TOP GRAMMAR MISTAKES

COUNTABLE NOUNS
A countable noun is something you can count: 30 books, many researchers, 100 apples, several PCs. Generally, if a countable noun is in the singular it must be preceded by a or the.

I work as a researcher. She works in a bank. We did the tests in the laboratory.

UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS
An uncountable noun is seen as a mass rather than as several clearly identifiable parts. You cannot use a/an or one before an uncountable noun.

Examples of uncountable nouns: research, information, feedback, English

You cannot say:

all the / three / several / many / informations
an / another / one / each / every information
an English / one English / three Engishes

But you can say:

a lot of information, some information, not much information

A VS AN VS ONE
1) an is used i) before u when the sound is like the u in uncle, unpredictable, and ii) before letters in acronyms which begin with a vowel sound. Compare:

a university an understanding a u-r-l (letters pronounced separately) an url (letters pronounced as one word) an s-o-s

2) an is only used before an h in these words: hour, honour, honest, heir (ereide)

3) Use one instead of a/an when it is important to specify the number:

I need two books not one.
I need at least one person to help me immediately.

And also in the following expressions:

one way to do this ... from one place/problem etc to another ... I’ll do it one day next week
EXERCISES

1) Which of these nouns are countable?
advice, behavior, damage, data, device, equipment, evidence, feedback, hardware, progress, research, software, traffic, work

2) Insert a or an, some or nothing (∅)
1. Hydrogen is produced at ____ high temperature.
2. Hydrogen is produced at ____ high temperatures.
3. This gives ___ really useful information.
4. We have made ___ progress.
5. We used ___ particular software in our calculations.
6. We are doing ___ research into rats.
7. ___ analysis of the results shows that ….
8. I speak ___ good English.
9. You can’t go there without ___ passport.
10. It travels at 90 km ___ hour.
11. I have ____ headache.
12. This is ___ evidence of how effective the system is.

3) Insert a or an or one or nothing
1. We need to use ____ LAN, i.e. ____ local area network.
2. This is designated with ____ L not ____ N.
3. There is ____ hierarchy.
4. We went to ____ hotel. It took over ____ hour to get there.
5. I went to ____ university in England.
6. He’s ____ honest guy and has ____ understanding of X.
7. We used it as ____ input because it has ____ unique value.
8. It increased by ____ order of magnitude
9. We’ll do it ____ day next week.
10. ____ after the other.
11. ____ way to do this is …
12. If you make even ____ mistake you will fail the test.
13. We only did ____ test before the machine broke down.
14. All these lamps need just ____ bulb. For this lamp we need ____ 80 watt bulb and for this lamp ____ 60 watt bulb.
15. There were ____ hundred people not two hundred.
16. ____ EU directive.
17. ____ European Union directive.
ALLOW, ENABLE, PERMIT, LET

1) **allow, enable** and **permit** are neutral / formal. They can all be used in three ways.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntax</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>active verb + object + infinitive with ‘to’</td>
<td>X allows Y to do Z.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use this form to specify who/what is performing the action.</td>
<td>This software enables one / you / users to carry out tasks more quickly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>active verb + object + passive infinitive (to be + past participle)</td>
<td>X allows Y to be done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use this form when it's obvious who/what is performing the action.</td>
<td>This software enables tasks to be carried out more quickly (by users).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject + passive verb + infinitive with ‘to’</td>
<td>X is allowed to do Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In this case this form stresses the ‘users’ rather than the ‘software’.</td>
<td>With this software users were enabled to carry out tasks more quickly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) **let** is used more in the spoken language, but also in emails.

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>let + complement + infinitive without ‘to’</td>
<td>X lets X do Y.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This device lets you learn a language while you’re sleeping.</td>
<td>This device lets you learn a language while you’re sleeping.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) Sometimes you may wish to use an alternative construction for the sake of variety.

   This device allows you to speak in any language.

   - With / Using this device you can speak in any language. (neutral)
   - With / Using this device, any language can be spoken. (formal)
   - It is possible to speak in any language using this device. (formal)

**EXERCISES**

4 Complete the second sentence so that it means the same as the first.

1 With this system you can save a lot of time. **This system allows**
2 Under the new law shops can trade 24 hours a day. **The new law.**
3 The new law permits tax inspectors to check all tax returns. **Under the new law tax inspectors**
4 You can see for miles with these binoculars. **These binoculars let**
5 These results have enabled researchers to complete their investigation. **These results have enabled the researchers’ investigation**

5 Tick the correct sentences, and correct those sentences with mistakes.

1 Their boss let them to go home early.
2 This will allow to make much progress.
3 This software enables calculations to make more quickly.
4 They were not permitted to leave the country.
5 The new equipment allowed them to finish the job on time.
AS VS LIKE VS HOW

like = similar to
as = has the role of
how = in the manner of

Bob acts like a manager (but he is only a project leader).
Bob is acting as the manager while the director is away (Bob is a temporary manager)
Bob doesn’t act how I would like him to (in the way that)

6a Insert as, like, or how
1. _____ a prototype it worked well, but not in its final version.
2. This technique is _____ the previous one.
3. _____ I told you yesterday.
4. It doesn’t matter _____ you do it.
5. It can be used _____ an alternative.
6. We used a piece of wood _____ a lever.
7. I’ll tell you ____ to do it.
8. We will explain ____ it is done in the next section.

AS VS AS A

Note the difference between these sentences
He has taken over as manager. (there is only one manager in the company – do not use a/an.
It would be possible to say he has taken over as our/their manager)
He works as a manager. (we are not referring to a specific company, the number of managers is irrelevant. You must use a/an).

Need rule for input
We use X as input.

AS VS AS IT IS

Note the difference:

as is = come (è)
This is not true, as is evident from the figure.
This is not true, as is evident from the figure. = …come si evince dalla figura.

as it is = poiché, siccome (è)
This is not true, as it is impossible to prove that X=Y.
= poiché è impossibile provare che X sia uguale a Y.

6b Insert as, as a, or as it
1. _____ can be seen in the figure.
2. For three months I have been working as ____ Phd student and as ____ lab technician.
3. I work as ____ researcher.
4. We only did one test _____ would have been impossible to do two.
5. _____ is well known, this feature only works for certain procedures.
6. We do not to use this feature _____ is redundant for our purposes.

**EVEN IF VS EVEN THOUGH**

even though = sebbene

even if is only used in hypothetical cases.
also if doesn’t exist!

*Even though* our teacher Adrian *is* English, he hates the Queen.
(real situation – Adrian is English)

*Even if* Adrian *was* King of England, he would never ....
(not real situation – Adrian is not the king)

7 Insert if or though.

1. *Even _________* war games fascinate me, I’ve never been a big fan of them
2. My email was rejected *even _________* I’m a member of the mailing list!
3. Was the war in Iraq justified, *even _________* weapons of mass destruction were not found?
4. I wouldn’t do this *even _________* you paid me.
INFINITIVE VS GERUND

1) You must use the gerund (-ing) after every preposition.
   
   After revising (= after I had revised) the document I sent it to my boss.
   
   This is an aid to verifying whether x does y.  (cf. This should be an aid to all people) 
   This study will be dedicated to analyzing.  (cf. I dedicate this song to you.)
   
   We look forward to hearing from you.
   
   As you can see in the examples in some cases a preposition may be part of the infinitive of a verb.
   
   We look forward to seeing you.  (to is part of the infinitive of the verb look forward to).
   
   We want to see you.  (to is not part of the infinitive of the verb want)

2) As a general rule when in Italian you say 'per fare' (i.e. per + l'infinito) in English, we just use the
   infinitive with to.
   
   To buy a house you need money.
   
   I need money to buy a house.
   
   After used, you can put either the infinitive or for + ing
   
   It is used to write code with.
   
   It is used for writing code with.

3) The difference between the infinitive and the gerund at the beginning of a phrase, is that the
   infinitive translates the Italian 'allo scopo di' o 'per fare'. The gerund simply translates the Italian
   infinitive in the sense of an activity.
   
   To learn English you need to study. Allo scopo di imparare l'inglese bisogna studiare.
   
   Learning English entails a lot of studying. Imparare l'inglese implica studiare tanto.
   
   To make this cake you need two ingredients. Per fare questa torta ...
   
   Making cakes is fun. Fare le torte è un attività divertente.

4) Note the construction of the negative infinitive (per non fare ...) and the negative gerund.
   
   We studied hard so as not to disappoint our professor.
   
   We studied hard in order not to disappoint our professor.
   
   Not wanting to disappoint our professor we studied hard.

8 Underline the correct forms.
   
   1. Passing / For passing / To pass this exam you need to study / studying.
   2. For not failing / To not fail / To don't fail / In order not to fail / So as not to fail I suggest that you
      study as much as possible.
   3. To carry / Carrying out this request entails doing ...
   4. To live / Living in Italy is easier than to live / living in England.
   5. To live / Living well in England you need a lot of money.
   6. Not to have / Not having access to email would be a problem for most people.
-ing form: advanced uses

SUMMARY
1 Use **by** before the –*ing* form to indicate how something is done.

   *By* clicking on the mouse you can open the window = *If* you click ...
2 Use **thus** to indicate the consequence

   We learn English **thus** enabling us to communicate with our clients.
3 Use **when** to mean *ogni volta che*

   *When* printing, instruct the printer to print on both sides.
4 Use **while** to indicate a duration

   We often work **while** listening to music.
5 Replace the –*ing* form with **and** when you are simply giving additional information.

   This document gives an overview of **X trying** to throw light on particular aspects.

   = of **X and throws** light on ...

FULL RULES
1) Use the –*ing* form at the beginning of the sentence when it is the subject of the **main verb**.

   **Learning** English will help you to pass the exam.

   When something else is the **subject** of the main verb, then the –*ing* form must be preceded with **by** or replaced with an **if clause**.

   **Learning English you will pass the exam.**

   **By learning** English you will pass the exam. **If you learn** English you will pass the exam.

2) The –*ing* form is often preceded by **thus** (quindi) and **by** (per mezzo di), otherwise it’s not clear what is happening. Look at the sentence below.

   *This will improve performance keeping clients satisfied.*

   Does it mean:

   a) the way to improve performance is if clients are kept satisfied?

   b) as a consequence of improving performance clients will be satisfied?

   We can show the true meaning if, before the –*ing* form, we insert **thus or by**:

   … **by keeping** clients satisfied = if clients are satisfied performance will improve

   … **thus keeping** clients satisfied = client satisfaction depends on performance

Often it is a good idea simply to break up the sentence or use **and**.

   *This will improve performance keeping clients satisfied.*

   = This will improve performance and clients will (thus) be satisfied.

   **The Euro indirectly raised prices, causing inflation.**

   = … raised prices. This **consequently / subsequently caused** inflation.

   = … raised prices **and so/thus caused** inflation.
3) Replace the –ing form with and when you are simply giving additional information.

This document focuses on the reasons for choosing x, trying to explain the background to these choices.

This document focuses on the reasons for choosing x, and tries to explain the background to these choices.

4) The –ing form can also be preceded by when (ogni volta che), while (mentre, durante).

When writing English you should use a dictionary. = every time you want to write English ...
While loading the program look out for any virus alerts. = while you are loading ...

Compare the use of –ing form in these examples.

Burning CDs now takes only a few seconds. = The activity of burning ...
By burning CDs we deprive artists of royalties. = If we burn ...
When burning CDs, the original must be in drive A. = Every time you want to burn ...
While burning CDs, you can listen to them at the same time. = While you are burning ..

5) Prefer who/which/that when the noun that comes before the –ing form is the ‘subject’ of that –ing form.

Adrian teaches students having a good level of English.
Adrian teaches students that have a good level of English.

If the subject of the first verb is also the subject of the second verb, then the sentence should be rewritten.

Adrian teaches students having a good level of English.
Adrian teaches students since he has a good level of English.

9 Insert by, thus, while or when into the spaces.

1. You can improve your chances _______ studying every day.
2. You can study _______ watching TV.
3. You should study hard _______ improving your chances of passing the test.
4. _______ studying for an English exam try to do as much listening as possible.
5. _______ doing as much listening as possible you will also improve your pronunciation.

10 Correct these sentences where necessary.

1. Watching TV in English foreign students have improved their listening skills.
2. Watching TV for more than four hours a day can cause brain damage.
3. This is done clicking on the mouse.
4. Taxes will be lowered creating more jobs.
5. Reviewing programs and codes for further developments, always check the CFQ.
11 Rewrite the parts in italics using by, thus or when, + -ing.

1 If we cancel world debt, trade will increase.
2 Every time you use this apparatus, use sterile gloves.
3 They stopped using sprays and this reduced the pollution levels.
4 We can do this in the following manner: reinforce Y.

PREPOSITIONS

There are no rules that determine which preposition goes with which verb, noun, or adjective. Below are the most frequently misused prepositions in technical manuals.

1. access NO PREP
2. gain access to smth
3. accordance with, in
4. according to
5. act on
6. add X to Y
7. advantage of X over Y
8. allocate X to Y
9. as an alternative
10. apart from
11. associate X with Y
12. assumption, on the
13. average, on
14. to benefit from
15. capable of
16. change X into Y
17. choose from
18. compensate for
19. condition, on the
20. convert X into Y
21. definition, by
22. deliver X to Y
23. depend on
24. discuss something with someone
25. except for
26. function of, as a
27. impose X on Y
28. an increase in cost
29. an increase of 10%
30. independent of
31. investigate NO PREP
32. investigation, under
33. irrespective of
34. occasion, on an
35. participate in
36. prepare X for Y
37. prevent X from
38. provide X with Y
39. random, at
40. regardless of
41. replace X with Y
42. respect to, with
43. responsible for
44. rule, as a
45. same as
46. same time, at the
47. sensitive to
48. similar to
49. suffer from
50. suitable for
51. suited to
52. transform X in
THAT VS WHICH (IN RELATIVE CLAUSES)

1) If you are making a distinction use that **
   Pisa university has many departments. I work for the departments that teach scientific subjects. The departments that have the most students are the IT departments.

2) If you are adding parenthetical / additional information use which (but if possible follow rule 6)
   English, which is the subject I teach, is very useful for Phd students.

3) If che is preceded by a comma use which
   I live in the center of Pisa, which is very convenient for my work.

4) If preceded by preposition use which
   I have several mobile phones many of which don't work.

5) which generally refers to the noun that it follows. So, in some cases, avoid using which and split the sentence and repeat the subject.
   Each language is characterized by a set of common rules as reported in Table 2 which highlights the structure of that particular language.

   The position of which initially seems to refer to Table 2. But in fact it refers to set of common rules. The sentence should be rewritten.
   Each language is characterized by a set of common rules, as reported in Table 2. This set highlights the structure of that particular language.

6) In long sentences, if possible replace the which clause by beginning a new sentence. NB repeating the same word (in this case institutes) is not bad style.
   The CNR is the Italian National Research Council and has many institutes where innovative research is carried out and which are located in various parts of Italy such as Pisa, Turin and Rome.
   = has many institutes where innovative research is carried out. These institutes are located in various parts of Italy such as Pisa, Turin and Rome.

7) If you put an adjective after the noun it describes, then this adjective should be introduced by that/which/who
   I met a girl who is 25 years old A document which/that is five pages long

** In scientific writing, the difference between that and which is important.
   The horse that wins the race gets the prize.
   That horse, which I've owned for several years, has never won a race.
   That horse usually wins, which is why I have bet on it.

In the first example, that wins the race is essential to understanding the sentence, it defines which horse I am talking about – you cannot logically say The horse gets the prize. In such cases, you should use that (though in non technical English, which is often used)

In the second and third examples, the parts in italics not essential to understanding the sentence. They could be omitted – e.g. you can say That horse has never won a race. In this case, commas must be used, and only which can be used not that.

If commas are needed and parenthetical / non-essential information is given, then which is used.
EXERCISES

12 Answer the questions.

a) My house that is in the country cost 350,000 euros.
b) My house, that is in the country, cost 350,000 euros.
c) My house, which is in the country, cost 350,000 euros.
d) My house which is in the country cost 350,000 euros.
e) My house cost 350,000 euros, that is a lot of money.
f) My house cost 350,000 euros, which is a lot of money.

1 In which sentence, b or c, is the use of commas correct?
2 Which sentence implies that I have more than one house?
3 Which sentence gives the idea that I have mentioned houses in a previous sentence?
4 Which sentence is ambiguous, i.e. it is not clear if I have one house or more?
5 Which is correct - e or f? Why?

13 Insert commas into these sentences where necessary.

1 That man over there whose wife left him last year is very depressed.
2 The English who are generally quite reserved don't always say what they think.
3 People that like dogs often don't like cats.
4 Dinosaurs which became extinct millions of years ago still fascinate us today.
5 I told him he was an idiot which is probably why he hit me.

14 Where necessary replace that with which. Insert commas where necessary.

1 The language that we use with our friends is not always the same as the language that we use with our family.
2 The English language that is now the international language of the world is spoken by about 500 million native speakers.
3 The English language is spoken in the USA that is probably why it has become so important.
4 This scientific English course that took me several months to prepare is designed to help students to improve their writing skills.
5 The lesson that we are going to do today is similar to the one that we did last week.
6 The results are shown in Figure 4 that reports the values regarding ...
7 The figure that we believe is the most illuminating is Figure 5.
15 Correct these sentences by:
   a) adding *which* where necessary
   b) removing *which* and starting a new sentence
   c) replacing, *where necessary*, *that* with *which*

1. The following techniques, shown in Fig. 1, are ...
2. We took a sample 2m long.
3. We used a procedure already known to be suitable for characterising the difficulties of particular languages.
4. These languages form the basis of our analysis, that is carried out using innovative techniques.
5. These results, published in a previous paper [12], highlight that ..
6. The reasons that lead to the reduction in complexity of a language are analogous to the ones that were reported for languages belonging to completely different groups, which is what is stated in the paper by Phillips published in 2004.
7. English is considered to be a very simple language, that is in fact a fallacy.
8. English is considered to be a simple language that as mentioned earlier is in fact a fallacy.

**THE**

1) **Don’t use the** if you are talking about something
   • in general, and the noun is in the plural (eg computers, books)
   • or is uncountable (eg software, information)
   • or is an abstract noun (eg love, imagination),

Use *the* if you are specifying or talking about something that you have either already mentioned or which the reader/listener already know about. Examples:

   - All you need is love.
   - The love I feel for her is …
   - We produce software.
   - The software we used to do this analysis …
   - This will help students to learn English.
   - The students I teach in my courses are ..

2) In phrases with the following combination: singular noun + of + noun, the first noun is nearly always preceded by *the*.

   - The language of love,
   - The university of Pisa,
   - The type of analysis

3) Use *the* when it would be possible to replace *the* with *these/those*, without changing the meaning of the sentence. (This ‘rule’ only works partially!)

   - The problems we had last week.
   - Those problems we had last week.
4) Don’t use the with subjects of study
   
   *We work in fashion / website design.*  
   *I studied history at school.*  
   *We are researchers in engineering, medicine, and veterinary sciences.*  
   *She is an expert in history of art.*  
   
   **But:** *In this paper we study the design of a new system to …*  
   *We are researching into the history of England from 1939 – 1945.*

5) When words such as **figure**, **table**, **column**, **item** are followed immediately by a number, the must not be used. Also, these words are often capitalized to make them stand out from the text. When they are not followed by a number, then the should be used.
   
   **Note that** Figures 5 highlights that …  
   **Finally, all the terms involved in Equation 4.1 are …**  
   **The figure shows that .. As can be seen in the figure ..**

6) Don’t use the with percentages.
   
   *I teach many students – the 50% are either engineers or computer scientists.*

7) the must be used with ‘uncountable’ nationalities that end in – h (eg English, French) and –ese (eg Chinese, Portuguese). Most other nationalities (Italians, Swedes etc) are countable.
   
   **The English** are not as tall as **the Dutch.**  
   **Italians** do it better than **Frenches** the French  
   
   The rule above does not apply if these words are being used as adjectives rather than nouns.
   
   **English** people are not as tall as **Dutch** people.
   
   If a sentence contains both a countable and uncountable nationality it is best to use the in both cases.
   
   **The English** don’t do it as well as **the Italians.**
   
   Countries do not require the article: Italy, France, Russia. **Exceptions:** the UK, the USA

9) Note the difference between **last/next** and the **last/next** in time expressions.
   
   We did this exercise **last week.** (i.e. the week before the current week)  
   I am going on holiday in **the last week** of August. (i.e. a specific week)  
   I went to Spain **last year** (i.e. in 2006) and I’m going to Portugal **next year** (i.e. 2008)  
   **The next year** the Olympics will be held in Europe will be 2012. (i.e a specific year)

10) Always use the in these cases: the Internet, in the literature, in the laboratory
16 Where necessary, insert the definite article (the) into the spaces.

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

17 Where necessary, insert the into the spaces. You will need to decide in each case whether researchers in general are being talked about or specific researchers.

____ 1 Researchers have a very privileged position as they are paid to do what they like doing.
____ 2 Researchers in industry tend to be paid more than ____ 3 researchers at university.
____ 4 Researchers at Manchester University are studying ways to improve English as a language of international business communication: the project is called Bizglish. ____ 5 Only researchers in the project who are not being sponsored by the British government are those from abroad: ____ 6 Researchers who started the project have now all left the team.

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

18 Check your answers to Ex 2 by answering the questions below. If your answer indicates that the researchers in question are specific researchers, then you must put the

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 Uni that we have already mentioned, or just some researchers at Manchester Uni 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 Have these researchers been explicitly mentioned before? Could we say: some researchers are studying non verbal ways in which we communicate and others are studying the language
we use? Could we say (in a similar way): There are two types of researchers involved in the project: English researchers and Italian researchers?

9 Have these researchers already been mentioned? So, are they specific?
10 Does this mean all researchers, some researchers, or very specific researchers?

**VOCABULARY PROBLEMS 1**

*Below are some words that are often used incorrectly in scientific papers.*

characteristic = tratto caratteristico, qualità peculiare
only = solo, unico
peculiar = strano, insolito
typical = peculiare, tipico, proprio, rappresentante
unique = unico nel suo genere
like = quale, come ad esempio (abbastanza informale)
such as = quale, come ad esempio (va bene per i paper)
e.g. = per esempio (per dare un esempio)
i.e. = cioè (per specificare)
remarkable = ragguardevole, considerevole, quasi sorprendente
relevant = pertinente, inerente, attinente
significant = importante, notevole, degno di nota
sensible = sensato
sensitive = sensibile (for people, instruments)
different from, than = diverso da qualcosa altro
several = parecchi, più di due (può sostituito da un numero unico)
various = variato, numeroso (corrisponde ad un insieme di numeri)
few (+ plural), little (+ sing) = molto pochi/poco (quasi niente)
a few (+ plural), a little (+ sing) = alcuni, un po’
fewer (+ plural), less (+ sing) = meno
minor = poco importante
convenient = comodo, accessibile, sotto mano, a portata di mano (generally refers to timetables, places etc)
comfortable = confortevole
advisable = consigliabile
not advisable = sconsigliabile, non conveniente
economic = che riguarda l’economia
economical = a basso consumo, efficiente, a basso costo
efficient = efficiente, utile, che funzione nel modo migliore
effective = effettivo, reale, che fa quello che deve fare
medium = media (di misura), also medium term (but more common mid term)
mid = metà, also mid term
average = che segue la norma, media aritmetica [obtained by dividing sum]
mean = medio [number between smallest and largest value]
median = mediano [midway in series of odd number of items]
request = richiesta (for someone to do something for you eg to send you a document)
query = dubbio, domanda, quesito (when you want info eg where in a doc you can find smth)

19 Underline the correct word. If more than one is possible, underline both/all.
1. This very interesting feature is peculiar to / unique to / typical of / characteristic of X.
2. This is the only / unique way to do it.
3. Various features of the system, like / such as command menus, multiple windows.
4. The UK is made up of 4 countries such as / e.g. / i.e. England, Scotland, Wales, and N. Ire.
5. English is spoken in many countries such as / e.g. / i.e. Australia and Canada.
6. Learning a foreign language is not compulsory in the UK. This is remarkable / significant especially for businesses who sell products outside the UK, and it is remarkable / significant given the importance of languages in today's multicultural society.
7. Let us now see in more detail / details how this works.
8. There is a sensible / sensitive / significant difference between the two results.
9. It was sensitive / sensible to the environment.
10. There are different / several countries in Africa located at various / several distances from the equator.
11. A few / Few / A little / Little is known about the real nature of ghosts, though a few / few / a little / little people claim to have seen them.
12. There were fewer / less / minor problems in the second test than in the first, but in any case most of them were only fewer / less / minor problems.
13. This system is no more used / no longer used / not used anymore.
14. Do x and then y or viceversa / vice versa / the other way round / y first and then x.
15. The most part / Most of the experiments were successful.
16. It is not convenient / advisable / comfortable to do more than one test at a time.
17. Some Mercedes are quite economic / economical since they run on diesel engines.
18. An engine that uses the least fuel is considered to be the most efficient / effective.
19. In the medium / mid term there will be a/an medium / average of 30 students per class.
20. I have a query / request regarding the document you corrected for me: what exactly do you mean by ’x’? And re your query / request to send you the final version by Monday, this will ..
VOCABULARY PROBLEMS 2

last year = l’anno scorso
last years = gli ultimi anni di un periodo particolare
last few years = gli ultimi anni fino a quello in corso
actually = in realtà
currently, at the moment = attualmente
nowadays = oggigiorno, al giorno di oggi - sempre con un contrasto con il passato
for the moment, for now = per un certo periodo da ora in prossimo futuro
by now = a questo punto, ormai - come conseguenza di quello che è avvenuto prima
so far, as yet = finora
from now on = da ora in avanti (in senso temporale)
hereafter = di qui in avanti (all'interno di un documento)
yet = già (in frasi interrogative)
still = ancora
still not = non ancora (senso di persitenza o sorpresa)
not yet = non ancora (neutrale)
already = già
just = appena
again = di nuovo
at the end + of = alla fine di
in the end / eventually = alla fine, in conclusione
if necessary, if need be, if appropriate = eventualmente
since = da quando (inizio periodo)
for = da quanto tempo (durata periodo)
from = da .... a
both ... and = sia .. sia, cio’è tutti e due
either ... or = o ... o,cio’è o l’uno o l’altro, ma non tutti e due

20 Underline the correct word. If more than one is possible, underline both/all.

1. During the last years / last few years, we have become ...
2. Nowadays / Currently / Actually the use of wireless connections is undergoing a radical change.
3. This product was once very expensive to manufacture. However nowadays / currently / actually it is much cheaper; nowadays / currently / actually it hardly costs anything at all.
4. We wanted X but by now / for the moment / so far we will have to use Y.
5. They should have received the package by now / for the moment / so far.
6. We don't envisage any problems by now / for the moment / so far.
7. We haven't had any problems by now / for the moment / so far.
8. At the end / In the end / Eventually we decided to abandon the tests.
9. Eventually / If necessary a more expensive solution can be used.
10. I have been in this department since / from / for five years. ... since / from / for 2003.
11. We can go to two places: both / either Lucca and / or Siena.
12. We can only go to one place: both / either Lucca and / or Siena.
13. I am afraid we can’t go anywhere, so we can’t go both / either / neither to Lucca and / or / nor Siena.

**VOCABULARY PROBLEMS 3**

log in = sostantivo, log in = verbo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Italian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>carry on = continuare</td>
<td>carry out = eseguire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be composed by = essere composto / scritto da (musica), be composed of = essere costituito</td>
<td>consist of = essere formato o composto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>made up of = essere formato o composto</td>
<td>be formed by = formarsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>check = verificare senza agire direttamente</td>
<td>control = controllare, regolare, comandare, agire direttamente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring = portare verso chi parla / ascolta</td>
<td>take = portare lontano da chi parla / ascolta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lead to = condurre, causare, provocare</td>
<td>anticipate = aspettarsi, prevedere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bring forward = anticipare</td>
<td>postpone = rimandare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assist someone = aiutare qualcuno</td>
<td>take part in / participate in = partecipare in modo attivo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attend something = partecipare in modo passivo</td>
<td>turn out = risultare, rivelarsi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>result in = avere come conseguenza, portare a</td>
<td>result from = derivare da</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exclude = lasciar fuori, emerginare</td>
<td>rule out = scartare da un ipotesi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>find = cercare per poi trovare, riuscire ad avere (scoprire da soli)</td>
<td>find out = venire a sapere (scoprire da qualcun'altro), informarsi, chiedere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be responsible for = essere (il) responsabile di</td>
<td>NB 'the responsible' non esiste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be in charge of = avere l’incarico di</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
rise / rose / risen (intransitivo) = alzarsi, incrementare, aumentare es. Taxes have risen.
raise (transitivo) = sollevare, aumentare es. The government have raised taxes.
arise / arose / arisen = presentarsi, insorgere es. Problems have arisen due to the rise in taxes
deal with = trattare (un argomento), avere a che fare, occuparsi di (lavoro) essere nella posizione di risolvere un problema
face = trovarsi davanti a, far fronte a, affrontare, fronteggiare
address = concentrarsi su, dedicarsi a, impegnarsi a
treat = trattare (con una cura medica)
care about = interessare (colloq., not suitable in technical docs)
be concerned about = interessare, studiare

21 Underline the correct word. If more than one is possible, underline both/all.
1. When you login / log in to your computer, a log file called ...
2. These steps can be carried out / on by the user.
3. The system is composed by / consists of / is made up of / is formed by / has 8 modules.
4. Can you look at the thermometer and check / control the temperature? What does it say?
   The thermostat is used to check / control the temperature.
5. However, using this in conjunction with that brings / leads to additional overheads.
6. The congress has been anticipated / brought forward / postponed from July to June.
7. I will be assisting to / taking part in the conference.
8. This method resulted / resulted in / turned out to be the best and resulted / resulted in us getting the best quality.
9. These results would seem to exclude / rule out the possibility of external interference.
10. We found / found out no differences between the two methodologies.
11. I am the responsible of / responsible for / in charge of technical aspects.
12. The proofreaders of the document have risen / raised / arisen some issues. These issues seem to rise / raise / arise from the fact that the English is poor. In fact the number of such complaints about our documents has risen / raised / arisen dramatically.

Irregular verbs
22 Correct the following.
1. They have to chose now
2. It is splitted into 2 parts.
3. Values are showed in all entries.
4. It is broadcasted to X,
5. Have you setted the X?
6. They founded a solution.
7. It has became possible.
APOSTROPHES

1 Do not use with acronyms and dates.
   
   CD’s became common in the late 1980’s.
   CDs became common in the late 1980s.
   
   Avoid contracted forms in formal papers.
   
   Let’s assume that ... = Let us assume that ...
   
   This doesn’t happen if = This does not happen
   
2 Apostrophes may be needed with symbols or letters to show plurals.
   
   Three Ω’s are required.
   There are two c’s in Lucca.

3) be careful of the position of the apostrophe in genitives
   
   Homer Simpson’s brain. = the brain of Homer Simpson
   Tess’s dilemma. = the dilemma of Tess
   Bart and Homer’s lifestyle = the lifestyle of Bart and Homer
   The Simpsons’ house. = the house of the Simpsons

   genitive
   1 indicates human possession (including nations, institutes, companies etc),
   and also animals or personified objects
   The PC’s screen.
   The user’s PC.
   
   The European Space Agency’s Giotto probe was reactivated in 1992.
   
   Italy’s gold reserves

   Prefer the use of ‘of’ to a genitive in cases like these:
   
   IBM’s Chairman.   The IBM Chairman.
   The Chairman of IBM.
   The plane’s pilot    The plane pilot.
   The pilot of the plane.
   
   The genitive is better not used here because the Chairman doesn’t really belong
   to IBM and the pilot certainly doesn’t belong to the plane.

   Inanimate entities do not usually take the genitive:
   
   Mathematics’ rules.
   The rules of mathematics.
   Malaria’s effects.
   The effects of malaria.
2 The genitive can be used with time periods.
I’m taking three weeks’ vacation next month. = three weeks of vacation
But not when these are preceded by a / the.
He’s on a three weeks’ vacation.
He’s on a 3-week vacation.

3 No article before names unless referring to a family:
That is the Homer Simpson’s car.
That is Homer Simpson’s car.
That is the Simpsons’ car = the car of the Simpson family.
That is the Anderson’s car.
That is Anderson’s car. (Anderson is one person not a family)

GENITIVE OR NO GENITIVE
1 Use the construction: the + name of person + noun when focus on the noun rather than the person, i.e. when we are considering a single entity.
   eg The Bush administration. (here we are thinking of all the people seen as a whole)
Use the construction: name of person + ‘s + noun when focus on the person, i.e. when we are considering two separate entities
   eg Bush’s administration. (i.e. Bush’s admin rather than Clinton’s, here we are thinking of Bush and all his people – thus two entities)
   Similarly:
I never buy Benetton clothes.
Benetton’s decision to raise prices ...

2 Use the construction: the + university + of + town when we see things from the university’s (eg the rector’s, the website, the prospectus) point of view – this tends to be in formal situations
   The University of Pisa is organizing a series of seminars on Scientific English.
Use the construction: town + university when we see things from the student’s point of view, less formal
   I studied mathematics at Pisa University.

3 The genitive is not usually used with towns.
I studied mathematics at Pisa’s University. (completely wrong)
Pisa’s three universities are world famous. (not wrong, but unlikely)
The three universities in Pisa are world famous.
Paris’s metro.
The Paris metro.
London’s university.
(London’s University would imply that there is only one university in London, whereas there are several).
However, for some reason, the genitive can be used in the construction:
town/country + adjective/noun + noun
London’s new airport.
America’s foreign policy.
London’s traffic problems.

THE GENITIVE IN SCIENTIFIC PAPERS
1 Formal definitions:
The Newton’s theory of gravity states that only massive particles and bodies participate in interactions: \( E = -Gm_1 m_2 r \), (1) where \( E, G \) ...
The Newton theory of gravity states that ...

2 References to the theory rather than definitions of the theory:
Mercury’s orbit is elliptical, as predicted by the Newton theory of gravity, but the ellipse ...
Mercury’s orbit is elliptical, as predicted by Newton’s theory of gravity, but ....

3 Focus on the scientist as well as his/her theory:
Does this mean that Newton’s theory of gravity is now wrong?

4 Only use name + theorem/analysis/method if the scientist is well established. Wallwork (i.e. your English teacher) is not famous enough!
We used Wallwork analysis to do X.
We used Wallwork’s analysis to do X.
The Wallwork analysis of this situation is ...
Wallwork’s analysis of this situation is ...

NOUN STRINGS
1 Don’t use strings of nouns or noun + adjective + noun constructions
Italians seem to think that you can indiscriminately put nouns in front of each other. You can’t! It makes the sentence hard to understand and often leads to ambiguity.
To avoid misunderstanding on the part of your reader, use:
of = which belongs to
* Pisa streets
The streets of / in Pisa
for = for the purpose of
* Potatoes boiling instructions
Instructions for boiling potatoes
by = how something is done
**Silicon wafer mechanical strength measurement for surface damage quantification**

Quantifying surface damage by measuring the mechanical strength of silicon wafers.

2 Occasionally using nouns as adjectives may be wrong in certain cases (as in the first example below), but not in others.

* A nature law.  A life law
A law of nature.  A law of life
A scientific law.  An international law

3 You cannot put an adjective
a) between two nouns
* The editor main interface
The main interface of the editor
* The algorithm computational complexity
The computational complexity of the algorithm
b) before a noun that it does not describe
* The main document contribution
The main contribution of the document

4 The secret is to only use noun + noun combinations that you are certain already exist.

a software program, a hardware device

5 However, strings of nouns and adjectives must be used if they are names of pieces of equipment or methods. For example:

An Oxford Link SATW ultra-thin window EDX detector
A Hitachi S3500N environmental scanning electron microscope
A recently developed reverse Monte Carlo quantification method
**EXERCISES**

23 **Insert apostrophes into the correct places.**

1. IBM first computer.
2. Manchester United 100th win against Juventus
3. Bill Gates philosophy
4. Alvarez document on X.
5. Andress document on X.
6. Burger and Wilmar document on X.
7. The Italians ideas about pasta making.
8. The dog bone.
9. These are the results of ten years studying, which was divided into two five year periods.
10. A mile walk.

24 **Choose the correct film title**

1. The Ring's Lord The Lord of the Rings
2. The List of Schindler Schindler's list
3. One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest One Flew Over the Nest of the Cuckoo
4. The Silence of the Lambs The Lambs' Silence
5. Taxi's Driver Taxi Driver
7. The Elephant Man The Man's Elephant
8. Oz's Wizard The Wizard of Oz
9. The Return of the Jedi The Jedi's Return
10. Brian's Life The Life of Brian
11. Robin Hood's Adventures The Adventures of Robin Hood
12. Frankenstein's Bride The Bride of Frankenstein
13. Planet of the Apes The Apes' Planet
14. The Lion's King The Lion King
15. Bicycle Thieves Bicycles' Thieves

25 **Choose the correct version.**

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) Pisa's university b) Pisa university c) the University of Pisa d) the Pisa 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 a) Definition of the Problem

13. This is a) an Italy law b) an Italian law c) a law in Italy d) an Italy'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

KEY

1

They are all UNcountable. Except for: behavior (only in scientific English), damages = risarcimento (dei danni), data (this data is / these data are), work (but only in the sense of opere e.g. works of art)

2

1 a 2 - 3 (some) 4 (some) 5 (some) 6 (some) 7 an 8 - 9 a 10 an/per 11 a 12 -

3

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

4

1 This system allows you to save a lot of money 2 The new law permits / allows shops to trade ... 3 Under the new law tax inspectors are permitted / allowed to check 4 These binoculars let you see  5 These results have enabled the researchers' investigation to be completed

5

1 Their boss let them go home early. 2 This will allow us / you etc to make much progress. 3 This software enables calculations to be made more quickly. 4-5 OK

6a

1 as 2 like 3 as 4 how 5 as 6 as 7 how 8 how

6b

1 as 2 as a, as a 3 as a 4 as it 5 as is 6 as it

7

1 though 2 though 3 though 4 if
1 to pass, to study 2 in order not to fail, so as not to fail 3 carrying 4 living, living 5 to live 6 not having 7 living

1 by 2 while (when) 3 thus 4 when 5 by

1 by watching 2 ok 3 by clicking 4 thus creating 5 when reviewing

1 by cancelling 2 when using 3 thus reducing 4 by reinforcing

1 c 2 a 3 a 4 d 5 f (which introduces additional info)

That man over there, whose wife left him last year, is ..
The English, who are generally quite reserved, don't ..
People that like dogs often don't like cats.
Dinosaurs, which ... of years ago, still fascinate us today.
I told him he was an idiot, which is probably why he hit me.

The language that we use ... language that we use with our family.
... language, which is now the language of the world, is spoken ...
The English language is spoken in the USA, which is probably ..
... course, which took me several months to prepare, is ...
The lesson that we ... to the one that we did last week.
The results are shown in Figure 4, which reports the values regarding ...
The figure that we believe is the most illuminating is Figure 5.

The following techniques, which are shown in Fig. 1, are ... // The following techniques (Fig. 1) are ...
We took a sample which was 2m long. // ... a 2m long sample
We used a procedure which/that is already ...
These languages form the basis of our analysis, which is ...
in a previous paper [12] and highlight that .. //// These results, which were ..
... groups. In fact, this is what is stated in the paper by Phillips published in 2004.
a very simple language, which is in fact a fallacy.
language, which as mentioned earlier, is in fact a fallacy.

1 the 2 – 3 the 4 the, - the, - 5 the 6 the, the, -, the 7 – 8 the, the 9 -, the 10 (the), the 11 -, the 12 – 13 the, - 14 the, the

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 the 6 the 7 – 8 – 9 the 10 the
18
all 2 – 3 all 4 some 5-6 they have been mentioned and are thus specific 7-8 not explicitly mentioned, yes, yes 9 yes, specific 10 specific

19
typical of / characteristic of 2 only 3 such as 4 i.e. 5 such as, e.g. 6 remarkable, significant 7 detail 8 significant 9 sensitive 10 several, various 11 little, a few 12 fewer, minor 13 no longer used / not used anymore 14 vice versa / the other way round / first y and then x 15 most 16 advisable 17 economical 18 efficient 19 medium/mid, average 20 query, request

20
last few years 2 currently 3 nowadays, actually 4 for the moment 5 by now 6 for the moment 7 so far 8 in the end, eventually 9 if necessary 10 for, since 11 both .. and 12 either .. or 13 either .. or

21
log in 2 out 3 consist of, made up of, has 4 check, control 5 leads to 6 brought forward 7 taking part in 8 turned out, resulted 9 rule out 10 found 11 responsible for, in charge of 12 raised, arise, risen

22
choose 2 split 3 shown 4 broadcast 5 set 6 found 7 become 8 led

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2. Manchester United’s 100th win against Juventus
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4. Alvarez’s document on X.
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2. The List of Schindler
3. One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest
4. The Silence of the Lambs
5. Taxi’s Driver
6. 2001: A Space’s Odyssey
7. The Elephant Man
8. Oz’s Wizard
9. The Return of the Jedi
10. Brian’s Life
11. Robin Hood’s Adventures

The Lord of the Rings
Schindler’s list
One Flew Over the Nest of the Cuckoo
The Lambs’ Silence
Taxi Driver
2001: A Space Odyssey
The Man’s Elephant
The Wizard of Oz
The Jedi’s Return
The Life of Brian
The Adventures of Robin Hood
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