

*Grammar  
Dialogues*

*An Interactive Approach*

# ***Grammar Dialogues***

***An Interactive Approach***

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# Preface

*Grammar Dialogues*, an interactive text, is a study of grammar through contextualized dialogues. It is intended for high-intermediate to advanced students of English as a second language who are at a college, at a university, at an institute or in a continuing education program for adults. The material is also appropriate for students of English as a foreign language who are studying in a non-English-speaking country.

## The Exercises

Each exercise in this book consists of a set of dialogues that focus on the points of English grammar discussed in the explanation that directly follows the exercise. The students can role-play these dialogues: one student playing the role of person A, another playing the role of person B. Sometimes there are three or four roles to play.

Here are some suggestions on how to use the materials:

1. The class can begin by breaking up into pairs or small groups.
2. To find out what the students may or may not know, the teacher can assign an exercise (or part of an exercise) as a quiz. The students can then exchange books and correct one another's work.
3. The teacher also can assign an exercise as homework. At the next class meeting, with the teacher's help, the students can correct their own work while they compare answers and practice the dialogues.
4. During the period of correction and practice, the teacher can go from group to group, helping individual students with pronunciation and demonstrating natural-sounding intonation patterns appropriate to the dialogue. The teacher also can help the students to "act out" the dialogues.
5. Following this "rehearsal," the class can perform the dialogues. More work on pronunciation and appropriate intonation patterns can take place at this time. Some students might not be quite clear on certain points of grammar, so the teacher may need to elucidate further.

## The Explanations

Except for some review exercises, a grammar explanation follows each exercise. Each explanation contains concise descriptions of grammar with examples and dialogues that are meant for the students, either in small groups or in a circle, to read aloud and perform. The paragraphs in each explanation are numbered so that the students can refer to them quickly and so that the teacher or the group leader can easily assign them to be read aloud.

While going through an explanation, the teacher can work on the pronunciation of grammatical terms and the production of appropriate intonation patterns; also, he or she may wish

to provide supplementary explanations, examples and written or oral exercises to illustrate a certain point further.

Depending on the level of proficiency of a class and the degree of difficulty of an exercise, either the teacher can go through an explanation with the students before they do an exercise, or the students can go through an explanation on their own (at home or in groups in class) as part of the assignment.

### Planning a Lesson

Depending on the nature of a particular class, the teacher may find that it is not necessary to follow the order of the exercises as presented in this book. However, because the book is semiprogrammed and the students will constantly review the old material within the context of the new, the teacher should try to adhere to the order as closely as possible.

To give the teacher an idea of how he or she might plan a lesson, let me describe the program I usually follow for my classes. I use the material for a multiskills course in which the students meet for 3 hours, 4 days a week, in a 14-week semester. Every morning, the students bring in copies of *The New York Times*, which we skim. This activity leads to reading or writing assignments or to a period of conversation practice focusing on an article in that day's paper.

The students continuously work on assignments, compositions and essays. On many mornings, they tape their written work on the chalkboard, compare their work and consult with me about any problems.

The second half of each meeting is usually devoted to the grammar dialogues. The students role-play the dialogues that they have done for homework. In the last 15 minutes or so of class, I frequently assign conversation topics, or the students find topics of interest to themselves.

### Acknowledgments

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Allan Kent Dart  
Brooklyn, New York



# To the Student

## Working in a Group

The explanations and exercises in *Grammar Dialogues* are designed to be used in pairs or in small groups. While studying English grammar, you are interacting with others and developing your communication skills. So that a group will work together smoothly, a leader can be chosen (either by the group or by the teacher) to take care of giving turns and to make sure that everyone participates.

When your group is having a discussion or a debate, the group leader can act as a moderator, imparting order to the meeting and making certain that everyone contributes.

## Correcting an Exercise

To facilitate correcting an exercise, it is a good idea for you to use a pen or pencil that differs in color from the one that you used to write your answers. In the following example, note how each mistake is crossed out rather than erased. Also note how each punctuation mark is circled for reading ease and how each addition is inserted above the place it belongs and is indicated by a caret ( ^ ).

### Example

even though / we / have / no / money / bank / we / still / plan / to go / trip  
we / want / to stay / home

A: What are your and your wife's summer plans?

B: *Even though we ~~don't~~ have no money <sup>in the</sup> bank. We*  
*we ~~have~~ still planned <sup>on a</sup> to go ~~to the~~ trip. We*  
*don't want to stay <sup>at</sup> ~~at the~~ home.*

## Formal and Informal Style

The terms formal and informal are frequently used in this text. Formal usage is found most commonly in formal writing—for example, in a research paper for a course at a university or in an essay or article for a magazine that takes itself seriously. Informal style is found in a personal letter, a gossip column in a newspaper or a work of fiction. Compare the following:

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| FORMAL   | Sir, the conditions under which we are working are intolerable. |
| INFORMAL | Boss, the conditions we're working under are hard to take.      |
| FORMAL   | Let us look at the question put forward and discuss it.         |
| INFORMAL | Let's look at the problem and talk about it.                    |

When you speak, you most often use an informal style. When you write, you must adopt a style that is appropriate to the subject matter and the audience for which your writing is intended. For instance, it would be inappropriate to use a formal writing style in a college newspaper article about a basketball game; likewise, it would be inappropriate to use an informal writing style for a *Los Angeles Times* or *Chicago Tribune* editorial discussing a serious social or political issue.

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# I

## Nouns and Pronouns

### ☐ 1.1 Agreement of Nouns, Pronouns, Verbs and Expressions of Quantity

Circle each correct verb form. In a few cases, both answer choices are acceptable.

#### Example

A: Don't you think some of the coffee breaks (have) / *has* been too long recently?

B: I certainly do, Professor. I couldn't agree with you more.

C: Yeah, there (is) / (are) a lot of lazy guys around here.

1. A: Half of the workers in this plant *(is / are)* union members.  
B: And they make more money than we nonmembers do.  
A: Right, and that isn't fair. Why, none of those union people *(work / works)* as hard as we do.
2. A: Ten dollars for a movie *(is / are)* much more than I can afford. How about you?  
B: Listen, that's too high. Even five dollars *(is / are)* too much for me.  
C: Not one of the movies playing in town *(is / are)* worth a dime. They couldn't pay me a thousand dollars to go to any of them.
3. A: Hey, what's wrong? What on earth is going on?  
B: I don't know, but the police *(is / are)* knocking at the front door.  
C: Well, none of us *(has / have)* done anything wrong.
4. A: The statistics in this report somehow *(strike / strikes)* me as wrong. What do you think?  
B: Oh, yes, I'm sure. In fact, I'm positive.  
A: Oh? Just why are you so certain?  
B: Statistics *(was / were)* my major at the university.
5. A: None of the president's suggestions *(was / were)* acceptable to the prime minister.  
B: Yes, I know, Ambassador. What do you think of the suggestions?  
A: Frankly, not one of them *(make / makes)* any sense, I feel.
6. A: I'm worried about my girlfriend. I haven't heard from her for weeks.  
B: Well, no news *(is / are)* good news, as they say.  
A: Well, I'm afraid, in my case, that no news *(is / are)* bad news. I've never had any luck in love.



7. A: Two-thirds of a cup of cream (*go / goes*) into the chicken gravy.  
 B: Hey, listen, there (*'s / are*) a lot of calories in that much cream.  
 A: Oh, come on, you don't have to worry about calories. Why, you're as skinny as a string bean.
8. A: You've had your head buried in that book for days. Why do you like it so much?  
 B: Each of the stories (*is / are*) about love and romance.  
 A: Oh, really! Can't you think about anything else?
9. A: In the days of the horse and carriage, thirty miles a day (*was / were*) good time.  
 B: Gee, Grandpa, that wasn't very fast, was it?
10. A: The number of refugees in the detention camps (*is / are*) shocking, isn't it? What can be done?  
 B: Well, the United Nations (*is / are*) looking into it.  
 A: I've heard a number of refugees (*has / have*) already died.
11. A: Every man, woman and child in the country (*carry / carries*) an ID card. The government is very strict and hard.  
 B: Yes, everyone (*has / have*) to follow a lot of regulations and rules. We're almost slaves of the state.  
 A: All of us (*live / lives*) in a constant state of fear.
12. A: The poor (*is / are*) victims of an unjust and greedy society.  
 B: Yes, the rich (*want / wants*) everything for themselves.  
 C: Oh, come on. People in the United States (*is / are*) living well, in general.  
 A: Yes, but not everyone (*is / are*), that's for sure.
13. A: Ummm, yum, this is delicious. What's in this soup?  
 B: There (*'s / are*) vegetables and lots of spices.  
 A: Boy, the French really (*know / knows*) how to cook, don't they? Everyone in France (*eat / eats*) well.

## 1.2 Agreement of Nouns and Verbs

1. One noun subject takes a singular verb; two (or more) noun subjects connected by *and* take a plural verb:

An apple *is* good for you.  
 A lemon and an orange *are* acidic.

A plural noun subject also takes a plural verb:

*Do* bananas grow up or down?

2. When a prepositional phrase follows a noun subject, the verb that follows must agree with the noun subject (not with the noun in the prepositional phrase). Compare the following:

*The plot* in that movie *keeps* you on the edge of your seat.  
*The actors* in that movie *keep* your attention throughout.  
*The child* in the garden *is* my granddaughter.  
*The children* in the garden *are* playing hide-and-go-seek.

## 1.3 Agreement with Expressions of Quantity

1. We often put expressions of quantity such as *some of* and *half of* before a noun or pronoun subject; the verb that follows must agree with the subject:

Some of *the dialogue* in that movie *is* a little boring.

(Some of *it* is boring.)

Some of *the actors* in that movie *are* rather amateurish.

(Some of *them* are amateurish.)

Half of *the apple* on this plate *is* yours.

(Half of *it* is yours.)

Half of *the apples* in that basket *are* rotten.

(Half of *them* are rotten.)

These are some other expressions of quantity:

a lot of	fifty percent of	one-third of
a majority of	most of	two-thirds of

2. *A number of* is an expression of quantity that is always followed by a plural noun or pronoun plus a plural verb:

A number of *good movies (them)* *have* been made recently.

A number of *good actors (them)* *are* up for Oscars this year.

3. *The number of* is always followed by a plural noun plus a singular verb:

The number of *accidents* on the nation's highway *is* shocking.

The number of *cars* on our streets *increases* ten percent a year.

4. A verb agrees with the noun or pronoun subject in expressions of quantity with *all of*:

All of *my time (it)* *is* spent on my school studies.

All of *the students (them)* *are* trying their best.

When we use a noun subject, we may omit the preposition *of*:

All (of) *my money* goes to food and rent.

All (of) *the people* want honesty in government.

But with a pronoun subject, we cannot omit *of*:

All of *it* goes quickly. [Never All *it*.]

All of *them* want an end to corruption. [Never All *them*.]

5. *Every* or *each* plus a singular noun determines a singular verb:

Every *book* in my teacher's bookcase *is* in reference to grammar.

Each *student* in the school *carries* an ID card.

6. *Each of* plus a plural noun or pronoun always takes a singular verb:

Each of *our four children* *has* a unique personality.

Each of *the students' teachers* *gives* a lot of homework.

Each of *us* *spends* a lot of time at the library.

7. *One of* or *not one of* plus a plural noun is always followed by a singular verb:

One of *the proposals* in this memo *is* absolutely insane.

Not one of *his friends* *has* offered help during this crisis.

We frequently use *only* with *one of*:

*Only one of* our ideas has made us any money.

*Only one of* my Christmas presents was something I wanted.

8. A singular verb always follows *everyone*, *everybody* and *nobody*:

*Everyone* on this planet *wants* to have peace and prosperity.  
*Everybody*, at least almost everybody, *desires* an end to war.  
*Nobody* in the world *is* going to be here forever.

9. Because *none* has the meaning of "not one," formal usage requires that a singular verb follow *none of* plus a plural noun:

None of [Not one of] *the men and women* here *is* married.  
 None of [Not one of] *his ideas* *is* very imaginative.

However, *none of* followed by a plural verb has become so common in modern informal usage that a singular verb following *none of* may sound incorrect to a native speaker's ears. For example, many English-speaking people might think the following sentences sound strange and unnatural:

None of *her children* *is* spoiled.  
 None of *my friends* *takes* advantage of me.

Many native speakers would perhaps feel more comfortable hearing a plural verb following *none of*:

None of *the grapefruits* in this basket *are* any good.  
 None of *the players* on the team *are* following the rules.  
 None of *us* *are* happy with the government's decision.

However, in formal usage, both spoken and written, a singular verb following *none of* is usually more accurate and precise:

*None* of the conclusions reached in this paper *is* supported by facts or examples.  
*None* of the experiments conducted during this project *has* brought forth any new approach to the treatment of mental illness.

## □ 1.4 Agreement with Expletive *There*

When the word *there* is an expletive, a singular verb follows when the following noun is singular. Informally, we often use *there's*, the contraction of *there is*:

*There's* a large soup bowl on the counter near the sink, and *there's* a small platter on the table in the pantry.

Formal usage requires that a plural verb precede a plural compound subject or a plural noun:

*There are* a large bowl and a small platter in the cupboard.  
*There are* some forks, spoons and knives in the drawer.

In informal usage, however, we frequently hear and see a singular verb:

*There's* a water kettle and a frying pan on the stove.  
*There's* some children at the door yelling trick-or-treat.

## □ 1.5 Agreement Irregularities with Some Nouns

There are a number of irregularities in the determining of singular or plural nouns:

1. The word *news* is singular; the word *people* is plural:

The *news* *is* startling; the *people* *are* shocked.