

GRAMMAR

FOR GREAT WRITING

 B

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Scope and Sequence

Unit	Common Errors	Vocabulary in Academic Writing	Kinds of Writing
1 Writing about the Present	1.1 Does the verb agree with the subject? 1.2 Do you need simple present or present progressive? 1.3 Do you need simple present or present perfect?	<i>Verbs Frequently Used in Simple Present</i> argue define indicate believe illustrate require change increase show come	Descriptive: <i>Choosing a Major</i> Descriptive: <i>The Human Heart</i>
2 Writing about the Past	2.1 Is the simple past form correct? 2.2 Is the past progressive form correct? 2.3 Do you need simple past or past progressive? 2.4 Are verb tenses consistent?	<i>Verbs Frequently Used in the Past</i> be do say become have take begin make work come	Descriptive: <i>The Pax Romana</i> Narrative: <i>The Beginning of World War I</i>
3 Writing with the Present Perfect	3.1 Do you need simple present or present perfect? 3.2 Do you need simple past or present perfect?	<i>Verbs Frequently Used in Present Perfect</i> be give see become have show come make take do	Introductory: <i>Global Warming</i> Cause-Effect: <i>Murray College</i>
4 Writing about the Future	4.1 Is the correct verb form used after <i>will</i> or <i>may</i> ? 4.2 Do you need to use <i>will</i> or <i>may</i> ? 4.3 Does the clause need a future or present verb?	<i>Verbs Frequently Used in the Future</i> be go know become happen lead come have need do	Introductory: <i>Ethnography</i> Proposal Process: <i>Project Proposal</i>
5 Writing with Prepositions	5.1 Is the preposition correct? 5.2 Does the verb after a prepositional phrase agree with the subject? 5.3 Is the preposition combination correct?	<i>Frequently Used Adjective + Preposition Combinations</i> associated with different from responsible aware of interested in for capable of known as similar to concerned about related to	Cause-Effect: <i>An Apple a Day</i> Comparison: <i>How Cultures View Aging</i>
6 Using Modals in Sentences	6.1 Does the modal need <i>to</i> ? 6.2 Is the negative form correct? 6.3 Do you hedge correctly?	<i>Frequently Used Modal + Verb Combinations</i> can help might seem should try to could do must take will continue to be have to should include would be may lead to	Opinion: <i>The Best Age for Children to Learn to Read</i> Opinion: <i>The Future of Money</i>
7 Using Adjective Clauses	7.1 Do you use <i>which</i> , <i>who</i> , or <i>that</i> ? 7.2 Does the adjective clause need a comma? 7.3 Does the adjective clause have a subject pronoun? 7.4 Is there an extra object pronoun?	<i>Words from the Academic Word List (Sublists 4 and 5)</i> access conflicts precise adequate exposure prior alter phases trends challenge	Descriptive: <i>Eduardo Kobra</i> Definition: <i>Shinichi Suzuki</i>
8 Writing with Adverb Clauses	8.1 Is there a comma missing? 8.2 Is it a fragment? 8.3 Does each clause have a subject and a verb? 8.4 Is there an extra connector?	<i>Words from the Academic Word List (Sublists 4 and 5)</i> concentration hypothesis labels debate implications obvious emerge investigations options goals	Descriptive: <i>Multitasking</i> Narrative: <i>Frogtown</i>

Unit	Common Errors	Vocabulary in Academic Writing	Kinds of Writing
9 Writing with Articles	9.1 Is the article <i>a</i> or <i>an</i> missing? 9.2 Is the article <i>the</i> missing? 9.3 Are you making a general or specific reference? 9.4 Is an article used where one is not needed?	<i>Frequently Used Nouns</i> education number result example participants studies health research variety increase	Classification: <i>Types of Long-Term Memory</i> Cause-Effect: <i>Becoming an Everyday Environmentalist</i>
10 Writing Simple and Compound Sentences	10.1 Does the independent clause have a subject and a verb? 10.2 Is a comma missing? 10.3 Is a coordinating conjunction missing?	<i>Words from the Academic Word List (Sublists 5 and 6)</i> aware fundamental ratio capacity generation version decline notion whereas equivalent	Problem-Solution: <i>Sleeping Cold</i> Comparison: <i>Cultural Interpretations of Facial Expressions</i>
11 Using Parallel Structure	11.1 Are items parallel before and after a conjunction? 11.2 Are items after each part of a correlative conjunction parallel? 11.3 Are items in a comparison parallel?	<i>Words from the Academic Word List (Sublist 6)</i> accurate exceed intelligence author fees migration brief gender revealed enhanced	Descriptive: <i>Thatched Roofs in England</i> Classification: <i>Levels of Airline Service</i>
12 Using Passive Voice	12.1 Is the passive missing a form of <i>be</i> ? 12.2 Is the passive form correct? 12.3 Do you need passive or active voice?	<i>Frequently Used Passive Verb Forms</i> are based is needed were asked can be seen was made were conducted can be used was reported were found is known	Cause-Effect: <i>Headaches in Children</i> Classification: <i>Elements of an Effective Apology</i>
13 Using Gerunds and Infinitives	13.1 Is the verb followed by an infinitive or a gerund? 13.2 Is the correct form used after a preposition? 13.3 Is the subject a gerund? 13.4 Is there a subject? 13.5 Is there a singular verb after a gerund or infinitive subject?	<i>Verbs Frequently Used after Gerunds or Infinitives</i> be know participate develop learn use find make work have	Process: <i>Saving Wildlife</i> Process: <i>Finding More Time</i>
14 Writing with Noun Clauses	14.1 Is the word order correct? 14.2 Is the verb form correct? 14.3 Is a question word or <i>that</i> -phrase missing? 14.4 Is the noun clause missing a subject or verb?	<i>Verbs Frequently Used with Noun Clauses</i> be prefer serve do remember show feel report suggest find	Narrative: <i>The Mysterious Key</i> Descriptive: <i>Recognizing the Sleep-Deprived</i>
15 Using Connectors for Better Writing	15.1 Is there an extra connector? 15.2 Is the connector correct? 15.3 Is a connector missing? 15.4 Is punctuation missing or incorrect?	<i>Verbs Frequently Used with Connectors</i> be make state can recognize suggest do should take have	Classification: <i>Forest Biomes</i> Comparison: <i>How Learning a Foreign Language Has Changed</i>

Writing about the Present

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

DISCUSS Look at the photo and read the caption. Discuss the questions.

1. Do students in your school conduct research outside of class? If so, what kind of research do students do?
2. How can conducting research help a student choose a major?

FIND THE ERRORS This paragraph contains two errors with present or present progressive verbs. Find the errors and correct them. Explain your corrections to a partner.

DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH

Choosing a Major

¹Many students in their first year of university study has difficulty choosing majors. ²Fortunately, there are some steps students can take to help them make the right choice. ³First, students can meet with an academic advisor. ⁴Because academic advisors are familiar with all the majors offered at the university, they are providing helpful information to guide students toward a specific field of study. ⁵Next, students can visit the university career center and meet with a career advisor. ⁶Career advisors are knowledgeable about the type of major needed for a specific career. ⁷Career advisors also administer skills inventories and career interest tests to help students identify possible careers. ⁸Finally, students can ask their professors for advice. ⁹Professors are able to share their experiences and offer valuable insights into what studying a specific major requires in terms of skills, abilities, and effort. ¹⁰After taking these steps, students are usually ready to select a major in their second year of academic study.

Student biologists look for the endangered smoky madtom, a species of catfish.

1.1 Simple Present		
Subject	Verb	Example
I / you / we / they	verb	Environmental engineers work on the protection of the environment and human health.
he / she / it	verb + -s	The government agency wants nuclear testing to continue as planned.

1.2 Present Form of Be		
Subject	Verb	Example
I	<i>am</i>	I am a citizen of both Spain and Colombia.
he / she / it	<i>is</i>	The company's main office is in Rome.
you / we / they	<i>are</i>	Strong teachers are essential for preparing students for higher education.

1.3 Present Progressive		
Subject	Verb	Example
I	<i>am + verb + -ing</i>	With this research, I am attempting to prove the effectiveness of the new medication.
he / she / it	<i>is + verb + -ing</i>	Panama is building a larger canal.
we / you / they	<i>are + verb + -ing</i>	Because of the weak economy, small businesses are growing very slowly.

1.4 Present Perfect		
Subject	Verb	Example
I / you / we / they	<i>have + past participle</i>	The Csango people have lived in Romania's Moldova region for over a thousand years.
he / she / it	<i>has + past participle</i>	Russian pianist Yevgeny Kissin has given concerts since he was a child.

- Notes
- Contractions are almost never used in academic writing.
 - See Appendix 4, Irregular Verbs, on page 220 for examples of irregular past participles.

1.5 Negative Present Forms	
Form	Examples
<i>do / does not + base form of the verb</i>	This article reports on one business that does not have any employees.
<i>be + not</i>	Many workers are not comfortable in their jobs.
<i>be + not + verb + -ing</i>	The main researcher for NASA's mission to Mars is not planning to visit the planet.
<i>have / has + not + past participle</i>	The Himalayan mountain climbers have not seen their families since late last year.

Note
Contractions with *not* are rare in academic writing.

ACTIVITY 1

Fill in the blank with the correct form of the verb in parentheses: simple present, present progressive, or present perfect. Use *not* when it is given.

- The earth _____ (*become, present progressive*) warmer, so scientists are worried about the future of the planet.
- Aircraft mechanics _____ (*wear, simple present*) headphones at work because the planes are so loud.
- The documentary on pollution _____ (*receive, present progressive*) a lot of attention from critics.
- The volunteers _____ (*not, travel, present perfect*) since the war began.
- I _____ (*preview, simple present*) upcoming chapters before the instructor's lecture, and it always makes me more prepared for class.
- The latest legislation _____ (*not, help, present progressive*) students with their huge college loans.
- The indigenous tribes _____ (*want, always, present perfect*) a land of their own.
- The singer _____ (*be, present*) also a well-known environmental activist.

1.6 Using Simple Present

The simple present is commonly used in academic writing. It is used:	
1. to write about general truths and facts that are not limited to a specific time	It takes about 12 hours for your body to digest a meal.
2. to write about a repeated or habitual action	Every fall, Canadian geese fly south for the winter.
3. to cite a source	Sleep researchers say that most people dream four to six times per night.
4. to give details about information from a book, poem, or film We use simple present because an event in a book or film remains the same every time we read or see it. This is called the literary present.	In “The Story of an Hour,” Mrs. Mallard learns of her husband’s death, but she does not feel sad.

Note					
Stative (non-action) verbs describe a state, rather than an action. They usually take the simple present form of the verb. Note the most common ones below.					
be (exist)	consist of	dislike	realize	seem	want
belong to	depend on	include	recognize	understand	

1.7 Using Present Progressive

The present progressive is not as commonly used in writing as other verb forms. However, it is used:	
1. to describe events in real time	In some countries, people are paying more taxes than ever before.
2. to write about the continuation of an event	Temperatures are continuing to rise because of global warming.

1.8 Using Present Perfect

The present perfect is used to write about past events that are still relevant now. It is used:	
1. to write about an event that happened in the past and continues until now Use <i>since</i> with a specific date or time. Use <i>for</i> with a period of time.	Alaska has been a U.S. state since 1959. Alaska has been a U.S. state for more than 50 years.
2. to write about a very recent past event that is important to the current discussion	The government has passed a new tax law that will have an immediate impact on citizens.

ACTIVITY 2

Fill in the blank with the correct simple present, present progressive, or present perfect form of the verb in parentheses. Use *not* when given. More than one answer may be possible.

- In his poem “The Raven,” author Edgar Allen Poe _____ (*use*) numerous symbols to express loneliness.
- Global sea levels _____ (*rise*) rapidly since the beginning of the 21st century.
- Historians _____ (*begin*) to study some alternative causes of World War I.
- Unfortunately, people from developing countries _____ (*not, have*) the same opportunities as those in wealthier nations to start small businesses.
- In that country, government regulations _____ (*not, allow*) politicians to accept contributions from private companies.
- As governments spend more money on cancer research, medical professionals _____ (*conduct*) more extensive studies on possible cures.
- Because people’s desire to explore space is stronger than ever, astronomers _____ (*work*) on a new super telescope.
- In his book *The Art of Happiness*, the Dalai Lama _____ (*state*) that we can train in happiness much like we can train in any other skill.

Common Error 1.1 Does the verb agree with the subject?

The people of Northern Africa ~~speaks~~ ^{speak} French, Arabic, and some Italian.

The family ~~are~~ ^{is} emigrating from the country because of the war.

Students in Canada ~~has~~ ^{have} studied a second language for many years.

REMEMBER: The verb must agree with the subject.

ACTIVITY 3 Common Error 1.1

Read each sentence. Underline the verb form that correctly completes each sentence.

- 1. Some nutritionists (*define / defines*) the United States as a “Fast Food Nation.”
- 2. Research has shown that pollution and asthma (*is / are*) related.
- 3. Since 1990, environmentalists (*has developed / have developed*) amazing tools to improve recycling methods.
- 4. In this year’s national report, the biggest increase in crime (*does not involve / do not involve*) violent physical crime but computer crime.
- 5. Social media companies (*has continued / have continued*) to experience significant growth.
- 6. In many western countries, the treatment of children with disabilities (*is not / are not*) different from the treatment of able-bodied children.
- 7. The new in-house exercise programs (*has benefited / have benefited*) both the employees of the company and the company itself.
- 8. Experts in business (*considers / consider*) honesty one of the most important qualities of a leader.

Common Error 1.2 Do you need simple present or present progressive?

Naan, a common Indian bread, ~~is tasting~~ ^{tastes} delicious because it is cooked over a fire.

REMEMBER: Stative verbs are usually in the simple present.

ACTIVITY 4 Common Error 1.2

Read each sentence. Underline the verb form that correctly completes each sentence.

- 1. Private airline companies (*take / are taking*) the place of national airlines.
- 2. Recent research (*shows / is showing*) that trees belong to a type of social network.
- 3. People who are not comfortable with technology sometimes (*do not understand / are not understanding*) the instructions on software packages.
- 4. Tourists (*visit / are visiting*) Hong Kong in record numbers these days.
- 5. If an experiment sample size is too small, the size (*ruins / is ruining*) the results.
- 6. Environmental scientists are concerned because icebergs (*melt / are melting*) at a very fast rate.
- 7. Teachers report that the new art education program (*improves / is improving*) students’ critical thinking skills.
- 8. According to some sociologists, pure democracy (*does not exist / is not existing*) in the world today.

Common Error 1.3 Do you need simple present or present perfect?

The number of biomedical engineers ~~increases~~ ^{has increased} significantly since 2005.

REMEMBER: With the adverbs of time *for* or *since*, use the present perfect. Do not use the simple present.

ACTIVITY 5 Common Error 1.3

Fill in the blanks with the correct simple present or present perfect form of the verb in parentheses.

- 1. Economists _____ (*study*) the possibility of an upcoming depression for more than 10 years. In fact, many of them _____ (*believe*) that things will become worse before they become better.
- 2. Today, only 35,000 people in Canada _____ (*speak*) one of the Inuit languages. They have spoken these languages for centuries, but now the languages _____ (*be*) at risk.

3. Scientists say that tomatoes _____ (*qualify*) as fruits, not vegetables. Today, approximately 7,500 tomato varieties _____ (*exist*) around the world.
4. This radio station is vital because it _____ (*focus*) primarily on news reports. It _____ (*share*) information with millions of listeners in the United States.
5. Scientists _____ (*understand*) the significance of the environmental problem because they _____ (*study*) its effects for the past three decades.
6. Recent studies _____ (*show*) that eating too much red meat is unhealthy. Many doctors and dietitians _____ (*recommend*) eating between five and six ounces per day.
7. For over 30 years, the disaster of the space shuttle *Challenger* _____ (*remain*) in the consciousness of the American public. Most people _____ (*remember*) what they were doing at the time of the explosion in 1986.
8. According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, individuals _____ (*adopt*) almost 3 million shelter animals each year. While the number is high, many abandoned pets still _____ (*need*) a good home.



Academic Vocabulary

Verbs Frequently Used in Simple Present in Academic Writing

argue	change	define	increase	require
believe	come	illustrate	indicate	show

Source: Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies 2008–)

ACTIVITY 6 Vocabulary in Academic Writing

Use the academic vocabulary in the simple present to complete each sentence. In some sentences, more than one answer is possible.

Subject Area	Example from Academic Writing
Economics	1. Economists often _____ about the cause of a stock market crash.
Paleontology	2. Recent findings _____ that giant alligators lived in North Africa thousands of years ago.
Criminal Justice	3. The statistics _____ a decrease in violent crime over the past few years.
Business	4. Many business experts _____ that low interest rates are very important for continued economic growth.
Literature	5. Robert Frost’s language in “Directives” _____ symbolism perfectly.
Anthropology	6. Anthropologists _____ anthropology as the study of humanity.
Science / Engineering	7. Career opportunities in biomedical engineering _____ every year.
Science	8. The word “science” _____ from the Latin <i>scientia</i> , meaning knowledge.
Physics	9. Physics _____ a very strong understanding of mathematics, especially calculus.
Computer Science	10. Cloud computing, or online data storage, _____ the way people and computers interact.

ACTIVITY 7 Review Quiz

Multiple Choice Choose the letter of the correct answer.

- 1. Tataouine _____ a region of Tunisia where the original *Star Wars* was filmed.
a. is b. are c. has been d. are being
- 2. Because the number of people who die from cancer is increasing, doctors _____ to find the cure.
a. race b. races c. is racing d. are racing
- 3. Internships give students valuable work experience, but university students who have internships while they are studying _____ a lot of free time.
a. does not have b. do not have c. is not having d. are not having
- 4. Anthropologists who want to learn more about ancient man typically _____ to the frozen area of the Alps for their research.
a. travels b. travel c. is traveling d. are traveling
- 5. Psychologists these days _____ the connection between income level and happiness.
a. research b. researches c. have researched d. are researching

Error Correction One of the five underlined words or phrases is not correct. Find the error and correct it. Be prepared to explain your answer.

- 6. According to film critics, there are several reasons why fans love the *Star Wars* films.
One reason is the portrayal of the main characters. The other has been the conflict between the characters. Finally, fans are very happy with the actors.
- 7. The idea of the power of positive thinking is around for decades. Basically, positive thinking involves thinking good thoughts. Using positive thinking leads to pleasant feelings. These thoughts help both the psychological and physical self.
- 8. The Druze people is a religious group in the Middle East. Even though their numbers are small, their community has banded together for centuries.
Although there are communities in other countries, most are in Lebanon.



The sun rises over the Arno River in Florence, Italy.

ACTIVITY 8 Building Greater Sentences

Combine these short sentences into one sentence. You can add new words and move words around, but you should not add or omit any ideas. More than one answer is possible, but these sentences require the simple present. (See Appendix 1, Building Greater Sentences, page 216, for tips on how to do this activity.)

- 1. a. Florence is a city.
b. Florence is an Italian city.
c. Florence is famous.
d. It is the birthplace of the Renaissance.

- 2. a. The U.S. Constitution is a document.
b. It is fairly long.
c. It is easy to understand.

- 3. a. Music therapy is helpful.
b. Music therapy helps people.
c. These people have depression.
d. Research has shown this.

ACTIVITY 9 Steps to Composing

Read the paragraph. Then follow the directions in the 10 steps to edit the information and composition of this paragraph. Write your revised paragraph on a separate sheet of paper. Be careful with capitalization and punctuation. Check your answers with the class.

DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH

The Human Heart

¹The human heart is an amazing organ. ²It is responsible for pushing blood inside the circulatory system. ³The left side of the heart pumps blood to the entire body. ⁴The right side pumps blood to the lungs to receive oxygen. ⁵Our lungs do two things: they receive oxygen when we inhale and remove carbon dioxide when we exhale. ⁶Inside the lungs, the respiratory system interacts with the circulatory system. ⁷Then the blood moves to the right side of the heart into a filling chamber, which is called the right atrium. ⁸With each individual heartbeat, blood moves from the right atrium into a pumping chamber. ⁹After that, the blood picks up oxygen. ¹⁰Once the blood picks up oxygen, it pushes back to the heart, filling another chamber, which is called the left atrium. ¹¹Doctors want to expand their research into the blood circulation of the heart in order to have a better understanding of both the heart and the blood that pumps through our veins. ¹²The functions of the heart are truly amazing.

- 1. In sentence 1, change *an* to *probably the most*.
- 2. In sentence 2, change *it* to *this organ*.
- 3. In sentence 2, change the word *inside* to *throughout*.
- 4. Combine sentences 3 and 4 using *while*. Make any other necessary changes.
- 5. In sentence 5, change *our lungs* to *each lung*.
- 6. In sentence 6, change the *respiratory system* to *individuals' respiratory systems*.
- 7. In sentence 7, change *moves* to *flows*. We usually use this verb when referring to blood.
- 8. In sentence 10, the phrasal verb *picks up* is repetitive. Change *picks up* to *collects*.

- 9. Sentence 11 ends with the phrase *in order to have a better understanding of both the heart and the blood that pumps through our veins*. Move this phrase to the beginning of the sentence to improve sentence variety. Pay attention to punctuation.
- 10. In sentence 12, change the phrase *the functions of the heart* to *the way the heart functions*.

ACTIVITY 10 Original Writing

On a separate sheet of paper, write a descriptive paragraph (at least six sentences) about the characteristics of a particular person or thing. Use at least two examples of the simple present and one example of present perfect, and underline them.

Here are some examples of how to begin.

- A good *leader* possesses three main characteristics.
- In order to be a successful student, one should do three things.
- A smart phone has several important functions.