

Understanding English Grammar

A Course Book for Chinese Learners of English

Tony T. N. Hung



香港大學出版社
HONG KONG UNIVERSITY PRESS

Hong Kong University Press
14/F Hing Wai Centre
7 Tin Wan Praya Road
Aberdeen
Hong Kong

© Hong Kong University Press 2005
First Published 2005
Reprinted 2008

ISBN-10: 962-209-726-X
ISBN-13: 978-962-209-726-1

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Secure On-line Ordering
<http://www.hkupress.org>

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library.

Printed and bound by Lammar Offset Printing Ltd., Hong Kong, China

Contents

Preface	vii
Introduction	1
1 The Subject	7
2 Nouns and Noun Phrases	21
3 Tense and Finiteness	41
4 Auxiliary Verbs and Aspect	57
5 Transitivity and Passive Voice	73
6 Verb Complementation	91
7 Simple Sentences	105
8 Finite Subordinate Clauses	117
9 Non-finite Subordinate Clauses	131
10 Relative Clauses	143
Notes and Answers Key	159
Appendices	221
Writing tasks	221
Proof-reading exercises	222
Diagnostic test	223
Bibliography	233

Introduction

What Is Grammar?

This book is about English grammar. We hope that, at the end of it, you will get a better understanding of how English grammar works, and that your own ability to use it will also be improved. But first, what do we mean by ‘**grammar**’?

We all know what words are. Here are a number of words from English:

met
she
yesterday
her friend

On their own, one at a time, words tell us very little. But here is the most powerful feature of all human languages — we can *combine* words to make **sentences**, which can tell us a lot more. For example, we can combine the above words to make strings of words like the following:

1. She met her friend yesterday.
2. Yesterday she met her friend.
3. She yesterday met her friend.
4. She met yesterday her friend, etc.

They all seem to mean something more than the words do on their own. Now, the important question is this: are the results always acceptable or **grammatical**?



QUESTION 1

Which of the above combinations (1–4) are acceptable or grammatical in English?

Answer:

[NB: When you see a double line like this, do not proceed further until you've answered the question.]

Most of you will have found only two of the four sentences above to be acceptable in English:

1. ✓ She met her friend yesterday
2. ✓ Yesterday she met her friend
3. * She yesterday met her friend
4. * She met yesterday her friend

[NB: From now on we'll use an asterisk * to indicate that a sentence is **unacceptable** or **ungrammatical**.]



QUESTION 2

Can you say what is wrong with sentences 3–4 above?

Answer:

At this point some of you may be thinking to yourselves: Isn't the **meaning** of sentences 3–4 just as clear as in 1–2? May be so. But here is the important point: in English (as in any other language), it is *not* enough just to put words together to make meaning. To put it simply:

- **There are only certain ways in which words can be put together to form acceptable or 'grammatical' sentences.**

Other ways of putting words together (as in 3–4) are 'ungrammatical'. That is the first thing that we need to know about grammar.

Let's check this out further and compare how words are put together in another language, Chinese. We'll stick to the same combinations of words given in sentences 1–4. Try replacing each English word with an equivalent Chinese word, look at the results and mark each sentence below with a ✓ or * to show whether it is grammatical or ungrammatical *in Chinese*:

1. ___ She met her friend yesterday (Chinese: 她碰到了她朋友昨天)
2. ___ Yesterday she met her friend (Chinese: 昨天她碰到了她朋友)
3. ___ She yesterday met her friend (Chinese: 她昨天碰到了她朋友)
4. ___ She met yesterday her friend (Chinese: 她碰到了昨天她朋友)

What you have discovered about the above sentences will have led you to a second, equally important conclusion:

- **Different languages have *different* ways of putting words together.**

Our next step is to try and see if we can describe these differences. Our purpose is not to write detailed 'grammars' of English and Chinese, but to become more sharply aware that there are systematic differences between them, and to avoid making the mistake that what works in Chinese will work in English.



QUESTION 3

Compare the Chinese and English sentences in 1–4 in terms of which combinations are grammatical or ungrammatical. What differences do you find?

English:

Chinese:



QUESTION 4

Now take each of the following sets of words, and try to combine them into sentences in both English and Chinese. Write out both the grammatical and ungrammatical combinations in each language:

1. *our teacher, left, the classroom, suddenly*
2. *I, bought, a house, last year*
3. *He, opened, the window, with a screwdriver*

	English	Chinese
<i>Grammatical:</i>	1. _____	_____
	2. _____	_____
	3. _____	_____
<i>Ungrammatical:</i>	1. _____	_____
	2. _____	_____
	3. _____	_____

Compare the grammatical and ungrammatical combinations in English and Chinese in the above examples. Try to think about them not as isolated examples, but as a group of data illustrating a particular *pattern* (or patterns) in the two languages. [NB: A ‘pattern’ is a *regular* ‘behaviour’ or way of doing things: e.g. in Hong Kong, you observe that all cars drive on the left side of the road, and that in mainland China, they drive on the right side. These are patterns.]

Try to describe these patterns in as clear and simple a way as you can. Don’t worry if you don’t have the technical vocabulary. All you need are basic, familiar terms like ‘subject’, ‘verb’, and ‘object’. To start off, you can say something like this:

- In both English and Chinese, the subject regularly comes before the verb, and the verb regularly comes before the object.

(For instance, the subject ‘I’ comes before the verb ‘bought’, which comes before the object ‘a house’, in both English and Chinese.) Did you notice that particular pattern?



QUESTION 5

Now go on to describe any other similarities or differences that you can find between English and Chinese grammar in the above examples.

Similarities:

Differences:

Summary

In this brief Introduction, you have seen that grammar is about the way the words of a language are put together to make sentences.

This is not as simple as it may seem — we can't simply put words together in a way that (we think) makes sense. The words have to be put together according to the 'rules' of grammar — and these 'rules' differ from language to language. What works in Chinese may not work in English!

In the rest of this book, we will try to discover what some of these rules are in English. 'Rules' in grammar are not rules made up by somebody to be obeyed by everybody else. These are just 'descriptions' or 'generalizations' of how the language works, how words are put together to form sentences in the language. They are patterns which you can discover for yourself (with a little help), and this book will help you to do that.

7

Simple Sentences

Introduction

As you know, the chief aim of learning grammar is to be able to put words together to form ‘**grammatical**’ sentences. (It is of course no less important to be able to write not only isolated sentences but whole **texts** — but for the purposes of this course, we’ll start at the more basic level of sentences.)

So far, we’ve been looking at **parts** of sentences, such as the noun or noun phrase and the verb or verb group, because they have their own internal structures and it’s important to understand them properly.

The noun (or noun phrase) and the verb (or verb group) can be said to be the basic ‘building blocks’ of the English sentence. Even the simplest sentence will have at least a **noun** —functioning as the **subject** — and a **verb**, for example:

1. People left.
2. The concert ended.

You can’t have a complete sentence which is without either a subject or a verb — e.g. *‘Left’ or *‘The concert’. [NB: For the time being, we’ll exclude ‘imperative’ sentences like ‘Go!’, and sentences which are ‘truncated’ or cut short.]

A sentence is a very complicated thing to analyse, because it can be very, very long, consisting of an enormous number of clauses, for example: ‘This is the dog that chased the cat that caught the rat that ate the cheese that Jim bought from the store that ... etc. etc.’

Or it can be very short, consisting of only one little clause (e.g. ‘People left’). Though the number of possible sentences in English is infinite (we can sit here and continue making up sentences and more sentences until we die of old age!), it can be seen that they fall into

a relatively small number of **patterns**. Understanding these patterns can help us to make grammatical sentences more easily, and this is what we are going to do in the next four units.

Since a sentence is made up of one or more **clauses**, let's first analyse the structure of the clause in English, and then the structure of the sentence will become clearer. A sentence which consists of only one clause is called a '**simple sentence**'. In this unit, we'll explore the structure of the clause (or simple sentence), i.e. the parts that it is made up of.

Pattern One: SV

(Note: **S** = Subject and **V** = Verb)

The simplest type of clause consists of a subject followed by a verb. Here are a few examples of this type of clause:

[Time]S [flies]V
 [The war]S [has ended]V
 [The new millennium]S [is beginning]V
 [What he said]S [will be remembered]V

As we have said earlier, the subject is most commonly a noun (or noun phrase). But it is not the only possibility (as you may have noticed in the last sentence).



QUESTION 1

In each of the following sentences, can the underlined group of words function as the subject? From this evidence, can you explain what types of words or phrases — other than nouns — can serve as subjects? [NB: In case you don't know what to call the underlined groups in 7–9, they are 'subordinate clauses'.]

1. Poor are always with us.
2. The poor are always with us.
3. Loudly are here.
4. The loudly are here.
5. Some are here.
6. On the table is tiring.
7. Standing on the table is tiring.
8. That oil floats on water is well-known.
9. What he does is well-known.

The following types of words or phrases can be Subjects:

Notice that, while a number of different forms can function as the subject (though nouns and noun phrases are by far the most common), only a **verb** can function as the verb. This may be obvious, but some students still wrongly produce sentences without a verb, e.g. *‘Her father very rich’, *‘My friend very angry with me’, etc.

Pattern Two: SVO

In Unit 5, you saw that certain verbs, called **transitive** verbs, require an **object**, without which the sentence would be incomplete. For example, *‘He likes’ and *‘He hates’ are incomplete, as opposed to ‘He likes classical music’ and ‘He hates heavy metal’. ‘Classical music’ and ‘heavy metal’ are objects of the verbs ‘like’ and ‘hate’ respectively.

Here then is our second clause pattern: **SVO** (where **O** = Object).



QUESTION 2

Complete the following sentences with an object *only where necessary* (otherwise leave it blank).

1. My friend repaired _____.
2. My friend snored _____.
3. He caught _____.
4. He died _____.
5. The economy has deteriorated _____.
6. Workers’ salaries will fall _____.
7. The building of Disneyland will stimulate _____.
8. The earthquake destroyed _____.

To test whether the ‘object’ you’ve added is really an object, try turning the sentence into the passive voice. Only true objects can be passivized.

Pattern Three: SVOO

In a SVO clause, there is only one object. But there are certain verbs that take not one but *two* objects. The most common example is the verb ‘give’. In terms of meaning, the action of giving involves not only a ‘giver’, but also something which is given (the ‘**Direct** Object’), and someone who receives it (the ‘**Indirect** Object’). For example:

1. She gave *him* [IO] *an expensive present* [DO]
2. The university gave *the Chief Executive* [IO] *an honorary degree* [DO]

(where IO = Indirect Object, DO = Direct Object)

Notice that the indirect object *precedes* (comes before) the direct object — it would be wrong to reverse the order, as in *‘She gave an expensive present him’. In this sense, English is just like Mandarin. However, there is another way of putting it, where the direct object comes first, and the indirect object comes next, preceded by a **preposition** (usually ‘to’):

3. She gave an expensive present *to him*.
4. The university gave an honorary degree *to the Chief Executive*.

Again, this is like Mandarin — ‘她給一件貴重的禮物 (DO) 給他 (IO)’, as opposed to the more common ‘她給他 (IO) 一件貴重的禮物 (DO)’.

Is it true that any sentence like (3–4) above can be rewritten as (1–2), with the indirect object preceding the direct object? This is a small but interesting question.



QUESTION 3

Some of the following sentences can be rewritten in the form Subject-Verb-Indirect Object-Direct Object, and some cannot. Identify and rewrite those that can. Do you see anything in common among them? [Clue: Look for any special characteristics of the indirect object in a S-V-IO-DO sentence.]

1. I sent a letter to my best friend.
2. I sent a letter to Japan.
3. She baked a cake for her boyfriend.
4. She baked a cake for the party.
5. He bought a car for his parents.
6. He bought a car for transportation.
7. He gave a thousand dollars to everyone.
8. He gave a thousand dollars to charity.

The sentences that can be rewritten as S-V-IO-DO are:

Pattern Four: SVC

(where C = Subject Complement)

We have seen that a sentence must have a subject and verb, and that some verbs need to be completed by an object. But are objects the only things that are needed to complete a sentence?



QUESTION 4

Complete the following sentences with whatever words you find appropriate (nouns, adjectives, and so on, but *don't* use another verb here). If you use a noun to complete it, do you think it is the object of the verb? If not, why?

1. My neighbour is _____.
2. In the 1950s, Hong Kong was _____.
3. China will be _____.
4. He became _____.
5. These apples are _____.
6. The students seem _____.

Types of words used to complete the above sentences:

You will notice that the sentences above are different from the SVO sentences that we looked at earlier. In the SVO pattern, the verb is ‘completed’ by an object, and an object has all the properties that we described in Unit 5 — i.e. it is usually a noun (or noun phrase), it can be passivized (i.e. moved to the subject position of a passive sentence), and in terms of meaning, it is the ‘target’ at which the action is directed.

In the pattern in Question 4 above, on the other hand, the verb is completed by something which is clearly not an object. It’s usually called a ‘**Subject Complement**’, and we’ll see why in a moment.

A subject complement is different from an object firstly because it is not necessarily a noun (or noun phrase) — it may also be an adjective or prepositional phrase or subordinate clause, for example:

1. The economy became *very bad*. [adjective phrase]
2. The book is *on the table*. [prepositional phrase]
3. This is *what I’ve always wanted*. [subordinate clause]

Secondly, even if the subject complement is a noun, it can never be passivized like an object, for example:

4. He became *a stockbroker*.
- 4a. * A stockbroker was become by him.

Thirdly, unlike an object, a subject complement is *not* the ‘target’ of any action aimed at it by the subject. In fact, *it refers back to the subject itself*.

1. The economy became *very bad*. (the economy ← very bad)
2. The book is *on the table*. (the book ← on the table)
3. This is *what I’ve always wanted*. (this ← what I’ve always wanted)
4. He became *a stockbroker*. (he ← a stockbroker)

That’s why verbs like *be*, *seem*, *become*, etc. are sometimes called ‘**linking verbs**’ or ‘**copula verbs**’, because they ‘link’ the subject to the subject complement. The term ‘subject complement’ suggests that it ‘completes’ the subject in some way.

One common mistake made by students is to omit a linking verb, especially the verb *be*, as in *‘My friend $\hat{=}$ very angry’. This is partly due to the influence of Chinese, where the linking verb (*shi* 是) is usually omitted unless you want to emphasize the subject complement.



QUESTION 5

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with an appropriate verb. Some of them can only be filled by a **linking verb**, and some only by a transitive verb, so be careful. If a blank can be filled by either a linking or a transitive verb, then provide both, but note the differences in meaning.

1. He _____ a doctor.
2. The driver _____ a man.
3. My classmates _____ very hard-working.
4. During the trip, he _____ ill.
5. During the trip, he _____ a fever.
6. My teacher _____ a book.
7. My teacher _____ a singer.
8. The truth _____ that he had an affair with the intern.

Pattern Five: SVOC

In Section V, we saw that, in the SVC pattern, the ‘subject complement’ is needed to refer to and ‘complete’ the subject. As you can see, this is a very common pattern — there are lots of sentences like ‘He *is* rich/young/handsome/ an actor/a teacher/at home/in the shower’ etc.

There is a less common pattern where a complement is needed to refer to the object, for otherwise the sentence would be incomplete. That’s why we call this type of complement an ‘**Object Complement**’, to distinguish it from a ‘Subject Complement’.



QUESTION 6

There’s something incomplete about some of the following sentences. Complete these sentences with an appropriate word or phrase. (For sentences which do not really *need* to be completed, do *not* fill in the blanks.) The objects are underlined for you.

1. The committee appointed him _____.
2. The committee welcomed him _____.
3. The students voted Professor Lee _____.
4. The students liked Professor Lee _____.
5. His war experience made him _____.
6. His war experience scared him _____.

The last pattern, SVOC, is the least common of all the five that we've seen so far, and involves a relatively small number of verbs (like *appoint*, *make*, *elect*, etc.) Still, it's important to know that such sentences would be incomplete and ungrammatical without an object complement where it's needed.

Adverbials

So far we have not said anything about a very common part of a clause or sentence. Consider the underlined parts in the following sentences:

1. He suddenly left Hong Kong yesterday.
2. He left Hong Kong for a conference in Tokyo.
3. He slept soundly on the plane all the way from Hong Kong to Toronto.
4. He cried because his sister took his teddy bear.

We'll call the underlined phrases **adverbials** — because they provide additional information such as the time, place, manner, reason, etc. (Note that the term 'adverbials' includes not only adverbs, but all other words or phrases [like the above] which have the same function as adverbs.)

The important point about adverbials is that they are generally *optional* rather than *compulsory*, and can be left out without making the sentence ungrammatical. All the other parts which we discussed earlier — subject, verb, object, complement — are compulsory (depending on the type of verb), and if any of them are left out, the sentence would be ungrammatical.

Another grammatical feature of adverbials is that, unlike subjects, objects and complements, they can be moved around much more easily. For example, sentence 1 can be rewritten as 'Yesterday he left Hong Kong suddenly' or 'He left Hong Kong suddenly yesterday', etc.

**QUESTION 7**

Which of the bracketed parts in the following sentences are **adverbials**? Can you explain how you know?

1. He lent [her] [the book].
2. He bought [the book] [from the university bookshop].
3. The boss made [him] [the general manager].
4. The boss scolded [him] [all the time].
5. The light went out [all of a sudden].
6. The light blinded [the intruder].

The following are adverbials:

They are adverbials because:

As we've said, there is a huge variety of adverbials, and they are optional — i.e. not strictly required by the grammar. Therefore, we'll not say too much about them in this book.

Coordination

From the next unit onwards, we'll go beyond the single clause, simple sentence and look at more complex sentences. One of the most common errors made by students is to combine two or more main clauses (or simple sentences) into one sentence without any attempt to *connect* them. For example:

1. The economy deteriorated, many people lost their jobs.
2. I called yesterday, he was not home.

This may be due to the influence of Chinese writing. Just remember that in English, you cannot keep putting main clauses (or simple sentences) one after another in a series, separated only by commas. You will need to *join* them with **coordinating conjunctions**, like *and*, *or*, *but*.

1. The economy deteriorated, **and** many people lost their jobs.
2. I called yesterday **but** he was not home.

If you don't do that, you should at least separate the two main clauses into separate sentences, with a full stop:

1. The economy deteriorated. Many people lost their jobs.



QUESTION 8

The following sentences are taken from students' writings. Correct any mistakes that you may find:

1. Vitamin A is also called retinol, occurs naturally in carrots.
2. The lower part was vegetation, this vegetation was very thick.
3. Coal is the most important fuel in our daily life, it has been used for a long time.
4. The baby was very clean, did not need a bath.
5. The giant plants died many years later, thus the plants decomposed gradually.

Answer:

Additional Exercises

Fill in the blanks in the following texts with appropriate words:

Text 1

I have read with amusement about _____ attempts of the Hong Kong government _____ control the littering public by _____ \$600 on-the-spot fines.

As we have all seen by _____ reports about beach littering, this system _____ completely useless as it is.

I _____ like to propose a new three-phase scheme _____ would surely deter littering. Phase one _____ the same, an on-the-spot fine, but _____ to \$1,000. Phase two would be _____ use the money to purchase a _____ refuse container to be placed on _____ near the spot of the crime. _____ this container would be a small _____ bearing the name of the offender _____ wording such as “This bin was _____ for by (offender’s name) as a _____ of littering.” Phase three of this _____ would be to make the offender _____ for one day cleaning the streets _____ the area where the offence took _____.

Surely this would deter littering in _____ of the punishment and I am _____ that it would also severely reduce _____ likelihood of a repeat offence.

Such _____ plan would demonstrate just how serious _____ government is about trying to make Hong Kong _____ a clean city, if indeed it _____ serious about a cleaner Hong Kong.

Text 2

The Chinese government will not let just anybody gather _____ 30,000 people, mostly students, in one place for an _____ or two for often emotional motivational speeches. Li Yang _____ clearly an exceptional case.

Mr Li is the inventor _____ Crazy English, a language learning method that requires students _____ shout in order to overcome their inhibitions, and he _____ more of a proselytizer than a teacher.

He once _____ to 100,000 people in a single day, at three _____ seminars in Chengdu, and to date as many as _____ million people are believed to have heard him speak _____ person or on tape. In perhaps the ultimate official _____, he was granted the privilege of holding a seminar _____ the hallowed grounds of the Forbidden City.

But it _____ not be surprising that government officials would support Mr Li, China’s _____ English-learning guru. He is singing their song, and it _____ something like this: learn English because it is necessary _____ your life and your country, and in return you _____ be rewarded with a higher salary, a stronger China _____ eventually a future in which people around the world _____ be required to learn Putonghua just as they need _____ learn English today.

Text 3

I hope that I am not the _____ Hong Kong citizen to feel profound shame _____ the reaction, or rather lack of it, _____ our community to the bomb disaster _____ Bali.

The island is a popular tourist _____ for Hong Kong people, so it was _____ from the outset that some of the _____ would be SAR residents. Yet the only _____ from our city when the news was _____ was a rather bland announcement on the _____ of Cathay Pacific that it would send _____ larger plane than usual to accommodate residents _____ wanted to return early. While the Australians _____ sending in medical teams and supplies, we _____ not even bother to donate as much _____ a box of bandages.

Are we so _____ up in the never-ending debates on _____ economy and negative equity that we have _____ all sense of our moral and social _____? Even when it became apparent that a _____ of fellow residents were missing, no member _____ our accountable government was dispatched to the _____ to represent our community and to ensure _____ everything possible was being done to find _____.

The Hong Kong community seems to have sunk _____ a spiritual vacuum. We must examine the _____ for this and try to recover our _____ of humanity and compassion for others.

Appendices

Writing Tasks

The fact that this book is aimed at helping you learn and understand more about English grammar does not mean that we are neglecting the importance of **language use**. In fact, as a language learner, it is important for you to realize that acquiring a language comes more from **using** it (in writing, speaking, etc.) than from just learning about it — but with proper guidance as to what is correct and appropriate in the language. This book provides some guidance to help you learn what is grammatically correct in English, but you will need to put this knowledge to use whenever you can.

As an English user and learner, you will no doubt be carrying out a lot of tasks and communicative activities in English both in your study and your everyday life — writing assignments, reports, letters, e-mail, etc. We will not try to duplicate all those tasks in the context of this little book. But just in case you would like to do some more writing, we suggest a number of topics below which might be of interest to you.

Instructions

Write two or three paragraphs, totalling 150–200 words, on any of the following topics. Please note that this is *not* a full essay or a ‘research’ topic, so there is no need for you to spend time reading up on it. Just draw on your own thoughts and ideas, and try to express yourself as clearly and coherently as you can.

1. Many people have been saying that the standard of English among Hong Kong students has been declining, and that it is not good enough for a world-class city. Do you agree? If so, can you think of any reasons why Hong Kong students’ English should be so poor, even after so many years of study in school?

2. What kind of learning activities do you think can best help you to improve your English? Please explain the reasons for your suggestions.
3. Recently, the Hong Kong government decided to introduce an optional (non-compulsory) Common English Exit Test for graduating students in all Hong Kong universities. The IELTS test (originating from Cambridge University and the British Council) was chosen for this purpose. What are your views on the positive or negative effects of such a test?
4. First there was September 11 in New York, and then there was October 12 in Bali. What (if anything) can the world do about terrorism?
5. University authorities today are increasingly concerned about falling standards in student behaviour. Many professors, as well as students, have complained about the chatting, late arrivals, mobile phone use, and other undesirable types of behaviour which go on during lectures, and which distract the attention of everyone, especially those who are serious about studying. Why do you think some students behave like that? What can be done about this problem?
6. One of the more popular ways of learning English is by joining an 'English immersion camp', where students are 'immersed' for a week or two in an environment where English is spoken exclusively, and where they stay together and mix freely with English-speaking tutors and counsellors. Would you like to join such a camp, and what sort of activities would you like to be included there?

Proof-reading Exercises

A 'proof-reading' exercise is one where you are given a text with mistakes, and asked to correct them. It is a useful way of applying your knowledge of English grammar, and testing whether you've got it right yourself.

Read the following texts carefully, and correct all the errors. Then check your answers against the answer key provided at the end of this section.

Text 1

Recently, there is a great debate about whether English exit test should be introduced to test English standard of the university graduates. In fact, the reason for setting English exit test is that the English standard of Hong Kong university student are declining. The government wants to set a test to motivate the undergraduate students to improve English in the university.

However, the government seem to have ignored the drawbacks of the test. In fact, the students do not like exams. What the students would do is to drill the examination skills and forget the goal of learning English. As a result, the English standard of university student will not be raised by the test.

Secondly, they seem to have ignored that the workload of the university students are very heavy. They do not have enough time to drill the English. If the test establishes, this may greatly affect their major studies.

Thirdly, they seem to have equalized the English test result as the English standard. Though the one who score good results in the test could be better in English, this does not mean that the one who get a lower mark is the poorest. Therefore, the test may not be reliable.

To sum up, the exit test should not be established due to the above drawback. Instead, more opportunity to use English naturally should be created on campus to help the students improve English standard.

Text 2

Hong Kong is an international city. We can meet people from different culture easily since many foreigners worked and lived in Hong Kong for a long time. They knew the Chinese culture. We can make friend with them pretty easily. However, I don't think that I would marry someone from a different culture.

Firstly, I think that live with someone from a different culture is difficulty, especially in terms of the eating habit. For example, I cannot eat the Japanese food or pizza everyday because I have some health problem. Also, I am not like eating meat very much. So, I don't want to change eating style.

Secondly, I am weak in language. I cannot listen, read and speak well English. So, I think I cannot make friend with the foreigner. I don't think that many foreigners will be willing to communicate with the people like me because they usually supposed that Hong Kong people can speak fluent English. So, I would not marry with someone from different culture.

Diagnostic Test

We know that all students hate tests (and so do teachers, secretly), but it is useful at certain points in your study of any subject to test yourself, with the purpose of finding out how much you have learned, and whether there are areas of weakness in your previous learning. The following test is designed solely for that purpose. Try to complete it within the time limit given, and mark your own answers by referring to the answer key given at the end of this section. Try to find out where your mistakes are, and look up the relevant sections of the book again to see if you have misunderstood or forgotten something important. If in doubt, check with your teacher.

Answer ALL questions

Duration: 45 minutes

Section One

Instructions: Some of the following sentences contain grammatical errors. Put a cross (X) against each ungrammatical sentence, and correct the error. [NOTE: There is no need to re-copy the whole sentence. You can either: (i) delete the error itself and write the correction (if needed) directly below it, or (ii) insert the missing word (if needed). If a sentence is correct, put a (✓) against it.]

1. The booklet distributing to all students will explain everything.

2. This product is advertise in all newspapers.

3. My father very angry with me because I came home late.

4. She tried to buy the book, but was sold out.

5. This year, there are many people travel abroad.

6. *Gone with the Wind* is one of most famous movies of all time.

7. I am strongly agree with you.

8. Yesterday, I heard him give a speech on TV.

9. Invention of the computer was one of the great achievements of the 20th century.

10. Students always like to complain the heavy workload.

11. After the banquet, the remained food was given to the poor.

12. His parents persuaded him study accountancy.

13. At the meeting, the committee discussed about many important matters.

14. One of my friends live in Taipo.

15. One of the students won the Young Scientist Award was from HKBU.

16. The police let the protesters to demonstrate outside the embassy.

17. The building had about 80 storeys high.

18. I heard a big noise last night. Do you know what was happened?

19. The teacher made the students come to class on weekends.

20. The book was very popular, and was quickly sold out.

21. After a long discussion, the plan rejected by the committee.

22. The teacher asked why was he late.

23. The temperature in the desert raises quickly after sunrise.

24. This new procedure can now carry out in many countries.

25. She considers money is not the most important thing in life.

26. They disagree that being educated abroad is important.

27. This book teaches both the speaking and writing.

28. They have too much problems in their marriage.

29. He exercises a lot and eats carefully, and is very health.

30. When did they bought this house?

Section Two

Instructions: In questions 31–50, fill in the blank with the correct form of the word in brackets. [NOTE: Sometimes the correct form of the word may require an **additional** word to be used — such as an auxiliary verb (*is/are/was/were/has/had* etc) or article (*a/the* etc. or preposition (*in/on/at/about* etc.)]

Example 1: The holiday allowed me **to catch** (catch) up on my correspondence.

Example 2: They were **opposed to** (oppose) my plan.

31. One of the students _____ (be) still missing.
32. This shirt is very delicate and should not _____ (wash) by machine.
33. As soon as she started singing, everybody _____ (leave).
34. Students are not _____ (allow) to leave the examination hall early.
35. The shop was full of _____ (smile) salesmen.
36. All applicants _____ (reject) by the selection panel will be notified within a week.
37. His girlfriend wanted him _____ (buy) her a ring.
38. The teacher forced the students _____ (repeat) the exercise.
39. I seem to remember having _____ (do) this exercise before.
40. Your writing is _____ (lack) originality.
41. Most of _____ (foreigner) in Hong Kong cannot speak Cantonese properly.
42. There are thousands of people _____ (look) for jobs in Hong Kong.
43. His parents are very _____ (concern) his marriage.
44. Everybody agrees that experience _____ (useful).
45. _____ (be) the eldest son, he feels the burden of responsibility.

46–50:

In August this year, there (46) _____ (be) massive flooding in central Europe. Hundreds of people (47) _____ (lose) their lives, and hundreds of thousands their homes. Floods of this magnitude (48) _____ (not see) in these parts for a very long time, and the damage amounted to billions of dollars. Not since the Second World War (49) _____ (have) so much damage (50) _____ (do) to these European cities.

Instructions: In questions 51–60, fill in the blank with a word of your own choice *if you think that one is needed*. Otherwise, put a (✓).

51. I tried calling him several times, _____ no-one answered.
52. Although he is poor, _____ he is a happy and contented man.
53. Students _____ come to class more than 15 minutes late will be considered 'absent'.
54. I do not know _____ he is guilty or innocent.

55–60:

Earlier this year, the government announced (55) _____ there would be a pay cut for civil servants. There (56) _____ not been a salary cut for many years. I (57) _____ not agree that this should be done through legislation rather than negotiation. Though (58) _____ economy has (59) _____ deteriorating, there are other ways to save (60) _____ money.

Section Three

Instructions: In each of the following sentences 61–74, a number of alternative words or expressions are underlined. Circle the word or expression that best fits the sentence.

61. One-third of student body / the student body / students' bodies / the students' bodies voted for Saturday classes.
62. There were several students scored / to score / who scored / were scored straight A's in their exams.
63. There have / has / are / is many people who believe in ghosts.
64. Meteors fall / fell / falling / are falling from the sky can cause serious damage.
65. George Orwell, that his real name / which real name / his real name / whose real name was Eric Arthur Blair, wrote many politically oriented novels and essays.
66. After the crash, most of the passengers were death / dead / died / die.
67. She is the only survived / surviving / survive / survives member of her family.
68. The scavenger, though living / though lived / after living / lived in abject poverty, was a happy man.
69. After watching the three boys playing in the river for ten minutes, Tom heard one of them shouted / to shout / shouting / shouts that it was time to go.
70. The students elected John / elected John as / elected John to / elected John be chairman of the Student Union.

71–74:

Many people mistake a linguist for someone who is proficient (71) with / about / in / on several languages. They are confusing ‘linguist’ (72) to / over / with / at ‘polyglot’. Linguists specialize (73) with / in / on / at the analysis of language. They may or may not (74) able to / are able to / be able to / be able speak many languages.

Section Four

Instructions: In the following text, words have been omitted at regular intervals. Fill in each blank (75–90) with an appropriate word, which fits the context both in terms of meaning and grammar.

Admittedly, newspapers and authors have to (75) _____ their intellectual rights, but one would like to (76) _____ how these rights are compromised by having (77) _____ article (not the whole paper) photocopied and (78) _____ to a class of students for purposes (79) _____ teaching reading comprehension or generating discussion on (80) _____ issues. Are the students thereby discouraged from (81) _____ newspapers? On the contrary, one should think (82) _____ this would stimulate their interest (83) _____ Hong Kong’s newspapers.

Teachers are perfectly willing (84) _____ accept reasonable limitations on the amount that (85) _____ be copied, and on the distribution and (86) _____ of copied materials. But apparently this is (87) _____ good enough. Someone even had the boldness (88) _____ ask, ‘Why do teachers have to copy (89) _____ articles anyway? Why don’t they write their (90) _____ materials?’

Answer Key

Proof-reading Exercises

Text 1

Recently, there is a great debate about whether (**an**) English exit test should be introduced to test (**the**) English standard of the university graduates. In fact, the reason for setting (**the**) English exit test is that the English standard of Hong Kong university student (**students**) are (**is**) declining. The government wants to set a test to motivate the undergraduate students to improve (**their**) English in the university.

However, the government seem (**seems**) to have ignored the drawbacks of the test. In fact, the (**X**) students do not like exams. What the students would do is to drill the examination skills and forget the goal of learning English. As a result, the English standard of university student (**students**) will not be raised by the test.

Secondly, they (**the government**) seem (**seems**) to have ignored that the workload of the university students are (**is**) very heavy. They do not have enough time to drill the (**their**) English. If the test establishes (**is established**), this (**it**) may greatly affect their major studies.

Thirdly, they (**the government**) seem (**seems**) to have equalized the English test result as the English standard. Though the one who score (**scores**) good results (**a good result**) in the test could be better in English, this does not mean that the one who get (**gets**) a lower mark is the poorest. Therefore, the test may not be reliable.

To sum up, the exit test should not be established due to the above drawback (**drawbacks**). Instead, more opportunity (**opportunities**) to use English naturally should be created on campus to help the students improve (**their**) English standard.

Text 2

Hong Kong is an international city. We can meet people from different culture (**cultures**) easily since many foreigners worked (**have worked**) and lived in Hong Kong for a long time. They knew (**know**) the Chinese culture. We can make friend (**friends**) with them pretty easily. However, I don't think that I would marry someone from a different culture. Firstly, I think that live (**to live/living**) with someone from a different culture is difficulty (**difficult**), especially in terms of the eating habit. For example, I cannot eat the (**X**) Japanese food or pizza everyday because I have some health problem (**problems**). Also, I am not like (**do not like**) eating meat very much. So, I don't want to change (**my**) eating style.

Secondly, I am weak in language (**English / the English language**). I cannot (**do not**) listen, read and speak well (**X**) English (**well**). So, I think I cannot make friend (**friends**) with the (**X**) foreigner (**foreigners**). I don't think that many foreigners will be willing to communicate with the people (**people**) like me because they usually supposed (**suppose**) that Hong Kong people can speak fluent English. So, I would not marry with someone from (**a**) different culture.

Diagnostic Test

Section One

1. The booklet **distributing** to all students will explain everything.
distributed
2. This product is **advertise** in all newspapers.
advertised
3. My father ^ very angry with me because I came home late.
is/was
4. She tried to buy the book, but ^ was sold out.
it

5. This year, there are many people **travel** abroad.
travelling / who travel
6. *Gone with the Wind* is one of ^ most famous movies of all time.
the
7. I **am** strongly agree with you.
8. Yesterday, I heard him give a speech on TV.
(CORRECT)
9. ^ Invention of the computer was one of the great achievements of the 20th century.
The
10. Students always like to complain ^ the heavy workload.
about
11. After the banquet, the **remained** food was given to the poor.
remaining
12. His parents persuaded him ^ study accountancy.
to
13. At the meeting, the committee discussed **about** many important matters.
14. One of my friends **live** in Taipo.
lives
15. One of the students ^ won the Young Scientist Award was from HKBU.
who
16. The police let the protesters **to** demonstrate outside the embassy.
17. The building **had** about 80 storeys high.
is/ was
18. I heard a big noise last night. Do you know what **was** happened?
19. The teacher made the students come to class on weekends.
(CORRECT)
20. The book was very popular, and was quickly sold out.
(CORRECT)
21. After a long discussion, the plan ^ rejected by the committee.
is/was
22. The teacher asked why **was-he** late.
he was
23. The temperature in the desert **raises** quickly after sunrise.
rises/rose
24. This new procedure can now **carry**-out in many countries.
be carried
25. She considers ^ money is not the most important thing in life.
that
26. They disagree that being educated abroad is important.
(CORRECT)

27. This book teaches both **the** speaking and writing.
28. They have too **much** problems in their marriage.
many
29. He exercises a lot and eats carefully, and is very **health**.
healthy
30. When did they **bought** this house?
buy

Section Two

31. One of the students **is/was** (be) still missing.
32. This shirt is very delicate and should not **be washed** (wash) by machine.
33. As soon as she started singing, everybody **left** (leave).
34. Students are not **allowed** (allow) to leave the examination hall early.
35. The shop was full of **smiling** (smile) salesmen.
36. All applicants **rejected** (reject) by the selection panel will be notified within a week.
37. His girlfriend wanted him **to buy** (buy) her a ring.
38. The teacher forced the students **to repeat** the exercise.
39. I seem to remember having **done** (do) this exercise before.
40. Your writing is **lacking in** (lack) originality.
41. Most of **the foreigners** (foreigner) in Hong Kong cannot speak Cantonese properly.
42. There are thousands of people **looking** (look) for jobs in Hong Kong.
43. His parents are very **concerned about** (concern) his marriage.
44. Everybody agrees that experience **is useful** (useful).
45. **Being** (be) the eldest son, he feels the burden of responsibility.

46–50:

In August this year, there (46) **was** (be) massive flooding in central Europe. Hundreds of people (47) **lost** (lose) their lives, and hundreds of thousands their homes. Floods of this magnitude (48) **have not been seen** (not see) in these parts for a very long time, and the damage amounted to billions of dollars. Not since the Second World War (49) **has** (have) so much damage (50) **been done** (do) to these European cities.

51. I tried calling him several times, **but** no-one answered.
52. Although he is poor, ✓ he is a happy and contented man.
53. Students **who** come to class more than 15 minutes late will be considered 'absent'.
54. I do not know **whether/if** he is guilty or innocent.

55–60:

Earlier this year, the government announced (55) **that** there would be a pay cut for civil servants. There (56) **had** not been a salary cut for many years. I (57) **do** not agree that this

should be done through legislation rather than negotiation. Though (58) **the** economy has (59) **been** deteriorating, there are other ways to save (60) ✓ money.

Section Three:

61. One-third of student body / **the student body** / students' bodies / the students' bodies voted for Saturday classes.
62. There were several students scored / to score / **who scored** / were scored straight A's in their exams.
63. There have / has / **are** / is many people who believe in ghosts.
64. Meteors fall / fell / **falling** / are falling from the sky can cause serious damage.
65. George Orwell, that his real name / which real name / his real name / **whose real name** was Eric Arthur Blair, wrote many politically oriented novels and essays.
66. After the crash, most of the passengers were death / **dead** / died / die.
67. She is the only survived / **surviving** / survive / survives member of her family.
68. The scavenger, **though living** / though lived / after living / lived in abject poverty, was a happy man.
69. After watching the three boys playing in the river for ten minutes, Tom heard one of them shouted / to shout / **shouting** / shouts that it was time to go.
70. The students **elected John** / elected John as / elected John to / elected John be chairman of the Student Union.

71–74:

Many people mistake a linguist for someone who is proficient (71) with / about / **in** / on several languages. They are confusing 'linguist' (72) to / over / **with** / at 'polyglot'. Linguists specialize (73) with / **in** / on / at the analysis of language. They may or may not (74) able to / are able to / **be able to** / be able speak many languages.

Section Four

NOTE: Any word which makes sense in this context and is grammatically correct is acceptable.

Admittedly, newspapers and authors have to (75) **protect** their intellectual rights, but one would like to (76) **ask** how these rights are compromised by having (77) **an** article (not the whole paper) photocopied and (78) **distributed** to a class of students for purposes (79) **of** teaching reading comprehension or generating discussion on (80) **current** issues. Are the students thereby discouraged from (81) **buying** newspapers? On the contrary, one should think (82) **that** this would stimulate their interest (83) **in** Hong Kong's newspapers.

Teachers are perfectly willing (84) **to** accept reasonable limitations on the amount that (85) **can** be copied, and on the distribution and (86) **use** of copied materials. But apparently this is (87) **not** good enough. Someone even had the boldness (88) **to** ask, 'Why do teachers have to copy (89) **any** articles anyway? Why don't they write their (90) **own** materials?'