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Student's Introduction

What Is Easy English?

Easy English is a series of books to help you learn and revise your English with minimal effort.
There are two main strands of the series. You can improve your English by

1. doing short exercises to improve specific areas of grammar (this book) and vocabulary. The grammar and vocabulary books on focus the areas that tend to lead to the most mistakes. The aim is just to highlight what you really need rather than overwhelming you with a mass of rules, many of which may have no practical daily value
2. reading texts in English that you might well normally read in your own language (e.g. personality tests, jokes, lateral thinking games, word searches).

Who Is this Book for? What Level Do I Need to Be?

Anyone who is interested in eliminating the typical mistakes they make as a result of not being able to easily distinguish between similar grammatical items (e.g. the difference between the present perfect and the simple past, or between that and which).

You need to have reached a mid-intermediate level of English to benefit from this book.

Which Is the Best Format to Buy this Book in?

Paper, without any doubt. The exercises involve you writing or underlining directly onto the page. With an e-reader this would be much more difficult. However, an e-book provides a dictionary which will occasionally be useful for you.

How Many Grammar Mistakes Are Dealt with?

This book is called *The Top 50 Grammar Mistakes*. In reality there are several hundred mistakes dealt within the 50 chapters of Part 1 of this book. The 50 chapters are grouped by type of mistake, rather than individual mistakes.

In What Sense Is this Book an Example of 'Easy English'?

Many books on grammar try to cover too much and appear to give equal coverage to grammatical rules irrespectively of whether these rules:

- are common
- frequently give rise to mistakes

This means that you can end up doing many exercises that will not really be of much benefit to you. This is because they practise rules and examples that you are unlikely to meet in real life.

This book thus focuses on the areas of English grammar that tend to give rise to the most mistakes.

It is 'easy' because

- the typical mistakes are clearly laid out and easy to read
- example sentences contain examples using common English vocabulary
- the exercises are quick to do (they just involve underlining the correct answer) and they are quick to check

Of course, English can be much more complex. The good news is that the complex areas of English grammar are also those that tend to be used the least.

How Is the Book Organized?

Each chapter has a HEADING which gives the key words dealt with in the section. In the explanations below I will be referring to Chapter 32 (*Much, Many, A Lot of, Lots of*).

Each chapter is made up of five subsections.

1) THE FIRST SUBSECTION shows some typical mistakes. All sentences in *italics* are mistakes. Each mistake is then followed in the line below with the correct version (in normal script). The key point is highlighted in bold in the correct version. Here is an example:

Was there much people?
Were there **many** people?

2) In the SECOND SUBSECTION correct examples are given of the key words used in typical situations. These correct examples are shown in a box with a grey background. Here is an example:

> We have **a lot of** information.
>
> We **do not** have **much** information.

3) In the THIRD SUBSECTION, very simple guidelines are given of the key words. For example:

Guidelines

- **much -** used with **UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS**, generally in negative and interrogative.
- **many** - used with plural nouns, generally in negative and interrogative
- **a lot of** - used with all nouns, typically in the affirmative but also in the interrogative
- **lots of** - can replace *a lot of* in affirmative, but is not suitable for formal situations. **lots of** is very rarely used in negative phrases, and is also quite rare in questions.

These guidelines are not comprehensive, they are designed to give you a quick easy-to-remember guideline to the most common uses of the particular word in question.

4) In the FOURTH SUBSECTION, there is an exercise which tests the key words given in the heading of the chapter, so in this case **much, many, a lot of, lots of**.

The exercise simply consists in underlining the correct form. In some cases, more than one form may be correct. Here is an example:

1. I have **a lot of / lots of / many / much** books on this subject.
2. We have **a lot of homework / much homework / many homeworks** to do tonight.

In question 1) *a lot of, lots of* and *many* are all possible answers, so you should underline all three. In question 2) only *a lot of homework* is possible.

A few of the exercises are based on exercises that can be found in English for Academic Research: Grammar Exercises (Springer), which is part of a series of books on academic English, whereas the book you are reading now is focused on general English.

5) The FINAL SUBSECTION is the key. If a form is written in brackets, this means that this form is possible but that the form not in brackets is more common. For example:

18) a lot of advice 19) much (a lot of) 20) much feedback

The best answer to question 19) is *much* but *a lot of* would also be possible.

Revision Tests

In Part 2 of the book there are two sets of revision test. Revision Tests 1 deals all the incorrect sentences given in the first subsection of each chapter. Correct the sentences, then go to the first subsection of the relevant chapter to see the answer. Revision Tests 2 is based on the second subsection of each chapter. Again, go to the second subsection of the relevant chapter to see the answer.

For example:

The test on page 152 looks likes this.

1. I have much work at the moment.
2. How much times have you been there?
3. Was there much people?
4. You don't need many money to do this.

In the above case, you correct the sentences. Then to check your answers, turn to page 87, where you will see the same sentences (this time in *italics*) but with the correct answers below (in normal script).

I have much work at the moment.

I have **a lot of** work at the moment.

How much times have you been there?

How **many** times have you been there?

Was there much people?

Were there **many** people?

You don't need many money to do this.

You don't need **much / a lot of** money to do this.

Where Can I Find More Grammar Explanations and Tests?

Top 50 grammar mistakes is aimed at students studying general English. I have also written a series of books on academic English.

If you want more detailed grammar explanations, then you can find them in this book:

English for Research: Grammar, Usage and Style https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-4614-1593-0

If you would like to do extra grammar exercises and see examples of English sentences in a more technical context, then you can use this book: