

Adrian Wallwork

ENGLISH

for
Academic Research:
Grammar Exercises



Springer

English for Academic Research: Grammar Exercises

Adrian Wallwork

English for Academic Research: Grammar Exercises

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Introduction

Who is this book for?

This book is aimed at non-native researchers of any discipline who use English to carry out their work. The main emphasis is on writing research papers. The book is designed for self-study or use in a classroom.

Before doing the exercises, readers are encouraged to consult the relevant explanations in the other books in the series. To learn how the books are cross-referenced see page xiii.

Structure of the book

In Chapters 1–17, grammar items are practiced in individual sentences, often in informal contexts such as emails and social situations. In Sections 18–26, many of the items practiced in Chapters 1–17 are covered again, but this time in the context of complete paragraphs from specific sections of a paper (Abstracts, Introductions, Discussion, etc.). Chapter 27 contains ten short revision tests.

The exercises

The exercises are designed to be completed quickly. Unless otherwise stated, the task is simply to underline/highlight the correct form. If you are not sure how to do an exercise, look at the first question and then the key to that question: this should help you clarify the objective of the exercise.

In very few cases, the task involves writing some text or correcting an existing text. Instructions on what to do are given in *italics* at the top of the exercises.

There are several exercises for each grammar item. If you find an exercise particularly difficult, then simply do the next one instead.

The keys

For ease of use, the answers to the exercises are located immediately below each exercise. The keys give the most commonly accepted answer. In cases where there are two possible answers, I have used the following policy:

HAVE BEEN / WAS = the slash (/) indicates that both *have been* and *was* are equally possible

HAVE BEEN (WAS) = *have been* is the most common answer, but depending on the interpretation given to the phrase *was* (i.e., the alternative given in parentheses) may also be possible

You may not always agree with the answers. If you don't, consult your teacher or a native speaker to discover if your solution is possible or not.

Vocabulary

You may find that some examples contain technical words that you are not familiar with. In the majority of cases, there is no need to understand every word in a sentence in order to be able to complete the task. However, if you find the task difficult to do due to the vocabulary, simply move on to the next sentence or exercise. For each grammar topic, I have provided many exercises, so if you cannot complete an exercise this is not a problem; you will have many other opportunities to practice the same grammar point.

Grammar coverage

The focus of this book is on the typical grammar mistakes made when writing research papers. In addition in Chapters 1–17, the grammar typically used in emails and social situations is also covered. This means that not all aspects of grammar are covered.

Other grammar items are given much more practice in this book than in equivalent grammar exercise books. This is because they cause particular problems in the writing of formal academic English. These include:

- The use of articles (*a/an*, *the*, zero article)
- The genitive
- *That* vs. *which*

- Countable vs. uncountable nouns
- Active and passive forms
- The difference between the present simple, present perfect, and past simple
- The position of adverbs

In addition, particularly for the use of tenses and modal verbs, practice is also given of the spoken language (in social situations, for example at conferences) and of emails.

Exercises on prepositions and link words can be found in the companion volume *English for Academic Research: Vocabulary Exercises*, and punctuation is covered in *English for Academic Research: Writing Exercises*.

English grammar and usage is in a constant state of flux. Often the rules of General English seem to be broken in Scientific English. Also, usage is not the same across disciplines. This means that some examples/exercises may occasionally not reflect usage in your specific area of research.

The rules on which the exercises are based are rules that reflect the principles of a clear reader-oriented writer. They may even conflict with what you see written by native English speakers, particularly in articles written more than 20–30 years ago.

The majority of examples are based on real papers and emails, though in some cases key words have been changed and sentences have been modified.

Cross-referencing with other books in the series

There are two types of books in this series: guides/manuals and exercise books.

1. Guides/Manuals:

English for Research: Usage, Style and Grammar – designed to resolve your doubts about the grammar, usage, and style of academic English.

English for Writing Research Papers – everything you need to know about how to write a paper that referees will recommend for publication.

English for Academic Correspondence and Socializing – tips for responding to editors and referees, networking at conferences, understanding fast-talking native English speakers, using Google Translate, and much more. No other book like this exists on the market.

English for Presentations at International Conferences – all the tricks for overcoming your fear of presenting in English at a conference.

2. Exercise Books

English for Academic Research: Grammar/Vocabulary/Writing Exercises – these three books of exercises practice the rules and guidelines given in the guides/manuals (there are, however, no exercises directly related to the Presentations book).

See www.springer.com/978-1-4614-1592-3 to learn how this book can be used in combination with the other books in this series.

A note for teachers

This book is not designed to be a fully comprehensive grammar exercise book. It only focuses on those problems that are regularly found in manuscripts and emails written by non-native speakers. This means that there is great emphasis on a limited number of grammar items.

I have tried to neutralize the effect of technical vocabulary impeding the possibility of completing the task, but some students may wish to focus equally on each word of a sentence. If such a sentence contains several words that are not in their personal vocabulary, they may find the exercise frustrating. A good solution is to tell students to choose which sentences within each exercise to complete. For example, your instruction could thus be: *complete five or more of the ten sentences in Exercise 12.1.*

I would be very grateful to receive feedback on the book at adrian.wallwork@gmail.com

Chapter 1: Nouns: plurals, countable versus uncountable, etc.

1.1 verb agreement

1. Of these papers, less than a half **deals / deal** with this issue.
2. A number of authors **has / have** claimed that $x=y$.
3. The number of publications per year **is / are** reported in Table 3.
4. The majority of articles only **covers / cover** marginal issues.
5. This group of tables **contains / contain** all the relevant results.
6. Ten kilos **is / are** enough to ensure a good performance.
7. Several thousand dollars **is / are** required.
8. People **is / are** stranger than animals.
9. The police **is / are** present in heavy numbers.
10. Fifty per cent **is / are** certainly a good rate.
11. A variety of articles **has / have** investigated this business sector.
12. None of the instruments **work / works**.
13. There **is / are** a bathroom and a bedroom.
14. Both clinical and neuropathological evidence **shows / show** that these symptoms are...

- | | |
|-------------|------------------|
| 1. deal | 8. are |
| 2. have | 9. are |
| 3. is | 10. is |
| 4. cover | 11. have |
| 5. contains | 12. work |
| 6. is (are) | 13. is |
| 7. are | 14. shows (show) |

1.2 uncountable nouns 1

Complete the table. Example: Yes (Y): some traffic, a bit of traffic No (N): a traffic, every traffic, a piece of traffic.

	A / AN	SOME	EACH / EVERY	A PIECE OF	A BIT OF
traffic	N	Y	N	N	Y
advertising					
blood					
earth					
electricity					
good					
heat					
luck					
machinery					
news					
progress					
smog					
trouble					

	A / AN	SOME	EACH / EVERY	A PIECE OF	A BIT OF
advertising	N	Y	N	N	Y
blood	N	Y	N	N	Y
earth	N	Y	N	Y	Y
electricity	N	Y	N	N	Y
gold	N	Y	N	Y	Y
heat	N	Y	N	N	Y
luck	N	Y	N	N	Y
machinery	N	Y	N	Y	Y
news	N	Y	N	Y	Y
progress	N	Y	N	N	Y
smog	N	Y	N	N	Y
stone	N	Y	N	Y	Y
trouble	N	Y	N	N	Y

1.3 uncountable nouns 2

The following sentences contain mistakes regarding uncountable nouns that have mistakenly been used as if they were countable. Identify the mistakes and correct them.

1. Such feedbacks are vital when analyzing the queries.
2. The time depends on the efficiency of each equipment and the number of equipments.
3. Several software packages were developed with many attentions to eradicating all bugs. However, in several situations, the results obtained from these softwares are still erroneous.
4. Special hardwares are required in some situations.
5. Many informations on the structure and function are being gathered.
6. This causes many traffics on the network.
7. There are few knowledge about the best way to do this.
8. These researches have achieved many progresses in this field.
9. I owe you ten dollar, I will give you them on Monday.
10. All patients gave a written consent to the tests.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. feedback is | 6. a lot of traffic |
| 2. each piece of equipment, the amount of equipment | 7. is little knowledge |
| 3. much attention, this software is | 8. this research has achieved much progress |
| 4. hardware is | 9. ten dollars... give you it |
| 5. much information / a lot of information | 10. gave (their) written consent |

1.4 uncountable nouns 3

The following sentences contain mistakes regarding uncountable nouns that have mistakenly been used as if they were countable. Identify the mistakes and correct them.

1. As far as we know, there has only been one research in this field.
2. These money are collected once a month.
3. This may be an evidence for astrologists.
4. About 60% of the feedbacks were negative.
5. Several informations are now available.
6. The earthquake caused few damages and no fatalities.
7. Garbages represent a big problem in the process of urbanization.
In fact they cause.
8. They did a training during the course.
9. She was the only child of a blind father (he was struck by a lightning)
and a mother who died of a cancer when she was a teenager.
10. The sheeps appeared to be in a good health and gained weight like the
normal control sheeps.

1. one piece of research
2. this money is
3. be [some] evidence
4. feedback was
5. much information is

6. little damage
7. garbage represents... it causes
8. some training / a training course
9. by lightning... of cancer
10. sheep... sheep

Chapter 2: Genitive: the possessive form of nouns

2.1 authors, theories, companies, products

Underline the correct form. If both are correct, underline both.

1. **Yin** / **Yin's** paper was the first to...
2. **Yin's et al.** / **Yin et al's** paper was the first to...
3. **Jones** / **Jones's** / **Jones'** most recent investigation into...
4. We have addressed all the **referee** / **referee's** / **referees'** requests.
5. **A Boolean** / **Boolean's** operator may refer to one of the following...
6. In our work **Fourier** / **Fourier's** analysis was used to derive the...
7. They used a **Turing** / **Turing's** machine simulation to obtain their result.
8. A **Turing** / **Turing's** machine is a device that...
9. **Turing** / **Turing's** / **The Turing's** original thesis was that... He then went on to reformulate this thesis by...
10. **Beer** / **The Beer's** / **Beer's** findings, together with those of Johann Heinrich Lambert, make up **Beer-Lambert** / **the Beer-Lambert** / **Beer-Lambert's** law.
11. Physicist Stephen **Hawking** / **Hawking's** early career was...
12. We used an **Apple** / **Apple's** G6 Powerbook laptop running LION to...
13. **Apple** / **Apple's** / **The Apple's** initial decision to make iPods solely compatible with iTunes caused...
14. **The iPad** / **iPad's** potential for education has been investigated...
15. **The Thatcher** / **Thatcher** / **Thatcher's** administration caused tremendous...

1. Yin's
2. Yin et al's
3. Jones's
4. referees'
5. Boolean
6. Fourier
7. Turing
8. Turing
9. Turing's
10. Beer's, the Beer-Lambert
11. Hawking's
12. Apple
13. Apple's
14. iPad's
15. the Thatcher / Thatcher's

2.2 various 1

Select the correct form (a or b).

1. How do you measure (a) a circle's area (b) the area of a circle?
2. I have just been studying (a) the fundamental theorem of integral calculus (b) the integral calculus fundamental theorem.
3. I think that (a) the sum of the angles of a triangle is... (b) the triangle angles sum is...
4. Let us look at (a) Pascal's hexagon theorem (b) Pascal hexagon theorem (c) the Pascal's hexagon theorem.
5. I think that (a) the last theorem of Fermat was... (b) Fermat's last theorem was... (c) the Fermat last theorem was...
6. Have you ever studied (a) the binomial theory (b) the binomial's theory (c) the binomials theory.
7. Can you explain the (a) large numbers law to me (b) the law of large numbers to me?
8. I studied at (a) Harvard's university (b) Harvard University (c) the University of Harvard (d) the Harvard University.
9. The area of (a) the box's base. (b) the base of the box.
10. The size of (a) the function's parabola. (b) the parabola of the function.
11. (a) The solution to our problem may be stated as... (b) Our problem's solution may be stated as...
12. *As a heading* (a) The problem's definition. (b) Defining the Problem (c) The problem definition (d) Definition of the Problem
13. This is (a) a China law (b) a Chinese law (c) a law in China (d) a China's law.
14. I have (a) a computer's problem (b) a computer problem (c) a problem with my computer.
15. The (a) best solution to the problem (b) problem's best solution (c) problem's best solution.

(1) b

(2) a

(3) a

(4) a

(5) b

(6) a

(7) b

(8) b and c

(9) b (a)

(10) b

(11) a

(12) b and d

(13) b and c

(14) c

(15) a

2.3 various 2

1. **IBM's / IBM** first computer.
2. **Gates's / Gates'** philosophy.
3. **Burger and Wilmar's / Burger's and Wilmar's** document.
4. The **Koreans's / Koreans'** plans for the future.
5. These are the results of ten **year's / years' / year** studying, which was divided into two five-**year / years / years'** periods.
6. A **mile's / mile** walk.
7. I am on a six **month / month's** sabbatical.
8. I'm taking six **month / month's** sabbatical next year.
9. The number of **cancer / cancer's** cases is increasing.
10. **Cancer / Cancer's** principal health hazard is the ability of malignant tumors to invade.
11. Such patients do not tolerate **goat / goat's** milk or cheese.
12. We analysed the function of **goat / goat's** milk and its products in nutrition.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. IBM's | 7. month |
| 2. Bill Gates's | 8. month's |
| 3. Burger and Wilmar's | 9. cancer |
| 4. Koreans' | 10. cancer's |
| 5. years'... year | 11. goat / goat's |
| 6. mile's | 12. goat / goat's |

Chapter 3: Indefinite article (*a / an*), definite article (*the*), and zero article (\emptyset)

3.1 *a, an, zero article (\emptyset)*

1. Hydrogen is produced at ***a / an / \emptyset*** high temperature.
2. Hydrogen is produced at ***a / an / \emptyset*** high temperatures.
3. This gives ***a / an / \emptyset*** really useful information.
4. We have made ***a / an / \emptyset*** progress.
5. We used ***a / an / \emptyset*** particular software in our calculations.
6. We are doing ***a / an / \emptyset*** research into rats.
7. ***A / An / \emptyset*** analysis of the results shows that...
8. I speak ***a / an / \emptyset*** good English.
9. You can't go there without ***a / an / \emptyset*** passport.
10. It travels at 90 km ***a / an / \emptyset*** hour.
11. I have ***a / an / \emptyset*** headache.
12. This is ***a / an / \emptyset*** evidence of how effective the system is.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| (1) a | (7) an |
| (2) \emptyset | (8) \emptyset |
| (3) \emptyset | (9) a |
| (4) \emptyset | (10) an |
| (5) \emptyset | (11) a |
| (6) \emptyset | (12) \emptyset |

3.2 *a, an, one*

1. We need to use **a / an / one** LAN, i.e. **a / an / one** local area network.
2. This is designated with **a / an / one** L not **a / an / one** N.
3. There is **a / an / one** complex hierarchy in the company.
4. We went to **a / an / one** hotel. It took **a / an / one** hour to get there.
5. I went to **a / an / one** university in England.
6. He's **a / an / one** honest guy and has **a / an / one** understanding of the topic.
7. It has **a / an / one** unique value.
8. It increased by **a / an / one** order of magnitude.
9. We'll do it **a / an / one** day next week.
10. We used **a / an / one** after the other.
11. This is just **a / an / one** way to achieve such performance.
12. If you make even **a / an / one** mistake you will fail the test.
13. We only did **a / an / one** test before the machine broke down.
14. All these lamps need just **a / an / one** bulb. For this lamp we need **a / an / one** 80 watt bulb and for this lamp **a / an / one** 60 watt bulb.
15. There were **a / an / one** hundred people not two hundred.
16. This is **a / an / one** EU directive.
17. This is **a / an / one** European Union directive.

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

3.3 *a / an, the, zero article (Ø)*

1. In ***an / the*** examination room students are only allowed ***a / the*** monolingual dictionary.
2. ***A / The*** dictionary I use the most is ***an / the*** online one called Word's Worth.
3. In the 1950s ***a / the*** television changed the way advertising was done.
4. This paper investigates the role of ***the / Ø*** church and the media in the UK by analyzing how many people go to ***the / Ø*** church every Sunday in relation to how many have ***a / the*** television.
5. All the patients had been operated either on ***the / Ø*** eyes or on ***the / Ø*** nose.
6. These values can be used in ***an / Ø*** input.
7. She is acting as ***a / Ø*** manager while her boss is away.
8. These cells are interpreted as ***a / Ø*** codomain of x and y.
9. ***An / Ø*** examination of the residues showed that...
10. This is detectable at ***a / Ø*** subcellular level in neurons.

- (1) the, a
- (2) the, an
- (3) the
- (4) the, Ø, a
- (5) the, the

- (6) Ø
- (7) Ø
- (8) a
- (9) an (Ø)
- (10) a

3.4 *the*, zero article (\emptyset): 1

1. *The* / \emptyset aim of this paper is to review all *the* / \emptyset relevant works in *the* / \emptyset literature.
2. We wanted to test for any toxic affects of copper in fruit. *The* / \emptyset Samples of *the* / \emptyset fruit were collected at *the* / \emptyset harvest time to test for *the* / \emptyset residues of copper in *the* / \emptyset edible parts.
3. *The* / \emptyset presence of copper contaminants was confirmed by GC-MS.
4. *The* / \emptyset snow samples were analyzed after *the* / \emptyset melting. These samples were then...
5. In general, *the* / \emptyset formation of *the* / \emptyset clouds seems to depend on...
6. Using this toothpaste totally prevents *the* / \emptyset plaque formation.
7. *The* / \emptyset force triggers *the* / \emptyset mechanism described above.
8. *The* / \emptyset Blake's hypothesis suggests that *the* / \emptyset Boolean value cannot be estimated in such cases.
9. With regard to *the* / \emptyset passive immunization, *the* / \emptyset administration of an antibody that recognizes the disease in *the* / \emptyset patients with *the* / \emptyset mild to moderate symptoms is very useful.
10. *The* / \emptyset rapamycin is a naturally occurring compound with *the* / \emptyset immunosuppressant activity that is used to prevent *the* / \emptyset organ rejection, especially in *the* / \emptyset kidney.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. the, the, the | 6. \emptyset |
| 2. \emptyset , \emptyset , \emptyset , \emptyset , the | 7. the, the |
| 3. the | 8. \emptyset , the |
| 4. \emptyset [assuming that such samples have not been mentioned before] \emptyset | 9. \emptyset , the \emptyset [i.e. all patients not specific ones], \emptyset |
| 5. the, \emptyset | 10. \emptyset , \emptyset , \emptyset the |

3.5 *the*, zero article (\emptyset): 2

1. This can be seen in *the* / \emptyset figure.
2. *The* / \emptyset Table 1 highlights that...
3. Please see *the* / \emptyset appendix for further details.
4. This is highlighted in *the* / \emptyset Results (*the* / \emptyset Sect. 3.4) and commented on in *the* / \emptyset Discussion (*the* / \emptyset Sect. 3.5).
5. This is *the* / \emptyset story of my life.
6. I work at *the* / \emptyset Dept. of X at *the* / \emptyset University of Shanghai in *the* / \emptyset China. Before I worked in *the* / \emptyset UK.
7. We found that *the* / \emptyset 15% of these samples were contaminated.
8. I was *the* / \emptyset best student in *the* / \emptyset class.
9. *The* / \emptyset pollution has significantly affected *the* / \emptyset environment.
10. *The* / \emptyset Italians are not very patriotic but *the* / \emptyset French are.
11. *The* / \emptyset most of *the* / \emptyset samples were tested using this method.
12. We carried out this research *the* / \emptyset last year.
13. There is a congress in *the* / \emptyset last week of September *the* / \emptyset next year.
14. We found this data on *the* / \emptyset Internet, but it is not referred to in *the* / \emptyset literature.
15. *The* / \emptyset knowledge of the mechanisms involved is essential. But *the* / \emptyset knowledge we currently have is insufficient.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| (1) the | (9) \emptyset , the |
| (2) \emptyset | (10) (the), the |
| (3) the | (11) \emptyset , the |
| (4) the, \emptyset , the, \emptyset | (12) \emptyset |
| (5) the | (13) the, \emptyset |
| (6) the, the, \emptyset , the | (14) the, the |
| (7) \emptyset | (15) \emptyset , the |
| (8) the, the | |

3.6 *the*, zero article (Ø): general versus specific: 1

(1) **The** / Ø researchers have a very privileged position as they are paid to do what they like doing. (2) **The** / Ø researchers in industry tend to be paid more than (3) **the** / Ø researchers at university. (4) **The** / Ø researchers at Manchester University are studying ways to improve English as a language of international business communication: the project is called Bizglish.

(5) **The** / Ø only researchers in the project who are not being sponsored by the British government are those from abroad. (6) **The** / Ø researchers who started the project have now all left the team.

There are two types of researchers involved in the project. (7) **The** / Ø researchers who are studying the ways mother tongue speakers communicate and (8) **the** / Ø researchers studying the way non-native speakers use English. (9) **The** / Ø researchers who are studying the way non-native speakers use English have provided the most interesting results so far. (10) **The** / Ø researchers that I met yesterday told me that the project was going very well.

(1) Ø

(6) the

(2) Ø

(7) Ø

(3) Ø

(8) Ø

(4) Ø

(9) the

(5) the

(10) the

3.7 *the*, zero article (\emptyset): general versus specific: 2

Check your answers to 3.6 by answering the questions below. If your answer indicates that the researchers in question are specific researchers, then you must put **the**. The numbers below refer to the numbers in 3.6.

1. Are we talking about *specific* researchers that we've already mentioned, or *all* researchers?
- 2, 3. Are we talking about *specific* researchers that we have already mentioned, or essentially *all* researchers in industry and *all* researchers at university?
4. Are we talking about *specific* researchers at Manchester University that we have already mentioned, or just some researchers at Manchester University that we have not already mentioned?
- 5, 6. Have these researchers already been mentioned in some way? Are they defined in some way? Are they specific researchers or simply researchers in general?
- 7, 8. (a) Have these researchers been explicitly mentioned before?
(b) Could we say: some researchers are studying non verbal ways in which we communicate and others are studying the language we use? (c) Could we say (in a similar way): There are two types of researchers involved in the project: English researchers and foreign researchers?
9. Have these researchers already been mentioned? So, are they specific?
10. Does this mean *all* researchers, *some* researchers, or very *specific* researchers?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| (1) all | (7, 8) (a) no (b) yes, (c) yes |
| (2, 3) all | (9) yes, specific |
| (4) some | (10) specific |
| (5, 6) they have been mentioned and are thus specific | |