

Step 7 Self-assessment exercises:  
using appropriate grammar,  
punctuation and spelling

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# Step 7 Self-assessment exercises: using appropriate grammar, punctuation and spelling

## 7.1 Task 1: Grammar and punctuation

Please **read** each of the following sentences, decide how each needs to be changed, and then **rewrite** it correctly.

### Sentence 1

Each candidate who applies to the college has individual interview.

#### Answer

Each candidate who applies to the college has **an** individual interview.

'Interview' is countable. It requires an article – 'an'.

### Sentence 2

There are a number of ways of keeping informed about current affairs. Reading the newspaper. Listening the radio.

#### Answer

There are a number of ways of keeping informed about current affairs: reading the newspaper; listening **to** the radio.

'Reading the newspaper.' This is not a complete sentence as it has no main verb, so a full stop wouldn't be appropriate. Similarly, 'Listening the radio'; this is not a complete sentence as it has no main verb. Also, the preposition 'to' is needed after listen.

### Sentence 3

It known that exhaust emissions are the major cause of pollution in large cities.

#### Answer

It **is** known that exhaust emissions are the major cause of pollution in large cities.

The verb 'know' is in the passive tense. This involves the use of the verb 'to be' (is) + past participle (known).

### Sentence 4

Caxton introduced the printing press into England, the first texts were printed in English at the end of the C15th.

**Answer**

It is not correct to link two sentences with a comma. You can use a full stop:  
Caxton introduced the printing press into England. The first texts were printed in English at the end of the C15th.

or a semicolon:

Caxton introduced the printing press into England; the first texts were printed in English at the end of the C15th.

(Notice that there is a capital letter after a full stop but not after a semicolon.)

**Sentence 5**

What the major reasons for inflation have been?

**Answer**

The word order (or syntax) of this sentence is wrong. It should be:

What have been the major reasons for inflation?

**Sentence 6**

Hospital waiting lists will be shorter if more doctors and nurses were recruited.

**Answer**

Either:

Hospital waiting lists will be shorter if more doctors and nurses **are** recruited.

or

Hospital waiting lists **would** be shorter if more doctors and nurses were recruited.

The first sentence describes a situation that is more likely to happen than in the second sentence.

### 7.1.1 Self-assessment

- (A) I was able to identify the errors easily and could rewrite the sentences correctly with no difficulty.
- (B) I was able to identify most of the errors and rewrite some of the sentences.
- (C) I had difficulty identifying the errors and was not able to rewrite the sentences correctly.

Please now turn to your [Step 8 Self-assessment grid](#) and note in the appropriate column for this task whether your self-assessment is A, B or C.

## 7.2 Task 2: Verbs

Please read these extracts from course guidelines for students. The first is from M150 *Data, computing and information*. The second is from A103 *An introduction to the humanities*. **Rewrite** the verbs in square brackets in their **appropriate form**.

### For example:

The writing of history [(1) require] the utmost precision in the handling of language. We need concepts [(2) help] [(3) organise] our thoughts.

Answer:

The writing of history (1) **requires** the utmost precision in the handling of language. We need concepts (2) **to help** (3) **organise** our thoughts. (Marwick, 1998: 36–37)

### Extract 1

Now would be a good time [(1) reflect] for a few minutes on your progress over these two courses. [(2) Think] about what you [(3) know] at the beginning of the courses and [(4) compare] it with what you [(5) know] now. [(6) Take] time [(7) reflect] on the progress you [(8) make] in [(9) learn] mathematics. Which topics in this course have you [(10) find] straightforward? Which have you [(11) find] difficult? [(12) Write down] what you [(13) feel] you [(14) gain] from [(15) study] this course – for example, a skill that you [(16) improve] or an understanding of some idea or technique.

### Extract 2

For the next two weeks we [(17) look] at the political ideas of the eighteenth-century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, his influence on the French revolution and on the development of modern democracies. There [(18) be] three parts to these courses. These [(19) breakdown] into sections, each of which [(20) revolve] round one particular point. During your study of these courses [(21) make sure] you [(22) read] slowly, [(23) give] yourself plenty of time [(24) think]. Philosophy [(25) be] about argument and arguments cannot [(26) rush].

Now look at the answers below and compare them with your own.

### Answer

#### Extract 1 answers

Now would be a good time (1) **to reflect** for a few minutes on your progress over these two courses. (2) **Think** about what you (3) **knew** at the beginning of the courses and (4) **compare** it with what you (5) **know** now. (6) **Take** time (7) **to reflect** on the progress you (8) **have made** in (9) **learning** mathematics. Which topics in this course have you (10) **found** straightforward? Which have you (11) **found** difficult? (12) **Write down** what you (13) **feel** you (14) **have gained** from (15) **studying** this course – for example, a skill that you (16) **have improved** or an understanding of some idea or technique.

## Extract 2 answers

For the next two weeks we **(17) are going to look** at the political ideas of the eighteenth-century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, his influence on the French revolution and on the development of modern democracies. There **(18) are** three parts to these units. These **(19) are broken down** into sections, each of which **(20) revolves** round one particular point. During your study of these units **(21) make sure** you **(22) read** slowly, **(23) giving** yourself plenty of time **(24) to think**. Philosophy **(25) is** about argument and arguments cannot **(26) be rushed**.

(Maltravers, 1998: 92)

The following are also possible – though the meaning is slightly different.

- *the progress you are making*
- *did you find straightforward*
- *did you find difficult*
- *you gained from studying*
- *you improved*

The following are also possible:

- *we are looking*
- *will look* (this sounds much more formal)
- *break down* (this is more informal)

*Note:* academic, and especially scientific or technical, texts frequently use the *passive form* of the verb.

### 7.2.1 Self-assessment

**(A)** I found this task quite easy and did it quickly (about two minutes per extract), with few errors.

**(B)** I made some errors but took no more than 5 minutes for each extract.

**(C)** I found this difficult. I spent more than 5 minutes on each extract and still had a number of errors.

Please now turn to your [Step 8 Self-assessment grid](#) and note in the appropriate column for this task whether your self-assessment is A, B or C.

## 7.3 Task 3: Punctuation

This final task is designed to help you reflect on your understanding of academic writing and how well you can use punctuation.

### Activity 5

Please punctuate the following text. It is an extract from the level one science short course SK195 *Human genetics and health issues*. It describes the human genome.

many thousands of genes have been discovered including many that have roles in disease these genes are scattered throughout the human genome but what is the human genome the physical appearance of the bulk of the human genome is 46 long thin structures known as chromosomes it is along the length of each chromosome that the genes are located the term genome is a combination of the two words gene and chromosome chromosomes are built up from a remarkable substance called DNA which stands for deoxyribonucleic acid DNA is breathtakingly simple in structure and yet capable of directing the way we grow reproduce and survive hence it is often referred to as the genetic blueprint the plan of human life

Now compare your punctuation with the answer below:

#### Answer

Many thousands of genes have been discovered, including many that have roles in disease. These genes are scattered throughout the human genome. But what is the human genome? The physical appearance of the bulk of the human genome is 46 long, thin structures known as chromosomes. It is along the length of each chromosome that the genes are located. The term genome is a combination of the two words 'gene' and 'chromosome'.

Chromosomes are built up from a remarkable substance called DNA (which stands for deoxyribonucleic acid). DNA is breathtakingly simple in structure and yet capable of directing the way we grow, reproduce and survive; hence it is often referred to as the genetic blueprint – the plan – of human life.\*

\* A variety of punctuation has been used here to break up the text and make it easier to read. You may have punctuated the passage in a more simple way which would be equally correct, for example, brackets, dashes and the semicolon can all be replaced by commas.

The full stops and question marks followed by a capital letter are essential.

A new paragraph is needed because the main subject changes from the genome to DNA.

### 7.3.1 Self-assessment

- (A) I had no problems in correcting the punctuation.
- (B) I managed to correct most of the punctuation but had problems with three or four.
- (C) I found this difficult. I had five or more wrong.

Please now turn to your [Step 8 Self-assessment grid](#) and note in the appropriate column for this task whether your self-assessment is A, B or C.

When you have completed all of the tasks in Sections 3–7, take an overview of your [Step 8 Self-assessment grid](#) to find out whether you have filled in mostly As, Bs or Cs. Then turn to [Step 9 What next?](#) to consider, 'Next steps'.