles.

What are articles?

What do they do?

Like quantifiers, articles belong to the wider class of 'determiner', words or phrases that come at the beginning of a noun phrase and signal whether the information is new or familiar, or which tell us something about quantity. We deal with articles separately here because this is how they are normally taught in course materials.

What do they look like?

The articles are:

- indefinite article: *a* and *an*.

- definite article: *the*.

We can think of *a* and *an* not as two words but as two forms of one word. This is because fixed pronunciation rules determine our choice between them.

The term 'zero article' is sometimes used for instances where we leave articles out (see *[ ]* on the following pages).

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Idioms and other fixed expressions

In a lot of idiomatic expressions articles are used or left out for no apparent reason other than that they belong or don't belong in the expression. Learners need to learn these like items of vocabulary, and have to remember the whole phrase, ignoring general rules or sub-rules (see below).

a bit of	*in a hurry*	*make a start*	*have a drink*
on the coast	*in the pink*	*off the record*	*do a turn*
go to the wall	*play the blues*	*through the nose*	
in [ ] debt	*on [ ] loan*	*out of [ ] action*	

chunks p 124

It has been estimated that idioms account for roughly 10% of instances of article use or omission. The use of *the* in approximately another 10% of instances occurs in expressions of position such as *the back, the centre, the beginning, the end*. Learners generally learn these as 'chunks'.

Where do they come in sentences?

Articles are part of noun phrases and come at the beginning of them, either immediately before a noun or an adjective, or before a combination of adverb, adjective and noun.

I heard a noise. (noun)

I heard an eerie noise. (adjective + noun)

I heard the strangely muffled noise (of an animal in pain).
(adverb + adjective + noun)

How do we choose articles?

Singular, plural and uncountable nouns; other determiners

The kind of noun that follows the article affects our choice.

We can leave out articles before:

- plural nouns: *[ ] Dreams often come true.*
- uncountable nouns: *Give me [ ] money.*

We can only leave an article out before a singular noun if we replace it with another determiner:

- possessive adjectives: *her brother.*
- demonstrative adjectives: *that book.*
- many quantifiers: *any occasion, each day.*

This table shows the choices we can make.

	Singular nouns	Plural nouns	Uncountable nouns
a/an	*a* book	—	—
no article	—	[ ] books	[ ] rice
the	*the* book	*the* books	*the* rice

Basic rules, shared knowledge and context

A/an: introducing what is new

We use *a/an* with singular nouns to indicate that something is not common ground, to announce that we are introducing something new, something unexpected or something that our listener/reader is unaware of.

For example, imagine we meet by chance in the street. I'm upset and I blurt out *I've just seen an accident.* I choose *an* (and not *the*) because this event is something you don't know about. It tells you that I don't expect you to look around you or to root around in your memory to identify which accident I'm referring to. It's unfamiliar to you.

The: indicating 'common ground'

We use *the* to signal to readers or listeners that they know or will soon know what we are referring to. It triggers the listener or reader to search for the most obvious area of common ground in order to identify this. Context is usually the most important factor in helping us to complete this search successfully.

We use *the* with a noun to refer backwards or forwards in a text or conversation, and also to refer to our shared experience or general knowledge. In each of the examples which follow, *the* (*the children*) signals that we know *which* children. We use the context to help us to identify who they are:

- referring backwards.

  When I was out I passed a young couple with two little girls and a boy. I thought I knew the parents but I didn't recognise the children at all. (i.e. the two little girls and a boy)

- referring forwards.

  Take prizes for the children who win. (i.e. those children who will win)

- external reference.

  Shouldn't we pick up the children soon? (i.e. our children – shared knowledge)

  Herod killed the children. (i.e. the Israelite children in the Bible story – general knowledge)

We also use *the* when something is immediately defined.

The next-door children are a pain (i.e. those who live next door)

No article – generalisations

We leave out articles before plural and uncountable nouns when we are referring to something general.

I usually have [ ] sandwiches for lunch.

[ ] English parsley has curly leaves.

Rules of thumb

Course materials often make little reference to these key basic rules, instead providing more specific rules of thumb, particularly with regard to using *a/an* and *the*. Some learners may find these helpful, but they can also make the basis for choosing articles unnecessarily complicated.

They teach that we use *a/an*:

- with *there is*: *There's **a** beer in the fridge.*
- the first time we mention something: *I bought **a** sandwich and **a** cake. The cake was mouldy.*
- after *have* and *have got*: *Have you got **a** mountain bike?*
- in naming things: *It's **a** rhinoceros.*
- with occupations: *I'm **a** teacher.*

They teach that we use *the*:

- when we have already mentioned what we're talking about.

  *I bought a sandwich and a cake. **The** cake was mouldy.*

- when there is only one of something.

  ***The** Moon* (i.e. the moon which revolves around our planet) *Can you lay **the** table?* (i.e. the table in the room we're both in)

- with defining relative clauses.

  *Shoot **the** kid who derailed the train.*

- with *of* – before something which is defined or restricted by a preposition phrase beginning with *of*.

  *We're enjoying **the** benefits of early retirement.*

- in superlative expressions: *It's **the** best city in the country.*
- in comparative expressions with *same*: *Give me **the** same as usual, please.*
- with particular adjectives: ***the** first, **the** next, **the** last.*

'Sub-rules' which contradict the 'basic rules'

The problem with the 'basic rules' for choosing articles is that there are plenty of exceptions, and learners need to learn additional 'sub-rules' that may contradict these.

A/an

We use *a/an* with the sense of 'every' in expressions of time and quantity such as the following:

*Forty times **an** hour.*   *Thirty dirhams **a** kilo.*

The
Leisure activities/forms of entertainment/travel

We use *the* in lots of fixed expressions, where there is no obvious element of common ground at all. Learners may find it helpful to consider these in 'topic' groups.

Entertainment:	*I went to*	*the cinema.*
		the pub.
		the shops.
Transport:	*I arrived at*	*the airport.*
		the bus stop.
		the station.
Musical instruments:	*I play*	*the piano.*
(British English only)		*the violin.*
		the acoustic guitar.

Proper nouns

We use *the* in the names of items in the following categories:

Rivers:	*the Ganges*
Mountain ranges:	*the Andes*
Oceans and seas:	*the Atlantic*
Deserts:	*the Sahara*
Groups of islands:	*the Maldives*
Hotels:	*the Hilton*
Cinemas:	*the Odeon*
Political bodies:	*the Labour Party, the Government*

Countries whose names include political terms or plural nouns:	**the** United Kingdom, **the** Czech Republic, **the** Philippines
Newspapers:	**The**[1] Guardian

[1] *The* is part of the title of this newspaper and so is capitalised. When no article appears in the title of a newspaper, we use one in referring to the paper: *I read it in the Daily Mirror.*

No article
'Belonging' to institutions
We don't use an article before the name of certain kinds of institutions (*hospital, church, school, prison, college, university, sea* meaning 'the navy', etc.) when we want to show that someone is part of that institution.

> *Is she still in [ ] hospital?* (i.e. as a patient)

> *He went to [ ] sea when he was only fourteen.* (i.e. as a sailor)

Meals
We don't usually use an article in expressions which involve using the names of meals to describe an occasion.

> *She came to [ ] lunch.*

Time expressions
We don't use an article in most expressions of time.

> *next [ ] week*   *last [ ] year*   *on [ ] Sunday*   *at [ ] six o'clock*

Work, home and *bed*
We leave out *the* after verbs of motion in expressions with *work, home* and *bed* when we use these words to describe the concept rather than a particular place or piece of furniture.

> *She left [ ] work.*   *I got [ ] home.*   *She went to [ ] bed.*

We also leave out *the* after *be*.

> *She is at [ ] work/home.*   *She is in [ ] bed.*

Proper nouns
There is generally no article in the names of:

- people.

  > *[ ] Dominique*   *[ ] Nelson Mandela*

- places such as villages, towns, cities, parks, streets, woods, forests.

  > *[ ] Knoxville*   *[ ] Parsonage Lane*   *[ ] Sherwood Forest*

Pronunciation

a and *an*

Whether we use *a* /ə/ or *an* /ən/ depends on the pronunciation of the sound which immediately follows. The key factor is whether or not this sound is a consonant (/j/ and /w/ are considered consonants when they precede a vowel).

The spelling itself is unimportant. Even though *umbrella* and *union* begin with the same letter (*u*), and so do *hour* and *horse* (*h*), we say:

an umbrella (the first sound of *umbrella* is /ʌ/)

a union (the first sound of *union* is /j/)

an hour (the first sound of *hour* is /aʊ/)

a horse (the first sound of *horse* is /h/)

Most people pronounce /h/ in *hotel* but some people say *an hotel*: /ən əʊtel/.

the

We pronounce *the* according to whether or not the word which follows begins with a consonant.

Before a consonant we pronounce *the* /ðə/. Before a vowel we pronounce it /ðɪ/, and sometimes add a linking /j/.

| Before a consonant: | *the problem:* /ðə prɒbləm/ |
| Before a vowel: | *the egg:* /ðɪ eg/ *or* /ðɪ jeg/ |

Stressed and isolated forms

We don't usually stress articles but if they are stressed or if we are isolating the word for some purpose, we also pronounce them differently.

	a	*an*	*the*
Stressed or isolated form	/ei/	/æn/	/ðiː/
Neutral form	/ə/	/ən/	/ðə/ or /ðɪ/

*I didn't say **two** tickets, I said **a** (/eɪ/) ticket.*

*You're not **the** (/ðiː/) Tom Stoppard, are you?*

Typical difficulties for learners

Many languages have no article system. Learners whose first language is one of these usually find it particularly difficult to grasp how articles are used in English.

Comprehension

We often pronounce articles in a very weak form, and learners may fail to recognise or distinguish them, even when they know and can predict where they should occur. For this reason, learners who listen to a lot of spoken English but who rarely read may be at a disadvantage in learning how articles are used.

Serious misunderstanding is rarely caused either by failing to hear articles or by not knowing the rules that govern how we use them. However, learners have to work much harder to understand what other people say or write if they fail to notice or understand the signals that articles give and the help they provide in processing information.

We can help learners by drawing attention to articles and to their functions in materials they use, and by guiding them to distinguish them in their very weakened forms in rapidly spoken English.

Speaking and writing

How serious are problems with articles?

Individual mistakes in using articles rarely lead to serious problems of communication. However, when learners consistently make mistakes in using them, their readers or listeners have to work much harder to understand.

Reasons for making mistakes

Learners often make mistakes because they don't know or haven't internalised the rules, or they haven't learned the fixed expressions. They may also transfer rules for using articles in their own language, inappropriately, to English.

Missing articles out

Even when learners do know the rules they may miss out articles in the struggle to communicate and to remember and use the correct information-carrying words. Indefinite articles are particularly likely to get 'squeezed out' in these circumstances.

   *Have you got pen?   **I'd like to buy new car.*

Learners may also miss out articles in certain expressions where they are missed out in their own languages. *A/an* before occupations is a frequent casualty.

   *She is tax inspector.

Using articles where they aren't needed

Problems arise because learners don't know fixed expressions or relevant 'sub-rules'.

I didn't have a lunch yesterday.
I watched a television.

Learners may also use *the* in generalisations (in many European languages definite articles are normally used for this purpose).

She likes the sport.
The international tourism has benefited many countries.

Other mistakes may be the result of not realising that a noun is uncountable. Learners may treat uncountable nouns as though they are singular and therefore require an article.

She plays the tennis.   *She has a flu.*   *It was a good fun.*

Mistakes in using an article before a possessive adjective are usually made by people whose first language (e.g. Italian) requires this. This mistake is common also among Turkish learners.

Where is the my book?

Using *one* instead of *a/an*

In many languages the equivalent of *one* can be used to express indefiniteness before singular nouns. Learners may transfer this to English.

We went to one party last night.

Using *a* instead of *an*

Learners may forget to use *an* before a word beginning with a vowel.

They reached a agreement.

Consolidation exercises

Language in context
The text which follows describes an unreliable workman. The numbers indicate where articles have been used or left out. For each number explain the use (or non-use) of the article.

> He was a (1) glum, unsociable person with a (2) raucous voice and (3) very thick eyebrows, and as a (4) mason he suffered from the (5) defect that he could not be depended on. He would promise to start (6) work on a (7) certain day, all the (8) furniture would be moved to the (9) far end of the (10) house, and then he would not turn up.

Learners' English
In the first paragraph below, a learner of English has written about a trip to the cinema, and the second is about a TV programme she had seen. The numbers indicate mistakes and especially interesting instances of how she uses articles. In each case identify correct alternatives and speculate about her use of articles.

> The (1) last week I decided to go to a (2) cinema. It was difficult to choose an interesting film which I could understand without a (3) problem. I looked in a (4) newspaper and found a film. It was 'Cinema Paradiso'. The actors played in (5) Italian Language. I don't understand the Italian language but fortunately the subtitles were written in English. It is a wonderful film about many interesting aspects of the world of cinema and the (6) life.
>
> I watched on a (7) TV about the (8) tuberculosis. It was (9) very interesting film. Many years ago they had to go in the (10) hospital. It was like a (11) jail. At this time many people were treated among the (12) family.

Answers to consolidation exercises

Language in context
(1) This is introducing new information. The noun (*person*) is singular.

(2) This is introducing new information. The noun (*voice*) is singular.

(3) Although this is introducing new information, the noun (*eyebrows*) is plural and so no article is needed.

(4) This is introducing new information and the noun (*mason*) is singular. In some languages *a/an* would be left out before the name of an occupation (*mason*).

(5) *the* signals that this is not any defect, but a particular one. Since no prior mention has been made of defects, this alerts us to search for 'qualifying' information which we find in the following relative clause (*that he could not be depended on*).

(6) We leave out articles in many expressions which include *work* (e.g. *begin/start/finish work*).

(7) *on a certain day* contains a fixed expression (*a certain …*). We always use *a certain* before singular nouns (e.g. *at a certain time*, *in a certain place*) and we do not use an

article when we use *certain* with this meaning before plural or uncountable nouns (e.g. *at [ ] certain times*; *in [ ] certain weather*).

(8) *the* signals that this is not any furniture, but particular furniture. Since no prior mention has been made of furniture, this alerts us to search for 'qualifying' information, and from the context we conclude that this is the furniture in the house that he has been engaged to work on.

(9) *the far end* of is a fixed expression. This use of *the* can also be explained by the fact that *the far end* is qualified by *of* …

(10) *the* signals that this is not any house, but a particular instance. Since no prior mention has been made of houses, this alerts us to search for 'qualifying' information, and from the context we conclude that this is the house that he has been engaged to work on.

Learners' English

(1) The learner is referring to the previous week and should have written *Last week*. *The last week* would be appropriate in a context where she wished to refer to the final week of an established period of time (e.g. *We didn't have very good weather on our holiday but **the** last week was dry*). The learner may be translating literally from her own language.

(2) This is not incorrect but it is unidiomatic. We normally talk of *going to **the** cinema* or *theatre*, thinking of the act of seeing a film or a play.

This learner may, however, be acting on the principle that we use *a* before singular nouns when the information is 'new'. After all, *I decided to go to **a** museum* is completely idiomatic.

(3) A teacher might be tempted to correct this to something like *without any problems* or *with no problems*, both of which are more accurate in that she is unlikely to have only one problem. However, the expression itself is an odd one and might be a literal translation from the learner's first language. A more idiomatic way of expressing her meaning might be something like *without too many difficulties*.

(4) This is not incorrect but it is unidiomatic. We normally refer to the act of *reading/ looking in/consulting **the** newspaper* (fixed expressions). The 'common ground' principle would lead a learner who didn't know this to use *a/an*.

(5) The learner probably wants to say that the actors *spoke Italian* or that the film was *in Italian*. She may not know these set phrases and may not realise that *Italian* can be a noun, acting as the name of the language.

(6) This is incorrect, at least if the learner intends to refer to *life* generally, in which case no article should be used.

(7) She wants to say that she saw a programme on TV about tuberculosis, but lacks the knowledge and command of appropriate set phrases (e.g. *watch [ ] television* and *on [ ] television*). In fact the meaning is quite clear, and her use of *a* follows the 'not common ground' principle.

(8) This is general and needs no article. The effect of *the* is to alert our sensors for 'common ground', and it is disconcerting to discover (from the context) that there is none.

(9) Given that the learner applies the rule for using indefinite articles before *TV* (albeit inappropriately in this instance), it is perhaps surprising to find a singular noun without any article (or other determiner) here. Perhaps she leaves out *a* because there are already two words before the noun (*very interesting film*).

(10) The learner probably doesn't know that we don't use an article when we describe 'belonging' to an institution. As in the case of *tuberculosis* she chooses *the*. Perhaps she is influenced by expressions such as *go to **the** cinema*, ***the** pub*, etc.

(11-12) In these two instances the articles are used correctly. (12) is an idiomatic use (one might expect *among their families*) and perhaps the learner absorbed this or picked it up from the programme itself.

Grammar for English Language Teachers encourages teachers to appreciate the range of factors which affect grammatical choices, but also introduces the 'rules of thumb' presented to learners in course materials.

Consolidation exercises provide an opportunity for teachers to test the rules against real language use and to evaluate classroom and reference materials.

The book is organised thematically, but also provides a 'short cut ' index at the beginning for ease of reference.

Grammar for English Language Teachers:
• helps teachers to develop their knowledge and understanding of English grammar
• provides an accessible reference for planning lessons and clarifying learners' problems
• includes a Typical difficulties section in each chapter, which explores learners' problems and mistakes
• is particularly helpful for trainee teachers

There is also a Cambridge ELT Web site with further chapter-by-chapter extension exercises to accompany the book: http://www.cup.cam.ac.uk/elt/