

ERRORS TO LOOK FOR

Section 4. Pronouns

Another common error to expect is with pronouns. There is likely to be at least one in every Test – and possibly more, so it is important to know about them.

Step 1 – Reminder

The problem you may have with pronouns is consistency, the theme of Sections 4, 5 and 6. That is, words in English often need to be linked grammatically as well as in meaning. For example,

- personal pronouns – if a girl's name has been mentioned (say, Jane) then the only pronouns that can be used to refer just to her are – *she, her, hers*. You cannot use *him, his* or *their*.
- relative pronouns – errors occur when *who/whom/whose* (referring to humans) are confused with *which* (referring to objects or creatures).

The boys returned from **their** Physical Education lesson first. Wei Ling still had in **his** hand **his** towel, which **he** eventually stuffed in **his** bag. He joined in with the others **who** were making fun of Martin, who had annoyed **their** teacher, Mrs Ang, when **he** only took the lesson half-heartedly. Now they mocked **him** for what **she** had said about **him**. **They** were already in **their** seats when the girls arrived from **their** lesson. Mavis had a broad smile on **her** face, which seemed directed at Wei Ling. The other girls all looked a little exhausted because **their** teacher had made **them** all run further than **they** usually did.

Step 2

Now find and highlight **all** the pronouns in this passage.

My class decided that **they** would like to go to the zoo for **their** end-of-year celebration. They invited me along and, although I turned up at 9 am, which was the time **they** had agreed with me, none of **them** could be seen. I was about to leave when **three** of my classmates strolled up. Wee Min, who arrived first, said **he** had been told it was 9.30 am, so **he** thought **he** was early. The other two said **they** had been told the same. We waited patiently (or not, really) and over the next half an hour or so others straggled in, some of whom thought **they** were late for 9.30 am, while others claimed that **they** had been told to meet at 10 am. The last group to arrive included the class monitor, who apologised to me and said that **she** had messaged me earlier to change the time to ten o'clock. There were some unhappy comments from Wee Min's group who had arrived soon after I had, but I then suggested that **we** put all that behind **us** and just start to enjoy our day out at the zoo.

When you check your answer overleaf, notice how often pronouns are used, especially in a passage such as this. Have you found them all?

Here are the pronouns that you should have found:

My class decided that **they** would like to go to the zoo for their end-of-year celebration. They invited **me** along and, although **I** turned up at 9 am, which was the time **they** had agreed with **me**, none of **them** could be seen. **I** was about to leave when three of my classmates strolled up. Wee Min, who arrived first, said **he** had been told it was 9.30 am, so **he** thought **he** was early. The other two said **they** had been told the same. We waited patiently (or not, really) and over the next half an hour or so others straggled in, some of whom thought **they** were late for 9.30 am, while others claimed that **they** had been told to meet at 10 am. The last group to arrive included the class monitor, **who** apologised to **me** and said that **she** had messaged **me** earlier to change the time to ten o'clock. There were some unhappy comments from Wee Min's group **who** had arrived soon after **I** had, but **I** then suggested that we put all that behind **us** and just start to enjoy **our** day out at the zoo.

Step 3

Importantly, read the passage above several times, noticing how the pronouns refer to people already mentioned – apart from that first one!

Step 4

Now enter the correct form of the pronouns in the spaces in the continuation passage below.

Once inside the gates, there was a difference of opinion about where **they** wanted to go first. It was clear that we were going to split into three or more groups so _____ suggested _____ meet at the picnic area at 12 pm. _____ went with a group of six _____ wanted to head for the Elephants of Asia show, _____ would start in just over an hour. On the way, Michael wanted to see _____ favourite animal, _____ was the Malaysian tapir, and then Janice screamed with _____ delight when _____ saw the pygmy hippos. _____ were splashing about in _____ lake and made _____ laugh. _____ enjoyed the Elephants show, amused by _____ antics. _____ threw water in _____ direction, _____ caused _____ to duck and then laugh. When _____ returned to the pavilion, _____ bought _____ a coffee and some lunch, before meeting most of the others, _____ were seated at the picnic area. One group told _____ how _____ had seen lions and giraffes, _____ movements fascinated Jo-Lin. _____ all agreed that _____ had enjoyed the morning. That was when the monitor and _____ group arrived, very late. _____ looked embarrassed for arriving so long after _____ agreed time.

Key Point

This is an important item of grammar to be aware of. If you miss it in tests or if you do not score 30/30 on this exercise, repeat Steps 2 and 3 using other passages of good English.

Answers: See page 108

TEST 29

Carefully read the text below, consisting of 12 lines, about a Japanese pop star.

A huge crowd thronged an upmarket shopping complex in Tokyo last month. The people looked as if they have stepped out of Barbie's very messy dream house. They wear oversized bows, eyeball-shaped pinky rings, spiky neck collars, and, especially, pink – lots and lots of pink. They had assembled to watch Kyary Pamyu Pamyu, a new face in J-Pop who debut album *Pamyu Pamyu Revolution* is arriving in stores that day. She emerged dressed like her fans, with a giant bow on her head and in the dress designed like a Rubik's Cube. For 30 minutes, she performed her brand of cheery pop in front of a stage featuring building blocks, rotate teddy bear heads, and purple tentacles. This mish-mash of imagery – cute meets creepy meets colourful – has help turn Kyary into one of the hottest young pop stars to be found at Japan these days. An Internet curio abroad, her face has become inescapable throughout Japan.

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TEST 30

Carefully read the text below, consisting of 12 lines, about how clean-ups can aid the local community.

Neighbours can influence their local community positively, a survey suggests. Three out of every four people questioned came to that interesting conclusion. Improving the local environments was the most popular suggestion for public action, with 42% saying that removing litter and graffiti will enhance their sense of local pride. It seems that the benefits of a local clean-up goes beyond aesthetic improvements. They provides an opportunity to meet neighbours and make new friends while at the same time doing something to improvement the place you call your backyard, an official explained. "Getting along with like-minded people to take action on an issue that you care about can be very rewarding." Community centres encourage residents with free kits for clean-ups, include refuse bags and clothing. Those which took part have certainly approved of all that was done. A typical comment according to the survey was: "Definitely worthwhile."

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TEST 31

Carefully read the text below, consisting of 12 lines, about a child with an unusual talent.

In 1886, a young woman was living in a modest house near a secluded village. Her only company was the little boy about five years old. She did her own work and discouraged acquaintanceships. All the villagers knew about her was that her name was Tang, and that she called a child Ah-chee. One day, this son asked his mother if he was different from others. He explained what had happened. A woman had asked him if the postman had been past and Ah-chee had confirmed that he had. Since she asked him how long ago the postman had come, Ah-chee had been unable to tell her - he had not seen him. Which had annoyed the woman, who asked how he can have known if he had not seen him. Ah-chee had replied that he could smell the postman's track on the path. This had annoyed the woman very much because she thinks he was lying when he made such a bizarre claim. Ah-chee's mother knew better, proving he had such a talent with a simple test.

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TEST 32

Carefully read the text below, consisting of 12 lines, about the importance of the arts to young people.

Students of any age can benefit from exposure to any or all of the creative arts. Apart from the delighting and pleasure of viewing or listening to art and music, a broader range with experience can enable students to develop their creativity and their imaginations. The experience in itself may not be guaranteed to lead to better understanding and enjoyment, while it is likely to be true that without experience, such awareness cannot be achieved. Indeed, while it may be important to start mastering the technicality aspects of the arts in a classroom, it is more crucial that students learn to appreciate 'the spirit of the arts'. That means learning to appreciate the beauty that surround us in our everyday lives. It means learning how to express us, in a creative and imaginative way. The arts can move us beyond the ordinary life to one with greater awareness of the life around us. The arts enrich our own lives and show us how we fit into society around us.

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TEST 33

Carefully read the text below, consisting of 12 lines, about the reality of aliens in science fiction.

Do science fiction authors lack imagination, creating aliens that are too human? Are they being lazy when their creations act in human ways, with just a few things changed? Even creating modified versions with other familiar creatures, such as spiders or octopuses, do not seem very imaginative. Aliens could take so many other shapes – solid rocks, for instance, or bridges. Or what about all the other possible shapes and materials that can form extra-terrestrial life? However, scientists now think that it may be correct to use humans features for aliens. Eyes, for instance, be good things to have. Light always travels in straight lines so that wherever light is available, such as in the vicinity of the star, it is technically easy to use light rays to navigation your way around and to locate objects. Therefore, some form of eyes may indeed evolved, wherever there is light in the universe. So it seems science fiction writers may simply be creating realistic aliens after all!

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TEST 34

Carefully read the text below, consisting of 12 lines, about why people enjoy playing board games.

People enjoy board games rather than computer games for a variety of reasons. Most adults treasure happy memories of time spending with other family members or with friends playing Monopoly, Draughts, Cluedo or any of the hundreds of available board games. So spending times with others in an enjoyable activity is clearly a good reason – online games could not quite match the nearness of friends. Most would say that they player such games simply because they are fun. However, if we analyse where the fun comes by, the words 'challenge' and 'competition' are sure to feature. Some people liked playing games of strategy, such as Chess or Go that requires a lot of thought. Others are just competitive and people enjoy be lucky or enjoy groaning if their luck is out. It is true that such games involve much conversations with other participants. Thus, playing board games is an excuse for spending time with other people.

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TEST 35

Carefully read the text below, consisting of 12 lines, about the justification for keeping wild animals in zoos.

Many people today do not agree with keeping wild animals in any city zoo. Their view may be said to be a misunderstanding. While the nature world still exists, it is under threats of one kind or another. As a purpose, the whole rationale for zoos these days is conservation. Responsible zoo, such as those in Singapore, are now places of education and science which prime concern is conserving the wild. They house animals in a social groups and habitats that resemble their wild habitat. In addition, most zoo animals today were born in zoos. The days of seizing them legally from the wild are long gone. Besides, a Sumatran tiger from a zoo will likely not last a week in a Sumatran jungle. He knows nothing for kraits, cobras and poisonous lianas or how to catch live food. He would probably be killed by another male or starve. In a zoo, he is safe. In addition, zoos breed wild animals co-operatively across national boundaries.

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TEST 36

Carefully read the text below, consisting of 12 lines, about a situation faced by a taxi driver.

A Singapore taxi driver reported an unusual incident to the police yesterday. It began when he picked up two teenage boys at Bukit Merah at the early hours of the morning. They told him that they wants to go to Queenstown, but as they were proceeding along Guan Chuan Street, one boy suddenly whip out a penknife and made a grab for the driver's waist pouch. The taxi driver was caught completely off guard, as he said that no passenger before have attempted to interfere with him after he was driving, although several had argued at the end of the journey. The taxi driver's instinct reaction was to fend the boy off with his left hand while holding on to the steering wheel with their other hand. In their struggle, he lost control of the car and drove onto the kerb. He hit a road sign before swerving wildly and crashing into the back of the parked SUV, damaging it and his cab. While the taxi driver was momentarily stunned, the boys rapidly fled the scene.

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TEST 37

Carefully read the text below, consisting of 12 lines, about two World Cross Country races.

Japhet Korir won the World Cross Country Championships at his first attempt. It was close at the end. The 19-year-old Kenyan athlete came over the final hill with his lead been cut all the time, but he hung on and finished the course in a time of 32 minutes 45 seconds to edge off Ethiopia's Imane Merga by six seconds. He was pleased to win in the difficult conditions with snow and lots of mud, as well as cold weather make the going tough for the athletes. Merga was disappointed to finish second, so at least he could be pleased that his country took the men's team award. Eritrea's Medhin finished third, a far three seconds back. Kenya's Emily Chebet won the women's title, with her country also scooping the women's team crown. Nigeria's Ayalew had looked a likely winner as she came to the final hill with what looked like a healthy lead over the chasing group of runners. She faltered on that last climb though, and ended up having to settle for silver.

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TEST 38

Carefully read the text below, consisting of 12 lines, about heavy school bags.

A father saw that his daughter's school bag weighed more than 5kg of rice did. Afterwards, the astounding father wrote to the local newspapers, lamenting that school bags were heavier despite technology. The father had thought that, since his daughter needed to take an iPad to school, most of the teaching material would be contained in it. Although, to his amazement, he discovered that this was not the situation. His Secondary 1 daughter has to carry her iPad on top of the usual textbooks. Later, a spokesperson on the Ministry of Education stated that the recommended weight of school bags shall be no more than 10 to 15 percent of a student's body weight. However, after questioning a large number of Primary and Secondary school students, the local media discovered that most had bags above the recommended weight. This might seem to many to be pandering to the young. However, it is also the case that heavy bags could cause physical injuries.

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TEST 39

Carefully read the text below, consisting of 12 lines, an advertisement for an interior decorating company.

For attention to detail and personal help, look no further than Wonder Interiors. This company will solve all your indoor decorating and flooring problems. Based at Ideal Business Park, Wonder claims to provide the full redesign and redecorating service for all customers at competition prices. The Wonder Interiors showroom, with everything from laminates, vinyls and carpets through to soft furnishings, offer a wide range of samples and displays. This independent company is run by a husband-and-wife team. "We pride us on our service because the majority of our work comes though recommendations from previous customers," Mr Won said. His wife, Deria, added, "We go the extra mile – literally. I manage each contract personal so that customers can deal with the same person from start to end." Public and trade customers were welcome. Wonder Interiors can be found at 26 Ideal Business Road, Ideal Business Park.

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TEST 40

Carefully read the text below, consisting of 12 lines, a fictional critique of a singer's album.

We loved O'Malley's debut album when we first heard it here at Music House. Naturally, we were quite excited when her latest album arrives. *Vinyl* is a stripped bare acoustic and vocal album with re-recordings of tracks from her debut album and some excellent new songs. The record kicks off with a cover of Jaime's *Willow* and straight away one is struck by the purity and warmth of O'Malley's voice. This lady has the ability to raise the hairs on the back of one's neck with effortless ease. This fine interpretation of *Willow* manages to improve on an original version. She also covers Springsteen's *No Surrender* and *Give Up* by Backhome. Both are good but do not have the magic she shows on that first album. For me, it is the brilliant *Run Around* that steals the show. I would go as far as to say that *Vinyl* is the best album I have heard this year – and in quite some time. O'Malley is the best female singer-songwriter to appear in the last five years.

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