

Signs: A Grammar Handbook

Answers to Exercises

Section I

Chapter 1

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the appropriate articles.

In the hills around Los Angeles sits the sign known all over the world: HOLLYWOOD. The classic icon of Tinseltown was first constructed in 1923, although the original sign read HOLLYWOODLAND. With letters fifty feet tall by thirty feet wide and lit by 4,000 light bulbs, the sign proclaimed the glitz and glamour below, drawing would-be stars to the town. In 1932, a aspiring actress, 24-year-old Peg Entwistle, brought the sign even more publicity when, in despair over her rejection from the biz, she jumped from the top of the letter H to her death. (Ironically, a letter arrived for Peg the next day informing her that she had been cast in a leading role as a woman who commits suicide.) Unlike Peg, the town's marquee, originally intended to last only a year and a half, survived—although barely—to 1949, when the town removed the letters L-A-N-D and restored the remaining nine letters, including the recently fallen H. This renovation would last for almost thirty years, until the sign again fell into disrepair in the 70s, requiring the city to completely rebuild the landmark for \$250,000 in 1978. Aside from a fresh paint job in 1995 and increased security in the 2000s, the sign has sat untouched in the Hollywood hills, continuing to represent the center of the global film industry.

citation for above paragraph: <http://www.hollywoodsign.org/history.html>

Chapter 2

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Change the description on the left to one that includes the possessive form of the noun.

Example: That book belongs to Jane. → That is Jane's book.

1. That song was written by Big Boi and Kanye West. → That was Big Boi and Kanye West's song.
2. The cookies are made by Mrs. Fields. → I enjoy Mrs. Fields' cookies.

3. Please tell us two weeks before you resign. → *Please give us two week's notice.*
4. The profits on my investments are varied. → *My investment's profits are varied.*
5. The dog that ate my homework belongs to the Jones family. → *The Jones family's dog ate my homework.*

EXERCISE 2

*Directions: Indicate whether the underlined nouns in these sentences are **common** or **proper**, **concrete** or **abstract**, and **count** or **non-count**.*

Example: Falling leaves are a good indicator that winter is around the corner.

Answer: common, concrete, count

1. In the depths of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.

–Albert Camus

Answer: common, abstract, count

2. If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant. – Anne Bradstreet

Answer: proper, concrete, count

3. One kind word can warm three winter months. – Japanese proverb

Answer: common, concrete, count

4. Winter is the time for comfort—it is the time for home. – Edith Sitwell

Answer: common, abstract, non-count

5. February is merely as long as is needed to pass the time until March. – J.R. Stockton

Answer: proper, abstract, count

Chapter 3

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Change the determinative pronoun used in the first sentence to a predicative one.

*Example: I reminded the clerk that **The Face of Flowers** was my book. → I reminded the clerk that the book was mine.*

1. The animal that is trampling the flowerbed is their dog. →

The animal that is trampling the flowerbed is theirs.

2. Flower shops usually have a sign with flowers on it but our shop doesn't. →

Flower shops usually have a sign with flowers on it but not ours.

3. Her yard was the one everyone was shouting about. →

The yard that everyone was shouting about was hers.

4. Is that your book about flowers on the counter? →

Is the book yours?

5. Stop right now! That book you are destroying is my book. →

Stop right now! That book you're destroying is mine.

EXERCISE 2

Directions: Fill in the blanks with the appropriate reflexive pronoun.

1. The florist wrote himself/herself a reminder about the new order.

2. She, herself, told me many times that she forgot things without writing reminders.

3. When she gets orders in, she does most of the arrangements herself

4. However, I, myself, have a great memory especially in the work place.

5. I never have to remind myself with lists or post-it notes.

EXERCISE 3

Directions: Fill in the blank with the appropriate relative pronoun.

1. In Turkey, the Montagu house, which was filled with flowers, became a symbol of what Lady Montagu wanted to take back to Britain.
2. The Montagu's staff, some of who came from England, replenished the flowers daily.
3. Floriography, which is the association of emotions with certain flowers, still exists today.
4. For instance, the black rose that is in the vase in the story "The Flower Game" represents death, hatred, or revenge.
5. Lady Montagu, whose husband was assigned an important government post, became the more famous of the two.

Chapter 4

Exercise 1

Tim, my boss, told the advertising staff today that **he** would be promoting one lucky person due to the success of the latest billboard design. This individual would be recognized at the end of the week for **his or her** hard work and dedication to **his or her** job, and **he or she** would also get **his or her** own private office.¹ I thought it might be Sue, who had spent many of **her** nights and weekends diligently working overtime on the project. The employees were excited that one of **their** own would soon be working in administration, but **they** couldn't figure out who the lucky person might be. Since everybody had spent so much of **his or her** personal time on the ad campaign, everyone on staff felt **he or she** had a chance at the big promotion—and **his or her** own office.² Unfortunately, the company had a policy of only promoting one of **its** staff members per year. Tim had a tough decision to make.

1. It's best to avoid overusing her/she or his/her by rewording the sentence: "The individual's hard work and dedication to the job would be recognized at the end of the week, and this person would also get a private office."

2. Better: "Since everybody had spent so much personal time on the ad campaign, everyone on staff felt entitled to the big promotion—and the private office."

Chapter 5

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Underline the complete subjects in the following sentences.

EXAMPLE: During the flight, the pilot saw signs of engine problems.

1. The plane filled with passengers on vacation was given its takeoff signal.
2. At some point during the flight, the flight attendant working the coach section heard a slight popping noise.
3. The pilot and co-pilot listened to the flight attendant's concerns.
4. About ten minutes later, they asked the passengers to fasten their safety belts securely.
5. What the flight attendant had heard was the sound of a goose flying into one of the engines.

Chapter 6

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Underline the linking verbs in the following sentences.

EXAMPLE: Air Force One is on the ground.

1. The new pilot seems happy to be flying Air Force One today.
2. He met the President earlier, and the President agrees that the pilot appears ready to be in charge.
3. Pilots of Air Force One must be intelligent, steady, and reliable.

4. Air Force One remains standing by at all times for the President.
5. At the request of the White House, the kitchen of Air Force One is always prepared to serve pizza.

EXERCISE 2

Directions: Underline the transitive verbs, and circle the direct objects in the following sentences.

EXAMPLE: The pilot canceled the flight

1. With the new pilot at the controls, Air Force One left the runway.
2. After landing, the Secret Service agents guided the President off the plane and into the hangar.
3. The committee had requested a secret meeting before the convention.
4. Although the President's advisors opposed the idea, the President agreed.
5. While the meeting occurred, the new pilot told himself that he had a great job.

EXERCISE 3

Directions: Underline the verbals in the following sentences.

1. To protect the President, his advisors suggested that he return to the plane.
2. Deciding what was in the best interest of the President, the Secret Service agents barred the media from the plane.
3. As she turned the plane around for the takeoff, the amazed pilot wondered what had happened.

4. Minutes later, the staff on the plane were informed that they were to return to Washington.

5. The returning flight seemed to take longer than the flight there.

EXERCISE 4

Directions: Specify the tense (present, past, or future) of the underlined verbs in the following sentences.

1. The price of oil dropped this year, but it is still expensive to fly.

Past

2. Moreover, the airlines will add even more surcharges this year.

Future

3. When I went to Jamaica last year, I thought there were already enough surcharges.

Past, Past

4. I am at home contemplating flying to Jamaica again, but those surcharges may stop me.

Present, Future

5. Staying at home, though, usually also costs a lot of gas money.

Present

EXERCISE 5

Directions: Identify each underlined verb by its tense (present, past, future) and its aspect (perfect, progressive).

EXAMPLE: I have wanted to fly to Jamaica for a long time. (present perfect)

1. Last year, I was going to Jamaica when I learned that I had lost my job.

Past Progressive

Past Perfect

2. Now that I have a new job, I am going on vacation soon.

Present Progressive (structurally)

Future (using “be + going” as future modal)

3. However, even though I had wanted to go to Jamaica last year, I am having thoughts about going to the mountains now.

Past Perfect

Present Progressive

4. My company is having a contest, and the winner and three friends will be going to Aspen.

Present Progressive

Future Progressive

5. Having never won a contest before, I am having second thoughts about buying raffle tickets.

Present Progressive

EXERCISE 6

Directions: In the following paragraph, change 10 verb phrases from the passive to the active.

Cultures all over the world have signs and symbols for good luck. Many people are familiar with four leaf clovers, but there are many more good luck charms than that! European, Middle Eastern, Far Eastern, and Native American cultures **consider** crickets lucky. Many cultures also **consider** ladybugs lucky, especially for the person on whom one lands, and the Ancient Egyptians **believed** scarabs to be a sign of good fortune. Aside from insects, cultures all over the world **value** animals for being lucky. The Chinese **believe** tigers to be important symbols in astrology, and they **associate** elephants with defeating death due to their long life spans. Germans **include** pigs in an expression that means, “Good luck is at hand.” Many societies even **regard** inanimate objects as auspicious: the possessors of horseshoes, dream catchers, and pots of gold (found at the end of rainbows) **are supposedly lucky**.

<http://www.squidoo.com/goodlucksigns>

Chapter 7

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Change eleven verbs in the following paragraph that do not agree with their subjects.

Evil omens and signs of bad luck **are** known throughout the world. Western cultures **believe** walking under a ladder or having a black cat **cross** your path will ensure a disaster of some kind. Spilling salt **is** also bad luck; the only remedy is to throw some salt over your right shoulder. Breaking a mirror **causes** seven years of bad luck, and you might as well stay in bed on Friday the 13th, because nothing good **happens** on this day. In fact, the number 13 should just be avoided altogether. In Russian culture, people who whistle indoors will **lose** all their money. Also, two people **are** never supposed to shake hands or talk across a threshold, and, if you **forget** an item at home, don't go back for it: bad luck **comes** to anyone who **returns** home for a forgotten item.

Chapter 8

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Underline each adjective or adjective phrase in the following sentences.

1. Recently, a news survey showed that a large percentage of Americans say that they have experienced credible results based on a superstition.
2. A four-leaf clover is often considered good luck.
3. Bringing an open umbrella inside is often considered bad luck.
4. Good luck and bad luck are both considered to be superstitious.
5. Believing in good luck can be a self-fulfilling prophecy that then confirms the belief in good luck.

Chapter 9

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Underline each adverb phrase in the following sentences.

1. Leaving so early for Iceland shocked our systems.
2. Even though we left early, we barely made the departure time.
3. Sally moved quite quickly for her, but she still was rather slow.

4. We all slept on the plane; consequently, we went straight to the concert.

5. To see Sign in Iceland was frankly one of the highlights of my life.

Chapter 10

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Underline each prepositional phrase, and circle each preposition. If a prepositional phrase is within another prepositional phrase, underline it twice.

1. When you think of prepositions, think of three boxes and all the spatial relationships that can occur between those three boxes.

2. You can be among the boxes or between two boxes.

3. In the middle of two boxes, you can find another box.

4. You can be above one box while being below another one.

5. At 3:00 p.m. every day, you could take a piece of candy out of one of the boxes.
