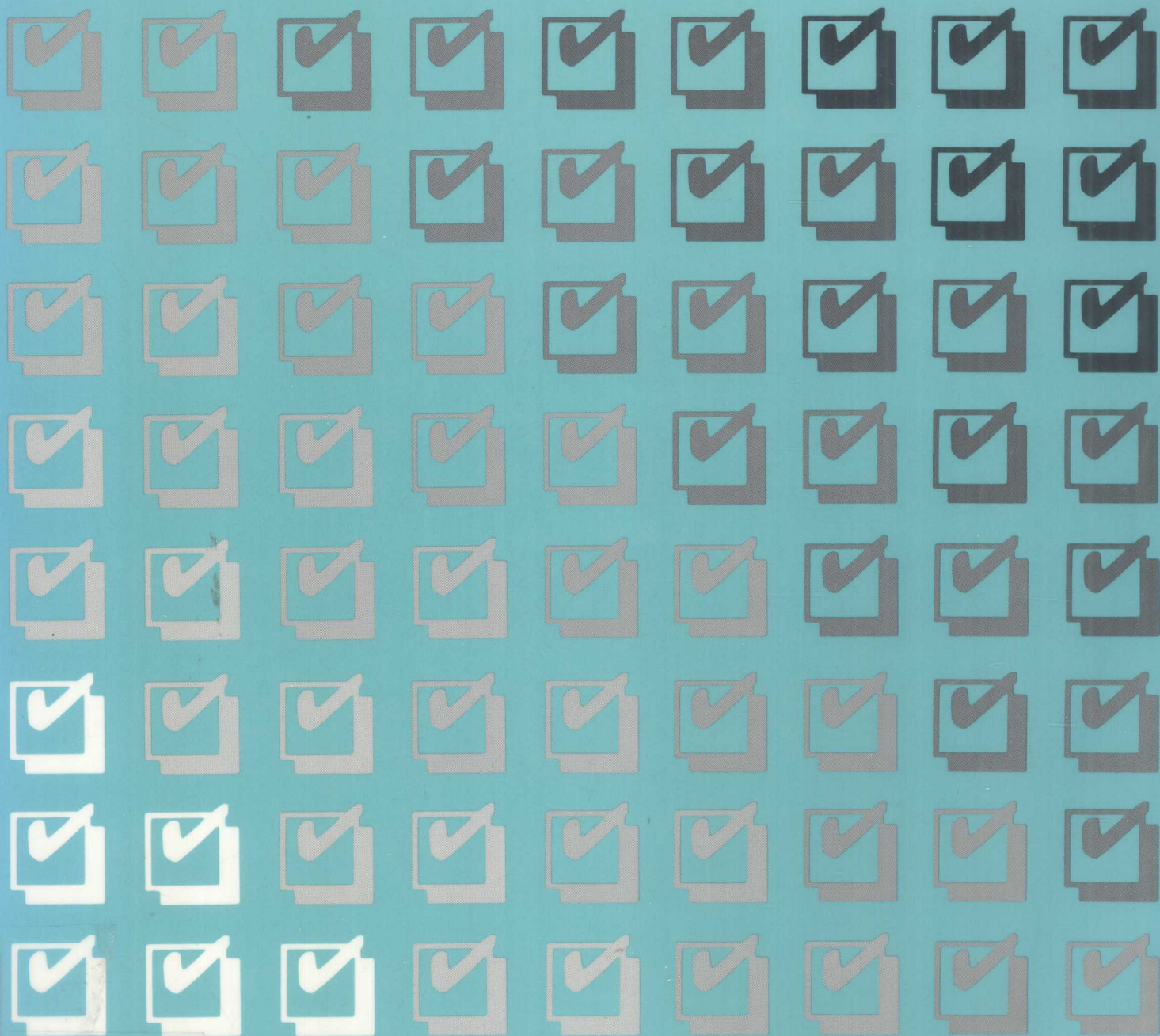

Testing Your Grammar

Susan M. Reinhart



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The University of Michigan Press Ann Arbor

To my mother and father

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Introduction

Testing Your Grammar was written for advanced students of English as a Second Language and has two main objectives. First, it serves as a review of major grammatical structures of English, and second, it provides explanation and practice in areas of grammar that are commonly tested on English proficiency examinations. It is not meant to be a comprehensive grammar book, but rather a concise review of these selected grammar points:

nouns	gerunds and infinitives
agreement	<i>that</i> and interrogative clauses
verb tense	sentence structure
passive voice	<i>if</i> (conditional) clauses
comparisons	<i>wish</i>
modals	negative adverbs
adjectives and adverbs	<i>that</i> clauses containing the bare infinitive
word classification	<i>so</i> and <i>such</i>
adjectives ending with <i>-ing</i> and <i>-ed</i>	prepositions

Each of the first seventeen units of *Testing Your Grammar* follows the same format. First there is a *pretest* on the main points covered in the unit. The pretest helps the students assess their comprehension of the structures in the unit.

The pretest is followed by a grammar *explanation*. Some of the units have more extensive explanations, but in general the goal of this text is to summarize information as succinctly as possible, omitting details that students already know or can figure out from doing the exercises.

The *exercises* follow the explanation, and provide further practice on the points discussed in the unit. A *final test* at the end of each unit helps students evaluate their understanding of the unit.

After every two units is a *review test* that reviews material covered in the two units. This test can be assigned when students have completed the two units, or later in the course, as part of a general review.

Unit 18, "Testing Your Prepositions," contains exercises but no pretest, explanation, or final test.

Following Unit 18, there are four *examinations* for pre- and post-testing.

An *answer key* is provided at the end of the text.

There are two main item types in the text. The first is multiple choice. In some exercises, students must choose between two possible answers; in others, they must choose among four. The latter is more representative of standardized tests, but the former is included to focus on contrastive analysis of the two choices.

The second type is error recognition. In some exercises, students must decide if an italicized portion of a sentence is correct. In other exercises, students must choose from four italicized portions of a sentence the portion that is incorrect. The latter is more typical of standardized tests. However, the former allows the students to focus more specifically on the particular grammar point being taught.

Introduction

Testing Your Grammar was not written to provide students with communicative situations in which to use grammatical structures, although it can provide additional classwork or homework to students enrolled in a course of this type. Instead, the text is intended to reflect current philosophies about how and what to test in order to measure a nonnative speaker's proficiency of English grammar.

To the Teacher

Testing Your Grammar was originally written to be used with teacher supervision. However, advanced students are often able to work through part or even all of the text on their own. For this reason an answer key is provided at the end of the book.

Although the format of *Testing Your Grammar* is not complex, teachers will find that many of the questions students ask about the material are difficult to answer on the spur of the moment. It is suggested that the teacher read the grammar explanations carefully as well as study the exercises before assigning a unit. Teachers may also wish to consult other grammar references for further information on a particular grammatical structure.

While there is no one best way to use *Testing Your Grammar*, it is suggested that the pretest be done in class, and that students check their answers along with the teacher. Many questions will arise at this point and the teacher may want to begin an informal discussion of the grammar explanation.

The grammar explanation is not meant to be read in class. The pretest is an informal vehicle for presenting this information to the class. However, teachers may wish to lecture on the material in the explanation. It is suggested, then, that the lecture be short—not more than ten to fifteen minutes—and that students be encouraged to participate by contributing examples, explaining one choice over another, asking questions, and answering others' questions. Complex grammar terminology should be avoided. The explanation can then be assigned to be read outside of class.

The exercises following the explanation provide additional practice on the grammar points in the unit. Teachers can assign the work to be done in class or as homework. Even though students can check their own answers at home, they often prefer to check them in class so that they can ask questions about areas they are having difficulty with. Students can go over their answers together with the teacher or in pairs. One advantage of pair work is that all students have the opportunity to discuss the reasons for their choices. From time to time, it is suggested that teachers grade their students' work in order to determine which students still need additional help.

Final tests can be done in class or at home. Teachers often prefer to do the tests in class in order to clear up difficulties students are still having.

Teachers may wish to ask their students to remove some or all parts of the answer key from their texts and then return them later in the course.

It should be kept in mind that a text of this type can be more interesting if there is student involvement. Students should be encouraged to participate at all stages of the lesson. However, dwelling on a particular question or comment from a student is generally not helpful and can slow down the pace of the class.

Testing Your Grammar was written to be used in an advanced grammar class, an integrated skills class, or in a test-taking class. In a test-taking class, teachers may wish to bring in additional teaching materials that cover sections of English proficiency exams. These materials are useful to students and also provide a change of pace.

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Unit 1

Nouns

Count versus Noncount Nouns

Pretest

Circle the best answer.

1. (Less) (Fewer) people enroll in English classes during the winter.
2. (How many of) (How many) potatoes are in a pound?
3. Do teachers in the United States give (much homework) (many homeworks)?
4. Do you have (a cup of sugar) (some sugars) I could borrow?
5. I've never seen such a large (amount) (number) of money!
6. I'm sorry but we do not have (much knowledge) (many knowledges) about the new transit system.
7. I'm looking for (a little equipment) (a few equipment) for my office.
8. Excuse me. Can you give us (a little) (a few) information?
9. You're taking (much too much) (much too many) baggage on this vacation.
10. (How many) (How much) money do you need?

Explanation

In English nouns function as either *count* or *noncount* (mass). While some nouns are considered to be count and others noncount, there are many cases where a noun can be count or noncount, depending on how it is used in the sentence. Consider the following examples.

Jane went to buy *a hamburger*. (count)
Jane went to buy *some hamburger*. (noncount)

In the first sentence, *hamburger* is used as a count noun to refer to a piece of meat between bread. In the second sentence, *hamburger* refers to a kind of meat (like lamb, chicken, pork, or fish). It is possible to say: *A hamburger* (count) is made from *hamburger* (noncount).

At seventy, Aunt Katherine didn't have even *one gray hair*. (count)
A gentleman with *grey hair* entered the room. (noncount)

In the first sentence, *hair* is count because the emphasis is on the *number* of gray hairs. However, *hair* is much more commonly viewed as noncount, as in the second example.

Count nouns are thought of as more specific entities. The speaker tends to view them as individual, separate units.

Noncount or mass nouns are thought to be more nonspecific and in some cases less tangible. They are not considered easily divisible into individual units. Noncount nouns may include larger masses of things, gases, liquids, granular or powderlike substances, concepts, forces, etc.

Nouns

The following is a list of count and noncount nouns. Add your own examples.

Noncount

homework
money
gold
trouble
fruit
equipment
furniture
clothing
news
luggage, baggage
wood
meat:
 pork
 beef
 chicken
coffee
perfume
knowledge
information
mathematics

Count

an assignment
1 dollar and 50 cents
a gold bar (*bar* is count)
a problem
an apple, a banana
a ball and a bat
a chair, a lamp
clothes (plural)*
a news item (*item* is count)
a bag, a suitcase
a log, a board

a pig
a cow
a chicken
a cup of coffee (*cup* is count)
a bottle of perfume (*bottle* is count)
a piece of knowledge, a fact

people (plural)

*Note: *Clothes* can be used with quantity expressions such as *a few clothes* but not with numbers. It is incorrect to say *two clothes*.

Notice that noncount nouns commonly represent a general class of things, such as *furniture*. Items in that class are generally count, such as *sofa*, *chair*, and *table*.

Some quantity expressions are used only with noncount nouns while others are used with count nouns. *Some* and *a lot of* can be used with both.

Noncount

a little
little
less
much (so much,
 very much, too much)
some
a lot of
an amount of

Count

a few
few
fewer
many (so many,
 very many, too many)
some
a lot of
a number of

Examples of these quantity expressions are:

Would you prefer *less coffee*? (noncount)

There are *so few people* living in the country nowadays. (count)

The first five quantity expressions in the list cannot be accompanied by *of* if a noun directly follows.

How much ~~of~~ sugar would you like?

There are too many ~~of~~ cars on the highway.

Of is used when the speaker is referring to a specific entity. In these cases, a definite article (such as *the, this*), a possessive pronoun (such as *my, his*) or any object pronoun (such as *them, us*) follow *of*.

Some *of the* sugar spilled on the floor.

John noticed the books on sale and bought a few *of them*.

A few *of my* friends are pilots.

Practice

Exercise

Circle the letter of the best answer.

- _____ has just arrived.
 - A piece of new equipments
 - A few new equipments
 - There are some new equipment which
 - A lot of new equipment
- _____ students enrolled this year than last year.
 - Less of the
 - A few of
 - A few more
 - There were a few
- You don't hear _____ news about Mr. Allen these days.
 - many
 - much
 - a lot
 - much of
- "Are you going hunting this year?"

"I don't know. There are _____ deer in this area."

 - so few
 - so little
 - no a lot of
 - only a few of
- "Are you sure you don't want to go to the movies tonight?"

"I can't. I have _____."

 - too many homeworks
 - much too much homework
 - much too many homework
 - too much homework assignments
- "How was your trip to Fort Knox, Kentucky?"

"I've never seen _____ bars in one place."

 - so much gold
 - so many gold
 - more than a little gold
 - as much of gold

Nouns

7. I'm sorry I'm late. I hope I didn't cause you _____ .
- a. too much problems
 - b. problem
 - c. many more trouble
 - d. too much trouble
8. "The price of chocolate has really gone up."
"Yes, they give you _____ for your money now."
- a. so few
 - b. so less
 - c. so little
 - d. fewer
9. " _____ do you think we need?"
"Oh, about a gallon."
- a. How many paint
 - b. How much of paint
 - c. How much paint
 - d. How many paints
10. "I'm looking for something to eat."
"There's _____ meat in the refrigerator."
- a. a little of
 - b. a little
 - c. a few
 - d. some few meat
11. I've never seen _____ people in one place.
- a. so much
 - b. so many
 - c. so much of
 - d. this many of
12. "What would you like to drink?"
"I'll have _____ , please."
- a. a coffee cup
 - b. small coffee
 - c. a little coffee
 - d. a cup coffee
13. "Henry wasn't able to give us _____ information."
"That's too bad. We really needed it."
- a. much
 - b. any of
 - c. many
 - d. a lot
14. _____ fish are there in that bowl?
- a. How much number of
 - b. How many
 - c. Do you know how much
 - d. What is the number of
15. _____ do we need for the winter?
- a. How many woods
 - b. How many wood
 - c. How much of wood
 - d. How much wood

Singular versus Plural

Pretest

Study the following sentences. Decide if the italicized portion of the sentence is *correct* (C) or *incorrect* (I). Circle your answer.

1. The contestants who are taking part in the 300 *meter* race come from various sections of the city. C I
2. A special license is needed to drive trucks and *bus*. C I
3. Many years ago the tribe developed *important*s methods of fishing that are still used today. C I
4. There are *other* reasons in addition to a computer failure that the rocket did not take off as scheduled. C I
5. *Every* people who had eaten at the new restaurant enjoyed it. C I
6. We are looking for *an* information about apartments for rent. C I
7. *Mathematics* courses are generally required in American high schools. C I
8. Usually *childrens* begin to take an interest in reading around the age of five. C I
9. Students must complete work on *each* sections of the test in order to pass. C I
10. One of the most *famous* restaurant in the world is Maxim's in Paris. C I

Explanation

Count nouns can occur in both singular and plural. It is possible to use *a* and *an* only with singular count nouns. It would, therefore, be incorrect to say:

We're having a beautiful *weather* along with a heavy *storms*.

Since *weather* is noncount and *storms* is plural, the correct statement is:

We're having *some* beautiful *weather* along with heavy *storms*.

An occurs before words beginning with a vowel sound.

There's *an* empty box and *an* apple on the table.
That was *an* honest answer.

Generally the plural in English is formed by adding *-s*, and it is incorrect not to use *-s* when expressing plurality.

A large number of plant^S_^ found in Europe originally came from the Americas.

Nouns

There are, however, certain nouns whose plural is irregular. Some of these exceptions are:

foot	feet
tooth	teeth
person	people
man	men
woman	women
child	children
sheep	sheep

These nouns are not followed by *-s*.

Adjectives are never pluralized in English. Therefore it would be incorrect to say:

In the closet were one old shoe and two old~~s~~ shirts.

Old is an adjective and cannot be pluralized.

Likewise, nouns functioning as adjectives never use *-s*. Notice that in the following sentence *car* cannot be plural, only *factories*.

There are many car~~s~~ factories near Detroit.

The same is true of expressions involving time and money, such as:

a four-month semester
a twenty-million-dollar deal

Each and *every* are used in reference to singular nouns while their counterpart *all* generally accompanies plural or noncount nouns.

Every ornament that arrived was handmade.
Each (one) of the records costs \$7.95.
All the fruit and vegetables were destroyed.

The following sentences would, therefore, be incorrect.

All
~~Every~~ people who take the train must have a ticket.
All
~~Each~~ but three of the beds had mattresses.

The adjective *another* also only precedes a singular noun. It begins with *an* which implies singularity.

Would you like *another* cup of coffee?

Other occurs with noncount and plural count nouns.

Let's listen for *other* information about the storm on *other* radio stations.

Practice

Exercise

Study the following sentences. Decide if the italicized portion of the sentence is *correct* (C) or *incorrect* (I). Circle your answer.

1. Modern *messages* systems are becoming more and more complex. C I
2. There is *an* equipment failure in the TV studio. C I
3. It is possible to find *another* uses for seaweed. C I
4. Meters are used instead of *feets* in most parts of the world. C I
5. *Every* man, woman, and child must wear a seat belt in Canada. C I
6. A large group of *tourist* will arrive on the island this summer. C I
7. The children's *butterfly* collection was found in the attic. C I
8. It was possible for the student to answer *each* but one exam question. C I
9. One of the most popular American *holiday* is Thanksgiving, which is celebrated in November. C I
10. A person's *foot size* decreases with age. C I
11. Many *news story* which deal with TV and film personalities are often exaggerated. C I
12. Policemen in England, unlike those in the United States, do not carry *gun*. C I
13. *These year's interest rates* have dropped 2 percent, making it possible for more people to buy homes. C I
14. More *American woman* have begun to work in the last twenty years because of financial necessity. C I
15. During the winter months *fruit and vegetable* are transported from California to other parts of the United States. C I

Final Test

Study the following sentences. Decide if the italicized portion of the sentence is *correct* (C) or *incorrect* (I). Circle your answer.

1. We have heard *so many news* about recent developments in computer technology. C I
2. Because of the polluted feed, we have *fewer cows* this year than last year. C I
3. The 14-*carat* gold ring was worth over two million dollars. C I
4. Some people are planning to vote in today's election, but *many of them* are staying home. C I
5. A teacher's equipment usually includes *a few chalks*. C I
6. The notebook lists *every* opportunities for handicapped workers in the area. C I
7. There are many *other* people who are members of the swim club. C I
8. There is *so few ink* that it will be impossible to finish addressing the envelopes. C I
9. Did you get *a* invitation to the wedding? C I
10. I need *one more wood* to finish the bookcase. C I

Nouns

11. There is a *small number of* corn that needs harvesting. C I
12. One of the *many use* of bicarbonate of soda is as an odor absorber. C I
13. Many educators recommend that the *nine-month school year* be lengthened to eleven months. C I
14. In the past Americans needed to know *less mathematics* than today. C I
15. Rabies is *extremely dangerous disease* which is usually fatal to humans. C I

Unit 2

Agreement

Subject-Verb Agreement

Pretest

Circle the best answer.

1. Statistics (is) (are) a difficult course for people to understand.
2. Not even one of the hundred students who took the test (has) (have) passed.
3. It is fortunate that the wishes of the community (was) (were) heeded before the new highway was built.
4. The number of women who smoke (has) (have) increased.
5. Statistics show that approximately 40 percent of all marriages in the United States (ends) (end) in divorce.
6. A study of the difference between synthetic and natural vitamins (is) (are) needed.
7. My daughters' instructor (seems) (seem) very competent.
8. What you eat and how much you exercise (is) (are) important factors in a weight loss program.
9. Farmers in the midwestern section of the United States raise cattle and (grows) (grow) a variety of crops.
10. People (is) (are) worried about the high rate of unemployment.

Explanation

In order to determine subject-verb agreement, it is important to decide which word (or words) of the subject agrees with the verb. In the following sentence *license* determines the form of the verb. The *license*, not the credit cards, *was lost*.

My license, rather than my credit cards, *was lost*.

In this next sentence, *the doors*, not the building, *were hand carved*.

The building's wooden doors *were hand carved*.

In some cases, the whole subject determines the form of the verb.

That the trees lose their leaves *is* a sign of winter.