

Grammar Refresher
Exercise – Answer Key

1) None of the reasons is sufficient to end the project.

None is an indefinite pronoun, whose number is determined by the following prepositional phrase. Reasons ... are.

2) Everyone realizes why they must take responsibility for their own actions.

Everyone is an indefinite pronoun that is always treated as singular. They is plural. Change to he or she, or rephrase the sentence.

3) I admit, I should of started this project earlier.

Should of is unidiomatic. Should have.

4) Stationery bicycles are perfect for winter exercise.

Commonly confused words: stationary – not moving; stationery – writing paper.

5) In her article, the reporter infers that an employee started the fire.

Commonly confused words: writers imply; readers infer

6) There are less SUV's on the road today than there were five years ago.

Countable nouns take the modifiers "fewer" or "greater." Non-countable nouns, like water, take less or more.

7) Your protection is ensured.

Usage – if this sentence implies a financial agreement, use "insured." If no financial promises are being made, "ensured" is preferred.

8) When Irwin was ready to eat his cat jumped onto the table.

Comma after an introductory phrase or to avoid confusion.

9) He should not be put on life support, his living will prohibits it.

Comma splice – use a semicolon to separate independent clauses.

10) Some of my favorite film stars have home pages on the web; John Travolta, Susan Sarandon, and Leonardo DiCaprio.

Replace semicolon with a colon.

11) Darwin's most important book *Origin of the Species* was the result of many years research.

Darwin only has one most important book. The name is simply additional information, non-restrictive, requires commas. And it should be underlined or italicized.

12) My high school classmates have gone on to either successful professional careers, satisfying home lives, or have landed in jail.

Faulty parallel structure. Change "have landed in jail" to two adjectives and a noun.

13) I have never known a tax lawyer whom the IRS did not despise or was friendly with the local legislators.

Faulty parallel structure. "Whom the IRS..." but "who was friendly." The who must be added to the second clause.

14) Despite the fact that he was exhausted after work, the invitation to dinner was too sumptuous for Larry to refuse.

Dangling modifier. Larry is the one exhausted, not the invitation.

15) Although sometimes difficult for students to abide with, the teacher's decision to offer regular quizzes did improve the class average.

Abide with is unidiomatic. Change to abide by.

16) The pivotal journal entry, together with all the books and papers, were destroyed in the fire.

S-v agreement. The phrase "together with" should not be considered part of the subject.

17) Neither the first schematic nor the subsequent diagram are accurate.

S-v agreement. Neither ... nor requires a singular verb unless the noun closest to the verb is plural. Compare "Neither the first schematic nor the subsequent diagrams are accurate."

18) Each of the opportunities were offered at no additional charge.

Each is an indefinite pronoun that should always be treated as singular, no matter what follows.

19) The black lab had barely finished playing with his rope when he laid down and fell promptly asleep.

The past tense of the intransitive verb lie, as in "to lie down" is "lay." Commonly confused because "lay" is the present tense of the transitive verb meaning "to set or place something," as in, "she lay the book on the table." That prompts the use of the non-standard form "laid," which is actually the past tense of "lay."

20) If I was not on vacation, you would never have caught me wearing Bermuda shorts.

Conditional – were. Compare would never have caught.

21) The only horse to win all three races was also the one who the owners had to sell.

Whom, the object of the verb to sell.

22) A good biologist researches a subject thoroughly, and carefully evaluates the possibilities before making a determination.

No comma before a coordinating conjunction separating compound elements, the two verbs, "researches" and "evaluates."

23) Sue was diagnosed with severe inoperable glaucoma.

Use a comma between coordinate adjectives, "severe, inoperable"

24) I always believed in the power of democracy, however, the recent election has led me to wonder about the viability of our present voting system.

The conjunctive adverb "however" requires a semicolon before and a comma after.