

## Common Problems for ESL Students: Exercises

\*Adapted from English Exercises: English as a Foreign Language by Angela Paratore. New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc. 1958.

### 1. The –s ending

Which words in parentheses should end in –s?

- |                           |                                     |                       |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. five thousand (dollar) | b. several (month)                  | c. two (hundred)      |
| d. some (shoe) polish     | e. one of the most beautiful (city) |                       |
| f. a (lot) of             | g. one and a half (year)            | h. one of the (thing) |
| i. a few (table)          | j. a (year) and a half              |                       |

### 2. Articles

Put in *the*, *a*, *an*, or leave it blank.

- Can you tell me where \_\_\_\_\_ Pacific Avenue is?
- \_\_\_\_\_ steak we ate was very good.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Japan is small, but it has \_\_\_\_\_ large population.
- \_\_\_\_\_ University of Wisconsin is in \_\_\_\_\_ state of Wisconsin.
- Tell me \_\_\_\_\_ story of your life.
- He was \_\_\_\_\_ very nice teacher.
- We have \_\_\_\_\_ plenty of food.
- I'll wait \_\_\_\_\_ few minutes.
- At \_\_\_\_\_ first I was homesick.
- We had \_\_\_\_\_ wonderful time.

### 3. This/that/these/those

Insert the correct word.

- |                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. Can you pass me _____ book?      | b. Can you pass me _____ books?      |
| c. _____ bread was delicious.       | d. _____ bread is delicious.         |
| e. Did you make _____ cookies here? | f. Did you make _____ cookies there? |
| g. _____ dog here is vicious.       | h. _____ dog there is friendly.      |
| i. Who owns _____ shoes here?       | j. Are _____ your shoes over there?  |

### 4. Word Order

Insert the words in parentheses at the proper place in each sentence.

- (a violin lesson) He has every week.
- (other) Two people were there as well.
- (from them) The children received presents.
- (very much) I enjoyed seeing those things.
- (some extra classes) I have been attending these days.
- (the whole day) We spent there.
- (many fine beaches) We have in my country.
- (almost all the time) The sky is gray.
- (always) He used to come and see us.
- (very large) He has a family.

### 5. Verbs

Give the proper form of the verbs in parentheses.

- a. I (leave) my job when I came here.
- b. I don't know if I will like winter because I (never see) a winter here.
- c. American movies (not always represent) a true picture of American life.
- d. Since that time I (be) living in an apartment.
- e. I (make) many friends during this semester.
- f. On our last trip to Paris we (stay) three days.
- g. When I decided to come to the United States I (be) afraid when I (think) that I (have to) speak English all the time.
- h. Tell me some experiences that you (have) since you arrived here.
- i. In your last letter you (ask) me when I (come) to see you again.
- j. We (never disagree) since I have known her.

## 6. Prepositions

Supply the preposition (of, on, at, for, in, from, by, about, etc.) if one is missing.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ the night of February 12
- b. I usually study \_\_\_\_\_ night.
- c. Did you attend \_\_\_\_\_ that meeting?
- d. Her birthday is \_\_\_\_\_ April.
- e. the best \_\_\_\_\_ the world
- f. Her voice appeals \_\_\_\_\_ me.
- g. \_\_\_\_\_ the third year
- h. I was impressed \_\_\_\_\_ its beauty.
- i. She is excited \_\_\_\_\_ going to California.
- j. \_\_\_\_\_ 1935

## 7. No, not

Choose between *no* or *not*. Make contractions of verb and *not* where possible.

- a. There's \_\_\_\_\_ place like home.
- b. I have \_\_\_\_\_ seen her anywhere.
- c. There is \_\_\_\_\_ much time.
- d. There's \_\_\_\_\_ time.
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ all the students are going.
- f. \_\_\_\_\_ yet
- g. \_\_\_\_\_ so fast!
- h. There are \_\_\_\_\_ students there.
- i. There is \_\_\_\_\_ possibility that it will happen.
- j. It's \_\_\_\_\_ possible that it will happen.

## 8. Interrogative words

Select the single interrogative word (who, whose, what, which, why, when, where, how) that would replace each item in a question.

- a. John
- b. John's
- c. in the drawer
- d. the last one
- e. tomorrow
- f. because I have to study
- g. in the air
- h. backwards
- i. mine
- j. by working hard

## 9. Pronouns

Insert the correct form of *we*, *you*, and *they* for each item.

Example: (our) name

(your) name

(their) name

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ customs
- b. for \_\_\_\_\_
- c. The house is \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. It belongs to \_\_\_\_\_.
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ live in that house.

Insert the correct form of *she*, *he*, and *I* for each item.

- f. with \_\_\_\_\_  
 h. That is \_\_\_\_\_ car.  
 j. for \_\_\_\_\_
- g. \_\_\_\_\_ friend  
 i. \_\_\_\_\_ own(s) the car.

Insert the correct pronoun to replace the word in parentheses.

- k. (people) \_\_\_\_\_ political ideas  
 m. (my city) \_\_\_\_\_ climate  
 o. (my family) I promised to write \_\_\_\_\_ often.
- l. (library) the first of \_\_\_\_\_ kind  
 n. (boys) \_\_\_\_\_ girlfriends

### 10. *Some, any, no, every* in compound words

These words combine with certain others to form compound words (*everything, somewhere, nobody*).

Where necessary, the words in parentheses will help you decide which word fits. *Neg.* means negative; *all* means select *every*; *indiff.* means indifference of choice, so you should select *any*.

- a. I understood \_\_\_\_\_ thing at all.  
 c. Is \_\_\_\_\_ body invited? (all)  
 e. \_\_\_\_\_ body was at the house. (neg.)  
 g. \_\_\_\_\_ body (indiff.)  
 i. Is \_\_\_\_\_ thing missing?
- b. Jim understood \_\_\_\_\_ thing (all)  
 d. \_\_\_\_\_ one can go (indiff.)  
 f. There is \_\_\_\_\_ thing left. (neg.)  
 h. \_\_\_\_\_ body has taken my book.  
 j. There isn't \_\_\_\_\_ thing wrong with it.

### 11. What's wrong?

Correct the portion in parentheses.

- a. No one (maybe) admitted.  
 b. It is one of the best (high school of) my country.  
 c. That was (my first time to see) Niagara Falls.  
 d. I (didn't see) him since October.  
 e. I don't feel well, but this (is no mean) that I am sick.  
 f. I see now (what) different American food is (with) ours.  
 g. I was (amazing) to see the winter sports here.  
 h. The thing that surprised me (it) was the tall buildings.  
 i. My sister lives (another city).  
 j. (the most of) the inhabitants  
 k. the people (whom) were there  
 l. (Almost houses) are made of wood.  
 m. the man (who I used to work in his restaurant)  
 n. She (can speaks) English very well.  
 o. I (hope) I could see it again.  
 p. the (most good) university in my country  
 q. Foreigners are people who (came) from other countries.  
 r. three times (in a day)  
 s. He (said me come) back later.  
 t. I enjoyed (even though the vacation).