

If you know these 10 English grammar rules, your English is AMAZING!

Think you're a grammar expert? Let's see! This lesson tests you with 10 tricky English grammar questions. You'll face challenges that might surprise even native speakers. Each question comes with a brief explanation of the answer. Whether you're learning English or you speak it as a first language, you might discover something new! Ready to test your grammar skills? Let's begin!



10 questions, 10 grammar rules!

1

Which word is missing from the sentence?

_____ **Molly to resign, who'd replace her?**

The answer is 'were' - **Were Molly to resign, who'd replace her?**

This is an **inverted conditional**. In second conditional sentences, we can remove 'if' and use the structure '**were + subject + to-infinitive**'. This makes the sentence more formal. Here are a few other examples of how we could write this sentence:

- **If Molly were to resign, who would replace her? (formal)**
- **If Molly resigned, who would replace her? (standard 2nd conditional)**

2

Where is the mistake in this sentence?

Tim or myself will lead the meeting today.

The mistake is the use of '**myself**' - **Tim or I will lead the meeting today.**

Now, if you're learning English, you probably got that one correct. If you were born in an English-speaking country and you've spoken English all of your life,



you might not have! Remember, we use **reflexive pronouns** like 'myself' as the object of a sentence when the subject and the object refer to the same person or thing.

In our example sentence, we need a **subject pronoun** - 'I'. This is such a common mistake among English speakers that it might even become correct in the future.

3 Join these sentences together using the words 'not only' and 'but'.
He didn't only wear mismatched socks. He also forgot to brush his teeth.

You should have written: **Not only did he wear mismatched socks, but he also forgot to brush his teeth.**

Did you get that? That's **an inversion with a negative adverbial**. We put the adverbial at the beginning and switch the normal order of the subject and auxiliary verb. We often do this in formal writing to make a statement more dramatic or emphatic. Here is the structure:

adverbial + auxiliary verb + subject

Following 'Not only' with 'but also' is very common.

4 Choose the correct verb to fill the gap.
The crowd _____ getting restless. is/are

Trick question: both **is** and **are** are correct in British English!

The crowd is/are getting restless.

Crowd is a **collective noun**. Collective nouns refer to a group of people or things as one. In British English, we often **treat collective nouns as singular or plural**. So in our example sentence, 'is' and 'are' both work.

In American English, people generally treat collective nouns as singular, so they would be more likely to use 'is' in our sentence.

5 Choose 'lay' or 'lie' to complete the sentences.

Every evening, I like to _____ in my hammock and look at the stars.

Please _____ the dress on the bed.

The answers: **Every evening, I like to lie in my hammock and look at the stars.**
Please lay the dress on the bed.

'Lay' and 'lie' are tricky for everyone, including me!

'**Lay**' /**leɪ**/ means to put something in a flat position, often gently. It should be followed by an object, which in our example sentence was 'the dress'.

'**Lie**' /**laɪ**/ means to be in or get yourself into a flat position. It does not need an object.

6 How would you complete this sentence?

It was _____ historic day for the country.

a. a

b. an

Another tricky one for you. Both '**a**' and '**an**' are perfectly fine!

It was a/an historic day for the country.

You've probably been taught the rule to use 'a' before consonant sounds and 'an' before vowel sounds.

a + consonant sound
an + vowel sound

'Historic' /hɪ'stɔːrɪk/ starts with the consonant sound /h/. And yes, people usually say **a historic** /ə hɪ'stɔːrɪk/. But quite a lot of people say **an historic** /ən hɪ'stɔːrɪk/. You can choose which is easier for you to say based on your own pronunciation. In writing, I'd go for 'a historic'.

7

Which sentence is correct?

1. **To whom does this jacket belong?**
2. **Who does this jacket belong to?**

I'm pulling out all the tricks with these: both are correct!

Technically, the first sentence is "**more correct**". When we have **a preposition**, like 'to', we should **use 'whom' in a relative clause**, and these words should go at the beginning of the clause. But this is very formal, and you won't hear it used very often in modern English. It's much more common to say - '**Who does this jacket belong to?**'

8

Which word can you add to show that this is a habit?

Our neighbour _____ play heavy metal all night long.

The correct answer is '**will**': **Our neighbour will play heavy metal all night long.**

Yep, 'will' doesn't just refer to the future. We can use it **to talk about habits**, either a general habit or if you emphasise 'will', it can be an annoying habit.

9

Which sentence is correct?

1. It took me a long time to get the flu over.
2. It took me a long time to get over the flu.

Did you choose the second sentence? If so, you are correct!

'**To get over**' in the sense of to recover from an illness is a **non-separable phrasal verb**, meaning you can't put the object - the flu - between the verb and the particle. So you '**get over something**'.

10

Which of these sentences is punctuated correctly? Look at the final comma.

1. At the fair, I ate a toffee apple, brandy snap and candyfloss.
2. At the fair, I ate a toffee apple, brandy snap, and candyfloss.

Yes, both answers are correct again! The comma after 'brandy snap' is one of the most controversial punctuation marks in English. It's called **the Oxford comma**. In American English, people often use a comma before the final 'and' in a list. In British English, at least between short items, people usually don't.



Activity

Choose the correct answer for each question.

1. Which sentence uses an inverted conditional?

- a. If Jessica were to win the race, she'd donate the prize money.
- b. Were Jessica to win the race, she'd donate the prize money.
- c. If Jessica won the race, she'd donate the prize money.

2. Choose the correct sentence

- a. The CEO or myself will address the shareholders tomorrow.
- b. The CEO or me will address the shareholders tomorrow.
- c. The CEO or I will address the shareholders tomorrow.

3. Choose the sentence that correctly uses "not only... but also":

- a. Not only the restaurant serves delicious food, but also offers live music.
- b. The restaurant serves delicious food not only, but also offers live music.
- c. Not only does the restaurant serve delicious food, but also offers live music.

Choose the words from the word bank to complete each sentence.

a. lay	b. will	c. an	d. lie	e. from
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4. I prefer to _____ on the beach and listen to the waves.

5. The archaeologists made _____ unprecedented discovery at the dig site.

6. My cat _____ scratch at the door every morning at 6am.

7. Please _____ the freshly ironed shirts in the suitcase.

8. _____ whom did you receive this antique watch?

Answers:

1) b 2) c 3) c 4) d 5) c 6) b 7) a 8) e

