

LBRIS

We know
books



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		Introduction	vi	
		Glossary	ix	
UNIT				
1	Nouns and articles		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	
	1	Nouns	<i>tourist/tourists; some advice, a litre of petrol</i>	
	2	Articles a/an, the, no article	<i>a café/an hour; I've got the photos.</i>	
	3	Special uses of a/an and the	<i>She's a student at art school. The rich/poor/French</i>	
	4	Article or no article?	<i>in the 1950s, on the left/right, at three o'clock, by train</i>	
	5	Demonstratives this, that, these, those	<i>Is this seat free? I remember that day.</i>	
		Review		14
	Test		16	
2	Possessives, pronouns and quantifiers		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	
	6	Possessive forms of nouns	<i>Matt and Jane's new house, a map of the city</i>	
	7	Possessive adjectives and pronouns	<i>your/yours, our/ours</i>	
	8	Pronouns one/ones; another/the other (one)	<i>Which ones would you like?</i>	
	9	Reflexive and other pronouns	<i>yourself, ourselves; each other; you/one/they</i>	
	10	some, any, all, most, no, none of	<i>None of the bread is fresh.</i>	
	11	Indefinite pronouns	<i>someone/anyone/no one/everyone</i>	
	12	much, many, a lot of, (a) little, (a) few	<i>too many people, not enough food</i>	
	13	both, either, neither; each, every	<i>Both dishes are tasty and neither is expensive.</i>	
		Review		34
		Test		38
	3	Prepositions		DIAGNOSTIC TEST
		14	General form and use; prepositions of place	<i>at, in, above, beside, between</i>
15		Prepositions of movement	<i>into, onto, off, along, across</i>	
16		Prepositions of time	<i>at, on, until, for, during</i>	
17		Prepositions with other meanings	<i>I'm working as a tour guide.</i>	
18		Common prepositional phrases	<i>by chance, on time, out of date</i>	
		Review		52
	Test		54	
4	Adjectives and adverbs		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	
	19	Adjectives with nouns and verbs; -ed and -ing forms	<i>He seems interested/interesting.</i>	
	20	Order of adjectives; stronger and weaker meanings	<i>a comfortable old chair; really beautiful, rather cold</i>	
	21	Comparison of adjectives	<i>large, larger, (the) largest</i>	
	22	Comparative structures	<i>the same as/different from; a lot bigger than</i>	
	23	Types of adverb	<i>slowly, usually, last week, upstairs, straight on</i>	
	24	Adverbs and word order	<i>They usually work here. He's often late.</i>	
	25	Comparison of adverbs	<i>more/less often; Who's been there the most?</i>	
		Review		70
		Test		74
5	Present tenses		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	
	26	be, have and have got	<i>I'm married and I've got/I have two children.</i>	
	27	Present simple	<i>My sister lives in Oxford. I don't live there.</i>	
	28	Present continuous	<i>Are you watching TV?</i>	
	29	Present simple or continuous?	<i>Sue works in a factory. She isn't working today.</i>	
		Review		86
	Test		88	

Past tenses
DIAGNOSTIC TEST

30	Past simple	<i>I saw that film. Which film did you see?</i>	89
31	Past continuous	<i>We were living in Paris then.</i>	90
32	Past simple or continuous?	<i>He saw an accident while he was driving to work.</i>	92
33	<i>used to and would</i>	<i>I used to work on a farm and I would get up at 4 a.m.</i>	94
34	Past perfect simple	<i>She had been there before.</i>	96
35	Past perfect continuous	<i>They hadn't been working hard.</i>	98
	Review		100
	Test		102

Present perfect
DIAGNOSTIC TEST

36	Present perfect for past experiences and present results	<i>Have you driven an automatic car before? I haven't found that book yet.</i>	106
37	Present perfect for situations up to the present	<i>He's worked here for two years.</i>	110
38	Present perfect or past simple?	<i>He's bought a new car. He bought it yesterday.</i>	112
39	Present perfect continuous	<i>I've been waiting for hours.</i>	114
40	Present perfect simple or continuous?	<i>We've played six games. We've been playing for three hours.</i>	116
	Review		118
	Test		120

Future forms
DIAGNOSTIC TEST

41	<i>going to</i> , present continuous and <i>will</i>	<i>We're going to buy a tent. We're camping this summer. Will you come with us?</i>	121
42	Future continuous	<i>I'll be sailing all day tomorrow.</i>	122
43	Future perfect: simple and continuous	<i>They will have finished by tomorrow. When I get home, I'll have been travelling for 35 hours.</i>	126
44	Present simple with future meaning	<i>Our flight arrives at 9.45.</i>	128
45	Other ways to talk about the future	<i>They were going to ... (but) ... It's likely to/due to/about to leave.</i>	130
	Review		132
	Test		134

Modal verbs
DIAGNOSTIC TEST

46	Ability and possibility	<i>can, could, be able to</i>	137
47	Making a guess (1)	<i>may, might, could, must, can't, should</i>	138
48	Making a guess (2)	<i>must, might, could, should + have</i>	142
49	Rules	<i>must, mustn't, have (got) to</i>	144
50	Necessary and unnecessary actions	<i>need, needn't, don't have to/need to Everything's fine – you needn't have worried.</i>	146
51	Advice and criticism	<i>should, ought to, must, had better</i>	148
52	Permission	<i>can, may, might, could, be allowed to</i>	150
53	Requests and suggestions; offers, promises and warnings	<i>can, could, would, will, shall</i>	152
	Review		154
	Test		156

Conditionals
DIAGNOSTIC TEST

54	Present and future conditions	<i>If we talk to the baby, she smiles. If it rains tomorrow, we won't go.</i>	161
55	Unlikely/unreal conditions	<i>If we moved out of the city, we'd be safer.</i>	162
56	Past conditions	<i>If we'd arrived on time, we wouldn't have missed the flight.</i>	164
57	Mixed conditionals	<i>If you hadn't woken me, I might still be in bed.</i>	166
58	<i>I wish, if only, it's time ...</i>	<i>I wish we were still on holiday. It's time you did this yourself.</i>	168
	Review		170
	Test		172

6

EXPLORERS

7

CARS

8

HOLIDAYS

9

TECHNOLOGY

10

CRIME

11 BUILDINGS	Word order and sentence patterns		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	175
	59	Word order in statements	<i>The museum has made people interested in Bilbao.</i>	176
	60	there and it	<i>There's a new cinema in town. It's got six screens.</i>	180
	61	Yes/No questions	<i>Is the water from a bottle? Yes, it is.</i>	182
	62	Wh- questions	<i>When was the Taj Mahal built?</i>	184
	63	how, which/what, who and whose	<i>How did they build it? What was it like?</i>	186
		Review		188
	Test		190	
12 HOBBIES AND ACTIVITIES	Verbs with -ing forms and infinitives		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	191
	64	Verb + -ing form	<i>Has he given up smoking?</i>	192
	65	Verb + infinitive	<i>We decided to leave. We'd rather go by plane.</i>	194
	66	Verb (+ object) + infinitive; make and let	<i>We asked them to leave. She makes him practise every day.</i>	196
	67	Verb + infinitive or -ing form	<i>I remember learning to swim. Remember to lock the door.</i>	198
	Review		200	
	Test		202	
13 THE MEDIA	Reported speech		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	203
	68	Reported statements	<i>They said they worked for the town council.</i>	204
	69	Reported questions	<i>He asked if I was going to buy the book.</i>	208
	70	Reported orders, requests and advice	<i>The lifeguard warned us not to swim there.</i>	210
	71	Reporting verb patterns	<i>He reminded me to book the hotel. She apologised for losing my umbrella.</i>	212
	Review		214	
	Test		216	
14 BOOKS AND LITERATURE	Relative, participle and other clauses		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	217
	72	Relative clauses (1)	<i>This is the book that he wrote.</i>	218
	73	Relative clauses (2)	<i>The play, which he wrote in 1922, is still famous today.</i>	222
	74	Clauses after the noun	<i>It's a novel based on a true story.</i>	224
	75	Participle clauses	<i>They escaped, leaving everything behind.</i>	226
	76	Infinitive clauses	<i>It was the first book to sell a million copies.</i>	228
	77	Other noun structures	<i>It describes what life was like then.</i>	230
	Review		232	
	Test		236	
15 THE WEATHER	Linking words		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	237
	78	Reason and purpose	<i>because, since, in order to, so that, etc.</i>	238
	79	Causes and results	<i>therefore, so; There's not enough rain to grow crops.</i>	240
	80	Adding information and giving alternatives	<i>not only ... but also; either ... or</i>	242
	81	Showing differences	<i>while, whereas, even though, however</i>	244
	82	Ordering events	<i>before, as soon as, when, while</i>	246
	Review		248	
	Test		250	
16 CLOTHES AND FASHION	Passive forms		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	251
	83	The passive	<i>This dress was designed by Armani.</i>	252
	84	Passives with modal and other verbs	<i>This shirt must be washed by hand.</i>	256
	85	have something done	<i>We had our house painted last year. We got them to paint the walls.</i>	258
	86	Passive reporting verbs	<i>He's thought to be very rich. They are expected to win.</i>	260
	Review		262	
	Test		264	

Word combinations		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	265
87	Common collocations	<i>run a business, make friends with, a little light rain</i>	266
88	Adjective or noun + preposition	<i>surprised by, keen on; What's the matter with ...?</i>	268
89	Verb + preposition (1)	<i>He congratulated her on her success.</i>	270
90	Verb + preposition (2)	<i>We ran into some friends at the shops.</i>	272
91	Phrasal verbs	<i>work out, take off, look forward to, put up with</i>	274
92	Confusing verbs (1)	<i>make/do, have/take, get</i>	278
93	Confusing verbs (2)	<i>come/go, bring/take, live/stay, keep, leave</i>	280
94	Confusing adjectives	<i>injured/hurt, amusing/enjoyable</i>	282
	Review		284
	Test		288
Word formation		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	289
95	Forming nouns	<i>visit/visitor, Poland/Polish, decide/decision</i>	290
96	Forming adjectives	<i>music/musical, comfort/comfortable; honest/dishonest</i>	292
97	Forming verbs	<i>modern/modernise, short/shorten; pay/repay</i>	294
98	Compound nouns and adjectives	<i>dishwasher, shopping centre; self-employed</i>	296
	Review		298
	Test		300
Formal and written English		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	301
99	Punctuation	<i>Louise bought a CD; Andy, who hates music, didn't buy anything.</i>	302
100	Ways to avoid repeating words	<i>I play the violin, but my brother doesn't.</i>	304
101	Using linking words in writing	<i>after that, finally, in the end; furthermore</i>	306
102	Using word order for emphasis	<i>In fact it was Pink Floyd who recorded that album.</i>	308
103	Organising information in writing	<i>The song was written in 1988. It was recorded by more than fifty artists over the next twenty years.</i>	310
104	Using nouns instead of verbs	<i>They decided to split up → Their decision to split up ...</i>	312
105	Formal language	<i>Your application will be assessed by the manager.</i>	314
	Review		316
	Test		320
Spoken English		DIAGNOSTIC TEST	321
106	Spoken question forms	<i>The doctor didn't say much, did he?</i>	322
107	Agreeing and disagreeing	<i>So/Neither do I. No it isn't.</i>	326
108	Expressing our feelings and ideas	<i>That's awful/wonderful! To be honest ...</i>	328
109	Emphasis	<i>You do say some silly things! That was such a good holiday.</i>	330
110	Other spoken features	<i>Don't know. Really? He's kind of shy.</i>	332
	Review		334
	Test		336
Grammar check			337
APPENDIX 1	QUICK CHECK 1	Pronouns	338
	QUICK CHECK 2	Prepositions	338
	QUICK CHECK 3	Verb tenses	340
	QUICK CHECK 4	Modal verbs	342
	QUICK CHECK 5	Conditionals	344
	QUICK CHECK 6	Verbs + <i>-ing</i> form and infinitive	345
	QUICK CHECK 7	Linking words	346
	QUICK CHECK 8	Verbs + prepositions	347
	QUICK CHECK 9	Phrasal verbs	347
APPENDIX 2	Irregular verbs		348
APPENDIX 3	Spelling rules		350
APPENDIX 4	British and American English		352
	Index		354
	Answer key		372
	Pronunciation table		inside back cover

17

SPORTS

18

EDUCATION
AND
TRAINING

19

MUSIC

20

HEALTH



Tourists enjoy **shopping** at the **British Museum**. There are lots of **postcards** and **books** for sale.

1 Types of noun

Nouns are the words we use for

- people, things and places: *a tourist, a postcard, a museum*
- activities, ideas and feelings: *shopping, information, love*

When nouns are names of people, places, dates, events, languages, religions and books, plays or films, they begin with a **capital letter**: *Professor Grey, the British Museum, Glasgow, Africa, Monday, April, May Day, Russian, Spanish, Islam, 'The Lord of the Rings', 'War and Peace', 'Avatar'*

Compound nouns, e.g. *bookshop, washing machine* ➤ Unit 98.1

2 Singular and plural nouns

Most nouns have a **singular** and **plural** form. To make plural forms

- add **-s** to most nouns: *books, postcards, days, houses*
- add **-es** to nouns ending in **-s, -ss, -sh, -ch, -o, -x** and **-z**:
buses, dishes, watches, potatoes, boxes (BUT *videos, pianos*)
- for nouns ending in **consonant + -y**: *country* → *countries*
- for most nouns ending in **-f** or **-fe**: *life* → *lives* *thief* → *thieves*

Spelling rules ➤ page 350

A few plural forms are **irregular**, and some nouns do not change:

SINGULAR	<i>man</i>	<i>woman</i>	<i>child</i>	<i>person</i>	<i>foot</i>	<i>tooth</i>
PLURAL	<i>men</i>	<i>women</i>	<i>children</i>	<i>people</i>	<i>feet</i>	<i>teeth</i>
SINGULAR AND PLURAL	<i>aircraft series fish sheep</i>					



Pronunciation ➤ 1.02

3 Noun + verb

Some nouns end in **-s** but are **singular**, so we use a **singular verb**:

athletics economics gymnastics politics maths physics news

Athletics is an Olympic sport. Today's **news** isn't very exciting.

Some nouns describe things with two parts, so they are **plural**:

jeans pants pyjamas shorts tights trousers glasses scissors

These **jeans** are too tight. My **glasses** are broken.

To talk about one or more of these things we can use **pair(s) of**:
I need a pair of trousers and three pairs of shorts.

Some nouns (e.g. *company, family, government, team*) describe groups of people. We use a singular OR plural verb when we are talking about the people in the group: *The Spanish team **is/are** playing brilliantly.* (all the Spanish players)

But we only use the singular verb when we are talking about the group as one thing: ~~*X A football team have eleven players.*~~ ✓ *A football team **has** eleven players.*

British and American English ► page 352

- ⚠ The group noun *police* is ALWAYS plural:
~~*X The police has arrested the thieves.*~~ ✓ *The police **have** arrested the thieves.*

4 Countable and uncountable nouns

Countable nouns are things we can count:

How many museums are there in Paris? There are 10,000 paintings in the Louvre.

Uncountable nouns are things we can't count.

- food and drink: *bread, butter, meat, tea, coffee, milk, oil, pasta, salt, rice*
- materials: *water, oil, air, oxygen, metal, cotton, wood, plastic, paper*
- school subjects and languages: *geography, art, music, English, Spanish*
- ideas and feelings: *education, work, advice, beauty, love, knowledge, fun*
- activities: *shopping, cycling, swimming*
- groups of similar things: *furniture, luggage, money*

COUNTABLE NOUNS	UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS
have a singular and a plural form: <i>one shop → two shops</i>	don't normally have a plural form: <i>petrol → X two petrols ✓ some petrol</i>
We use a singular or plural verb: <i>That painting is beautiful.</i> <i>Those paintings were expensive.</i>	We only use a singular verb: <i>Swimming is a popular sport.</i> <i>That petrol was expensive.</i>
We use <i>a/an, the</i> or <i>this/that</i> before a singular noun: <i>Is there a museum here?</i> <i>Where's the museum?</i> <i>This museum is enormous!</i>	We don't use <i>a/an</i> before an uncountable noun. We can use <i>some</i> or <i>this/that</i> : <i>X This table is made of a plastic.</i> ✓ <i>This table is made of plastic.</i> <i>X Can you give me an advice?</i> ✓ <i>Can you give me some advice?</i> <i>This rice isn't cooked!</i>
We use words like <i>some, the, these/those</i> before a plural noun: <i>I'd like some apples, please.</i> <i>Those books look interesting.</i>	

5 Nouns that can be countable or uncountable

COUNTABLE MEANING	UNCOUNTABLE MEANING
<i>We keep six chickens in our garden.</i> (animals)	<i>Do you like chicken and rice?</i> (food)
<i>A coffee and two teas, please.</i> (cups of tea)	<i>Sam prefers lemon tea.</i> (drink)
<i>Did you get a paper today?</i> (a newspaper)	<i>I need some writing paper.</i> (material)
<i>Those were easy exercises.</i> (tasks)	<i>Do you do much exercise?</i> (physical activity)
<i>I had some interesting experiences on holiday.</i> (things that happened to me)	<i>Experience is more important than qualifications.</i> (learning by doing something)
<i>The gallery has two works by Goya.</i> (paintings)	<i>My work is really interesting.</i> (job)

6 Ways of counting uncountable nouns

We use different expressions to 'count' some uncountable nouns.

- units: *a bar of soap, a bit of information/fun, an item of news, a loaf of bread, a piece of furniture/luggage/paper, a sheet of paper, a slice of bread/cake/meat*
- containers: *a bottle of water, a can/tin of soup, a carton of milk, a cup of coffee, a glass of orange juice, a jar of jam, a packet of sugar, a tub of butter/margarine, a tube of toothpaste*
- measurements: *half a kilo of meat, a litre of petrol, two metres of silk*

B

You are invited to a reception at the *British* museum at 7.30 p.m. on *Friday*, 20th *April*.
 There will be a talk by professor *Ernest* *Brand*, author of 'tribal Art', to introduce our new
 exhibition of art from *New* *Guinea*.
 Drinks will be served.

Please reply to Ms *Helena* *Summers* on 02243 77689 before 28th *March*.

2 Write the plural form of the nouns.

car child ~~country~~ family house life loaf person potato series sheep watch

+ -s	+ -es	+ -ies	+ -ves	no change	irregular
		<i>countries</i>			

3 Choose the correct words in *italics*. 2.02 Listen and check.

- I can't read his writing. I think I need new *glass* / *glasses*.
- How often do you brush your *tooth* / *teeth*?
- I think physics *is* / *are* the most difficult subject at college.
- How many *aircrafts* / *aircraft* does British Airways own?
- Was* / *Were* the news interesting yesterday?
- The police *is* / *are* trying to find the missing girl.
- There are three *women* / *womans* and two men in the new medical team.
- I like your new jeans. *Was it* / *Were they* expensive?
- Do you have *a pair of* / *a* scissors in your kitchen?
- Some farms in New Zealand have a million *sheep* / *sheeps*.
- Our neighbours have six *childs* / *children*.

4 Match sentences 1 and 2 with A and B in each pair.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| 0 1 I'd like some tea. | → | A And could I have two coffees, please? |
| 2 I'd like a tea. | → | B Could I have two packets of sugar, too? |
| 1 1 Can you get me some paper? | | A I want to write a letter. |
| 2 Can you get me a paper? | | B I want something to read. |
| 2 1 Do you have any chicken? | | A There isn't any on the menu. |
| 2 Do you have any chickens? | | B Or do you have only cows on your farm? |
| 3 1 You should try a skiing holiday. | | A It will give you lots of experience. |
| 2 You should take that job. | | B You will have a great experience. |
| 4 1 I need to do some exercise. | | A I want to improve my grammar. |
| 2 I need to do some exercises. | | B I want to get fit. |
| 5 1 I don't have a lot of work today. | | A I'm not busy. |
| 2 I don't have many of his works. | | B I'm not very keen on his books. |

Subject Here in London

Hi Clara

I got to London two days ago. (0) arrived on time and I came into town on the Underground. My (1) heavy, so I didn't need to take a taxi. The hotel is OK. The furniture (2) a bit cheap, it's all made of (3); but the room is clean.

You know I love history and (4) Well, yesterday I went to the British Museum - it was amazing! I loved the Egyptian stone statues. They are huge and the stone (5) a beautiful red colour. The museum is fantastic! There's no charge to get in, so you don't need to spend a lot of (6) There's a nice café there and I had some coffee and two (7)

Now I need (8) from you about my camera ...

- 0 A Flight B Some flight **C The flight**
- 1 A luggages weren't B luggage wasn't C luggages weren't
- 2 A is B are C were
- 3 A plastic B a plastic C the plastic
- 4 A an archaeology B archaeology C the archaeology
- 5 A are B were C is
- 6 A money B moneys C the money
- 7 A sandwiches B sandwichies C sandwiches
- 8 A an advice B some advice C advices

6 Complete the descriptions with the words from the box.

a bar a bottle a can ~~a carton~~ a jar a packet a piece a slice a tub



0 a carton of milk



1 of soup



2 of water



3 of soap



4 of jam



5 of furniture



6 of meat



7 of butter



8 of rice