

Adrian Wallwork

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# English for Academic Research: Grammar Exercises

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# English for Academic Research: Grammar Exercises

 Springer

Adrian Wallwork  
Via Carducci 9  
56127 Pisa, Italy  
[adrian.wallwork@gmail.com](mailto:adrian.wallwork@gmail.com)

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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.

### **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 Chapters 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 a 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 Sections 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, e.g. 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 that 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: Grammar, Usage and Style* – 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* – 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.

*English for Interacting on Campus* – tips for: socializing with fellow students, addressing professors, participating in lectures, improving listening skills and pronunciation, surviving in a foreign country.

## 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).

To find out how the manuals are cross-referenced with the exercise books go to: <http://www.springer.com/series/13913>

### **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.*

For full details on how to exploit all the books in the English for Academic series, see:

*English for Academic Research: A Guide for Teachers*

# 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...