

## Common Problems for ESL Students: Exercises – Answer key

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

### 1. The –s ending

The correct forms of the words follow.

- a. five thousand dollars
- b. several months
- c. two hundred
- d. some shoe polish
- e. one of the most beautiful cities
- f. a lot of
- g. one and a half years
- h. one of the things
- i. a few tables
- j. a year and a half

### 2. Articles

The correct articles are in parentheses.

- a. Can you tell me where (blank) Pacific Avenue is?
- b. (The) steak we ate was very good.
- c. (blank) Japan is small, but it has (a) large population.
- d. (The) University of Wisconsin is in (the) state of Wisconsin.
- e. Tell me (the) story of your life.
- f. He was (a) very nice teacher.
- g. We have (blank) plenty of food.
- h. I'll wait (a) few minutes.
- i. At (blank) first I was homesick.
- j. We had (a) wonderful time.

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

The correct word is in parentheses.

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

### 4. Word Order

The words in parentheses are at the proper place in each sentence.

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

### 5. Verbs

The proper form of the verbs are in parentheses.

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

## 6. Prepositions

The correct prepositions are in parentheses.

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

## 7. No, not

The correct form is in parentheses.

- a. There's (no) place like home.
- b. I have (not = haven't) seen her anywhere.
- c. There is (not = isn't) much time.
- d. There's (no) time.
- e. (Not) all the students are going.
- f. (not) yet
- g. (Not) so fast!
- h. There are (no) students there.
- i. There is (no) possibility that it will happen.
- j. It's (not) possible that it will happen.

## 8. Interrogative words

The correct interrogative word is in parentheses.

- a. John (who)
- b. John's (whose)
- c. in the drawer (where)
- d. the last one (which)
- e. tomorrow (when)
- f. because I have to study (why)
- g. in the air (where)
- h. backwards (how)
- i. mine (whose)
- j. by working hard (how)

## 9. Pronouns

The correct forms of *we*, *you*, and *they* are in parentheses.

- a. (our, your, their) customs
- b. for (us, you, them)
- c. The house is (ours, yours, theirs).
- d. It belongs to (us, you, them).
- e. (We, you, they) live in that house.

The correct forms of *she*, *he*, and *I* are in parentheses.

- f. with (her, him, me)
- g. (her, his, my) friend
- h. That is (her, his, my) car.
- i. (she, he, I) own(s) the car.
- j. for (her, him, me)

The correct pronoun is in italics.

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

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

The correct word is in italics.

- a. I understood *nothing* at all.                                  b. Jim understood *everything* (all)  
 c. Is *everybody* invited? (all)                                  d. *anyone* can go (indiff.)  
 e. *Nobody* was at the house. (neg.)                              f. There is *nothing* left. (neg.)  
 g. *anybody* (indiff.)    h. *somebody* has taken my book.  
 i. Is *something* missing?    j. There isn't *anything* wrong with it.

### 11. **What's wrong?**

The corrected portion is in parentheses.

- a. No one (may be) admitted.  
 b. It is one of the best (high schools in) my country.  
 c. That was (the first time I saw) Niagara Falls.  
 d. I (haven't seen) him since October.  
 e. I don't feel well, but this (doesn't mean) that I am sick.  
 f. I see now (how) different American food is (from) ours.  
 g. I was (amazed) to see the winter sports here.  
 h. The thing that surprised me (*blank*) was the tall buildings.  
 i. My sister lives (in another city).  
 j. (most of) the inhabitants  
 k. the people (who) were there  
 l. (Most houses) are made of wood.  
 m. the man (in whose restaurant I used to work)  
 n. She (can speak/speaks) English very well.  
 o. I (hoped) I could see it again.  
 p. the (best) university in my country  
 q. Foreigners are people who (come) from other countries.  
 r. three times (a day)  
 s. He (told me to come) back later.  
 t. I enjoyed (the vacation anyway).