

Adrian Wallwork

Essential English Grammar and Communication Strategies

Intermediate Level

English for Academic Research

Series Editor

Adrian Wallwork, English for Academics SAS
Pisa, Italy

This series aims to help non-native, English-speaking researchers communicate in English. The books are designed like manuals or user guides to help readers find relevant information quickly, and assimilate it rapidly and effectively.

More information about this series at <https://link.springer.com/bookseries/13913>

Adrian Wallwork

Essential English Grammar and Communication Strategies

Intermediate Level

 Springer

Adrian Wallwork
English for Academics
Pisa, Italy

ISSN 2625-3445

ISSN 2625-3453 (electronic)

English for Academic Research

ISBN 978-3-030-95611-0

ISBN 978-3-030-95612-7 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95612-7>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2022

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Introduction

Who is this book for? What are the aims of the book?

Who for: Non-native researchers, teachers of English for Academic Purposes (EAP).

Level of English: Intermediate and above.

Aims: A reference manual for learning the principal aspects of English that you need for academic writing.

- The grammar and link words needed to write a research paper.
- Strategies for ensuring what you write is easy for readers to understand.
- Strategies for writing clearly, unambiguously, with reasonably short sentences, and well-constructed paragraphs.
- Effective email communication with editors, referees and colleagues.

This book thus includes only what is ESSENTIAL. It is NOT a comprehensive guide to grammar and usage.

If you want more detail then you can consult the following book, from which the present book has taken several examples:

English for Research: Usage, Style, and Grammar (SpringerNature).

This means that the present book only covers, for example, key areas of tense usage in academic writing (present simple, present perfect vs past simple, passive) and not less frequently used forms (e.g. conditionals). It focuses on those link words that create the least problems in terms of structure – thus words like *although*, *however* and *but* are covered, whereas *notwithstanding*, *nonetheless* and other less frequently used link words are not covered.

The idea was to create a book that:

- contains what you REALLY need to know
- provides simple strategies for carrying out quite complex tasks (e.g. difficult emails, reducing sentence length, writing unambiguously)
- you can study and learn from easily – the layout and examples are designed to be very clear. You can try to correct the bad examples by yourself, then check with the good examples

In some cases I have used examples that have appeared in my previous books. These books are mentioned at the end of the relevant section, so you can refer to them if you need more details.

Contents

1	Articles and Nouns	1
2	Abbreviations, Acronyms, False Friends, Spelling	11
3	Can, May, Could, Might	23
4	Clarity and Empathy	29
5	Comparisons, Dates, Measurements, Numbers	41
6	CVS / Resumes	51
7	Emails and Letters to the Editor	63
8	Link Words	73
9	Paragraphs, Paraphrasing, Sentence Length	89
10	Prepositions and Adverbs	99
11	Present and Past Tenses Used in Research Papers	119
12	Punctuation, Genitive	129
13	Verbs	143
14	Word Order	153
	How is the Book Organized?	171
	Other Books in this Series	173
	The Author	175

Learn with English for Academics (e4ac.com) and the *English for Academic Research* Series Published by SpringerNature 177

Full Table of Contents. 179

Index. 183

Chapter 1

Articles and Nouns



1.1 a, an, one

a before:

- consonants
- the following letters in acronyms: B, C, D, G, J, K, P, Q, T, U, V, W, Y, Z
- *u*, if the sound is like you e.g. *university, unique, utility*
- *eu*
- *h* except in these cases: *an hour, an honor, an honest, an heir, an historical* (*a historical* is also common)

an before:

- *u*, if the *u* is pronounced as in *uncle, understanding, uninteresting*
- the following letters in acronyms: A, E, F, H, I, L, M, N, O, R, S, X



She has *a* *Apple* computer.

He has *an* *university* degree and *a* *MBA*.



She has *an* *Apple* computer.

He has *a* *university* degree and *an* *MBA*.

This is *a* *European* law.

This is *an* *EU* law.

This is *a* *universal* problem.

This is *an* *unusual* problem.

He is *an* *NBC* player.

1.1 a, an, one (cont.)

one: indicates a number

I have written **one** paper not two.

There is **only one** way to do this.



Usage, Style, and Grammar: 3

Grammar Exercises: 3.2



All countable nouns (1.4) in the singular require an article (either *a/an* or *the*). You cannot say, for example, *I am without ticket*. But instead you should say *I don't have a ticket* or *the ticket*.

If a noun is uncountable, then *a/an* are not used. You cannot say *I need an information*, instead you can use *some* or *a piece of*, or in some cases simply omit the article.



We carried out the experiments *in laboratory*.

They work *in bank*.

This test gave *an information* about how to ...

They speak *a good English*.

Please give us *a feedback*.

1.1 a, an, one (cont.)



We carried out the experiments *in a / the laboratory*.

They work *in a bank*.

This test gave *some information* about how to ...

They speak *good English*.

Please give us *some feedback*.



Usage, Style, and Grammar: 3

Grammar Exercises: 3.1, 3.3

1.2 *a vs the*

a/an – generic, or first time you mention something

the - on subsequent occasions (i.e. when the reader already knows what you are talking about)

This paper presents *a* new system for modeling 4D maps. *The* system is based on ...

ABSTRACT In this work, we make *an* attempt to test the efficiency of ...

CONCLUSIONS In this work, *the* attempt to assess the relative efficiency of the tested methods was carried out on two levels.

A comparison of our data with those in the literature indicates that ...

The comparison given in Sect. 2.1 highlights that ...

This is *a* first step = an initial step towards combatting the new virus. We cannot be sure of the outcome ...

This is *the* first step towards combatting the new virus. The second step is to ...



Usage, Style, and Grammar: 3

Grammar Exercises: 3.3

1.3 *the* vs no article

no article (also known as zero article) - to refer to something in general

the - to refer to something specific

the is not usually used with languages, but **the** is used with nationalities



Shortage of water in Middle East could be cause of next world war.

The researchers all over the world spend a lot of time in laboratory.

The drug is a serious problem in the today's society.

English made a terrible mistake to leave the European Union.

(Conclusions) Results show that $x = y$.



The shortage of water in the Middle East could be the cause of the next world war.

Our initial analysis proved that the water in the lake was very polluted.

Researchers all over the world spend a lot of time in the laboratory.

The researchers in our department spend a lot of time in the laboratory.

Drugs are a serious problem in today's society.

The English made a terrible mistake to leave the European Union.

English is a relatively easy language.

(Conclusions) The / our results show that $x = y$.

Pollution is a serious environmental issue and the pollution we have here in China is about the worst in the world.



Usage, Style, and Grammar: 3

Grammar Exercises: 3.4 – 3.9

1.4 Countable vs Uncountable Nouns

Countable - something that you can count and easily differentiate from other things of the same kind:

one car, two cars, three cars, many cars

Uncountable – difficult to count because not easy to divide up into distinct parts:

water, some water, a little water



I read *book*.

I read *two / many / various book*.

I received good *feedbacks*.

We need more *equipments*.

They have *few moneys*.

I have *an expertise* in this field.



I read *a / the / your book*.

I read *two / many / various books*.

I received good *feedback*.

We need more *equipment*.

They have *little money*.

I have [*some*] *expertise* in this field.



- When a countable noun is in the singular form, related words must be singular too.
- When a countable noun is plural, related words must be plural too.
- An uncountable noun is ALWAYS singular, so related words must be singular too.

1.4 Countable vs Uncountable Nouns (cont.)



This book are very interesting.

These informations are important. They must be read carefully.

These feedback is important.

We have done many researches. These show that $x = y$.



This book is very interesting.

This information is important. It must be read carefully.

This feedback is important.

We have done a lot of research. This shows that $x = y$.



Uncountable nouns used in academia: *access, accommodation, advertising, advice, agriculture* (and other subjects of study), *capital, cancer* (and other diseases and illnesses), *consent, electricity* (and other intangibles), *English* (and other languages), *equipment, evidence, expertise, feedback, functionality, gold* (and other metals), *hardware, health, industry, inflation, information, intelligence, knowhow, machinery, money, news, oxygen* (and other gases), *personnel, progress, research, safety, security, software, staff, storage, traffic, training, transport, waste, wealth, welfare, wildlife*

The table below lists words that indicate an indefinite quantity. These are words that you can generally use with countable and uncountable nouns in a research paper. Note: *a piece of* is not commonly used in research papers.

1.4 Countable vs Uncountable Nouns (cont.)

QUANTIFIER	COUNTABLE (SINGULAR)	COUNTABLE (PLURAL)	UNCOUNTABLE
a / an	a book		a piece of information
a (large / small) amount of		a large amount of books	a small amount of information
a bit / piece of			a piece of information
a few		a few books	
a great deal of		a great deal of books	a great deal of information
a little			a little information
a lot of		a lot of books	a lot of information
a number of		a number of books	
a series of		a series of books	
all		all the books	all the information
any		any books	any information
each	each book		each piece of information
enough		enough books	enough information
every	every book		every bit of information
few		few books	
little			little information
many		many books	many pieces of information
most		most books	most (of the) information
much			much (of the) information
no	no book	no books	no information
none of		none of the books	none of the information
one	one book		one piece of information
several		several books	
some		some books	some information
the	the book	the books	the information



Usage, Style, and Grammar: 1, 6.1

Grammar Exercises: 1

1.5 few, little, a few, a little; many, much

a little, a few = not much, not many

little, few = almost nothing / none; a very low (probably insufficient) quantity

a little, little, much + singular uncountable noun (1.4)

a few, few, many + plural noun



Few days ago we sent the paper to the editor.

We only had little time to undertake the research.

We have few informations on this topic.



A few days ago we sent the paper to the editor.

We only had a little time to undertake the research = A few days/weeks ...

We had little time. = A couple of days ...

We don't have much information on this topic.

= *We only have a little information.*

= *We have little information.*



Note the differences between these pairs of sentences.

He knows a little about this subject. = Just a few things.

He knows little about this subject. = He knows almost nothing.

Few people know this. = Hardly anyone / Almost no one knows about this.

A few people know this. = Some people know this, but not many.

Little has been done to help the poor. = Not enough / Very little has been done.

A little has been done to help the poor. = Something has been done, so a minimum amount of progress is being made.