

1001

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Grammar

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by Geraldine
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Introduction

This is a book of questions, so I'll start with one: What can *1001 Grammar Questions For Dummies* do for you?

- (A) provide a bit of fun, if you like quizzes
- (B) prepare you for standardized tests
- (C) help you earn higher grades and increase your chances of getting a better job
- (D) keep you up to date on recent trends in grammar
- (E) all of the above

Answer (E)

Explanation: Choice (A) is correct because this book is a collection of mini-quizzes on every aspect of grammar and writing. No one is grading you, so you can just enjoy yourself. Because standardized test-writers include the topics I cover in this book, choice (B) is also right. Choice (C) is true because authority figures evaluating your work may downgrade their assessment of your skills if you don't write and speak according to the conventions of Standard English. I'm not saying you'll be fired if you plug in the wrong verb tense or send an adjective to do an adverb's job, but our society often uses Standard English as a gatekeeper. If you show that you know how to follow its rules, doors open. Was Choice (D) a surprise? Teachers often give the impression that the rules of English grammar are etched in stone. Not so! Language arises from human beings, and as life changes, so does the way we talk about it.

The questions in this book reflect currently accepted usage in Standard English. If you already speak and write well, you can dip into this book to refine your knowledge. If English is a language you're still learning, you can concentrate on questions that address basic concepts and gradually work your way to more advanced points. In addition to 1,001 questions, this book provides answers and explanations, so you know *why* a particular expression is correct (or incorrect) in Standard English. In the explanations, I stay away from technical terms as much as possible, including only the specialized vocabulary you absolutely need to grasp the underlying logic or traditions of the language. I stay with the simplest terms and define them as they appear, in case you're not familiar with a term or you learned a different one in school. And you may have! Grammarians love jargon. For example, many bloody battles have been fought between those who favor the terms *predicate nominative* and *predicate adjective* and those who prefer the label *subject complement*. (Both apply to a word that follows a form of the verb *to be*.) Okay, I'm exaggerating a little. Maybe blood hasn't been shed, but an ocean of ink has! My view is that as long as you know proper usage, you can call something a *cantaloupe* for all I care.

A NOTE ABOUT PRONOUNS

Much has changed in the world of pronouns since I wrote the first edition of *1001 Grammar Questions For Dummies*. Change is not always comfortable, but it's here and, I believe, necessary and good.

Let me explain. A pronoun is a word that stands in for a noun or another pronoun. Pronouns streamline language, allowing you to say "George said that he forgot his phone" instead of, "George said that George forgot George's phone." A pronoun is supposed to match, or agree, with the word it refers to: singular pairs with singular, plural with plural. Gender also matters. Some pronouns are masculine (*he, him, his*), some are feminine (*she, her, hers*), and others are neuter (*it, they* when referring to objects, ideas, or places). The rules for these pronouns have stayed the same. Ditto for gender-neutral pronouns referring to a group (*they, them, their, theirs*).

The rules have shifted, though, when you refer to one person whose gender is unspecified—a *person* or a *senator* or an *insurance agent*, perhaps — or to a person who does not identify gender as binary (male or female) or who identifies as gender fluid. For more and more grammarians and editors, *they, them, their, and theirs* have become the preferred pronouns for these situations. In other words, these pronouns may be either singular or plural, depending on the word they refer to. Take a look at some examples:

- Someone forgot their homework; therefore, the teacher will give them a failing grade. (pairs the singular pronoun *someone* with the singular pronouns *their* and *them*)
- Each applicant should explain their reasons for leaving their previous job. (pairs the singular noun *applicant* with the singular pronoun *their*)
- Alix arrived late because they were stuck in a traffic jam. (pairs the singular noun *Alix*, the name of a person who identifies as nonbinary, with the singular pronoun *they*)

It's worth noting that this "change" in the usage of *they, them, and their* in the first two examples is actually a return to tradition. From the 14th century onward, ordinary people, as well as great writers (Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Austen, to name three) treated *they, them, and their* as flexible, gender-neutral pronouns, a grammatically correct way to refer to one person or a group, just as the pronoun *you* does. In the 18th century, though, influential grammarians declared that the pronouns *they, them, their, and theirs* were correct only for references to a group. According to these grammarians, the forms *he, him, and his* and *she, her, and hers* were the only appropriate references to one person. If the gender was unknown, masculine pronouns were said to be the proper choice. In 1850, the British Parliament went so far as to enact that grammar rule into law! You can imagine how popular this decision was with supporters of women's equality. In the late 20th century, many writers reserved *they, them, their, and theirs* for plural references but, in an effort to be more inclusive, turned to pairs—*he or she, him or her, and his or her* — for singular references. That practice often results in sentences like "A student should ask his or her teacher about his or her pronoun policy during the first meeting with him or her." As you see, providing two choices can result in a clunky sentence! Paired pronouns also ignore people who identify as nonbinary or gender fluid, a situation reflected in the third example.

To solve these problems, the singular *they/them/their/theirs* entered — actually, re-entered — the picture. And that’s why I’ve employed this usage in the second edition of *1001 Grammar Questions For Dummies*, a decision that Wiley, the publisher of *Dummies* books, supports.

It may take a while to get used to the singular *they*. If you’re expecting one dinner guest and hear “they’re on the way,” you may panic and cook an extra portion of pasta before you remember that *they* is your guest’s preferred pronoun, and *they* would never bring a friend without asking first. You may also find yourself writing for an authority figure who insists on restricting *they*, *them*, *their*, and *theirs* to plural situations. In that situation, you have some options. You can shift from third person (talking about someone) to second person (talking to the person with the flexible pronoun *you*):

If you forget to do the homework, you will receive a failing grade.

You can also reword and avoid the pronoun entirely:

- Someone forgot to do the homework and will receive a failing grade.
- Each applicant should explain the reasons for leaving a previous job.
- Alix arrived late because of traffic.

For practice questions on pronoun agreement, see Chapter 5.

One warning: According to one study, English has nearly a million words that may be combined in varied — and grammatically correct — ways. For each question, I provide the most common response, but at times, you may come up with another answer that’s also acceptable. In such a situation, measure your version by the standards I provide in each explanation, and count yourself “right” if you’ve followed the rules.

What You’ll Find

This book contains 1,001 questions, divided into 22 chapters. I take you through parts of speech (verbs, pronouns, and so forth), parts of a sentence (subjects, verbs, objects, descriptions, and the like), and what English teachers call mechanics (punctuation and capitalization). I also cover the most common mistakes, such as incomplete sentences, commonly confused words, and nonstandard expressions. Each chapter begins with a list of topics, followed by tips and traps — points to remember when you’re answering the questions in that chapter. You don’t have to complete every question in a section, and you don’t have to work on the chapters in order. You’re in charge! Select only the topics that stump you, if you want. When you’re checking your answers and reading the attached explanations, you may discover other areas worth exploring. For example, suppose you’re asked to select the proper pronoun for a sentence. In the answer section, you see that you need a subject pronoun. The problem is that you’re not sure how to locate a subject. No worries: Turn to Chapter 4 for practice in finding subjects.

How This Workbook Is Organized

This workbook includes 1,001 questions in Part 1 and answers to all of them, plus explanations, in Part 2.

Part 1: The Questions

Here are the topics covered by the 1,001 questions in this book:

- » **Verbs:** Chapter 1 deals with locating the verb and selecting the right tense. Chapter 2 covers irregular verb forms, helping verbs, and verb forms that function as descriptions (*participles*, in grammar terminology). On a more advanced level, Chapter 17 deals with verbs in active and passive voice and subjunctive verbs.
- » **Nouns and pronouns:** Chapter 3 checks your knowledge of singular and plural nouns and pronouns. The questions in Chapter 6 concern pronoun case — the difference between *he*, *him*, and *his*, for example.
- » **Agreement:** In grammar, the principle of agreement is that singular pairs with singular and plural with plural. Chapter 4 focuses on subject-verb agreement, and Chapter 5 checks whether pronouns agree with the words they represent or refer to, also known as their antecedents.
- » **Sentence completeness:** The building block of writing is a complete sentence. The questions in Chapter 7 deal with complete sentences (the correct form in Standard English), as well as run-ons (sentences improperly joined) and fragments (incomplete sentences).
- » **Descriptions and complements:** Adding to the bare bones of the sentence, the subject-verb pair are complements and descriptions. In Chapters 8 and 9, you distinguish between an adjective and an adverb, select the appropriate form for formal speech and writing, and place it in the right spot. In Chapter 10, you work on comparisons, so that yours are clear and logical.
- » **Capitalization:** Names, quotations, seasons, titles — Chapter 11 checks whether you understand where to place a capital letter in these situations and many others.
- » **Punctuation:** Lots of people shudder when they think about punctuation, but most of the rules are logical. In Chapter 12, you practice inserting and deleting commas. Chapter 13 hits you with questions about apostrophes and quotation marks.
- » **Parallel structure:** *Parallel* is the word English teachers use to describe balance. In Chapter 14, you work on questions about parallelism, including lists, paired conjunctions (*either/or*, *not only/ but also*, and so forth), tense, and person.
- » **Style:** Do your sentences need to go on a diet? Chapter 15 permits you to trim some repetitive or wordy sentences. Chapter 16 prods you to vary sentence patterns.
- » **Electronic media:** Do you know how to make a grammatically correct presentation slide or bulleted list? Chapter 18 questions you on this topic and tests the appropriate form and language for email and texts. In Chapter 19, you examine formal and informal English and decide when each is appropriate.
- » **Word traps:** Some word pairs can trick you — *accept/except*, *affect/effect*, *rise/raise*, and so on. In Chapters 20, 21, and 22, you practice choosing the appropriate word so that your writing always expresses your intended meaning.

Part 2: The Answers

Life is filled with unanswered questions (How can we achieve world peace? Where's the path to enlightenment? Do I need a ticket to get there?). Fortunately, this book is filled with answered questions. Check Part 2 for the correct answers, each accompanied by an explanation of the grammar or style point involved.

Beyond the Book

This book gives you plenty of grammar questions to work on. Perhaps you want to track your progress as you tackle the questions, or maybe you're having trouble with certain types of questions and wish they were all presented in one place. You're in luck.

In addition to what you're reading right now, this book comes with a free, access-anywhere Cheat Sheet that includes tips and other goodies you may want to have at your fingertips. To get this Cheat Sheet, simply go to www.dummies.com and type **Grammar 1001 Dummies Cheat Sheet** into the Search box.

The online practice that comes free with this book offers you the same 1,001 questions and answers that are available here, presented in a multiple-choice format. The beauty of the online problems is that you can customize your online practice to focus on the topic areas that give you trouble. If you're short on time and want to maximize your study, you can specify the quantity of problems you want to practice, pick your topics, and go. You can practice a few hundred problems in one sitting or just a couple dozen, and you can focus on a few types of problems or a mix of several types. Regardless of the combination you create, the online program keeps track of the questions you get right and wrong so you can monitor your progress and spend time studying exactly what you need.

To gain access to the online practice, you simply have to register. Just follow these steps:

- 1. Register your book or ebook at Dummies.com to get your PIN. Go to www.dummies.com/go/getaccess**
- 2. Select your product from the dropdown list on that page.**
- 3. Follow the prompts to validate your product, and then check your email for a confirmation message that includes your PIN and instructions for logging in.**

If you don't receive this email within two hours, please check your spam folder before contacting us through our Technical Support website at <http://support.wiley.com> or by phone at 877-762-2974.

Now you're ready to go! You can come back to the practice material as often as you want — simply log in with the username and password you created during your initial login. No need to enter the access code a second time.

Your registration is good for one year from the day you activate your PIN.

What you'll find online

The online practice that comes free with this book offers you the same 1,001 questions and answers that are available here, presented in a multiple-choice format. Multiple-choice questions force you to zoom in on the details that can make or break your correct solution to the problem. Sometimes one of the possible wrong answers will catch you in the act of making a certain error. But that's great, because after you identify a particular error (often a common error that many others make as well), you'll know not to fall into that trap again.

You can access this online tool by using a PIN code, as described in the next section. Keep in mind that you can create only one login with your PIN. Once the PIN is used, it's no longer valid and is nontransferable. So you can't share your PIN with others after you've established your login credentials. In other words, the problems are yours and only yours!

How to register

To gain access to the online practice, all you have to do is register. Just follow these simple steps:

1. **Register your book or ebook at Dummies.com to get your PIN. Go to www.dummies.com/go/getaccess.**
2. **Select your product from the dropdown list on that page.**
3. **Follow the prompts to validate your product, and then check your email for a confirmation message that includes your PIN and instructions for logging in.**

If you do not receive this email within two hours, please check your spam folder before contacting us through our Technical Support website at <http://support.wiley.com> or by phone at 877-762-2974.

Now you're ready to go! You can come back to the practice material as often as you want — simply log on with the username and password you created during your initial login. There is no need to enter the access code a second time.

Your registration is good for one year from the day you activate your PIN.

Where to Go for Additional Help

Each chapter begins with short explanations of the tips and traps associated with each topic, and the answer explanations give you still more information about grammar rules. If you need longer explanations and more examples, you may want to check out *English Grammar For Dummies*, *English Grammar Workbook For Dummies*, or *Grammar Essentials For Dummies*, all of which I wrote and Wiley published. My royalty statement and I thank you!

1

The Questions

IN THIS PART . . .

You may have a love-hate relationship with answering questions; you enjoy challenging yourself, but you don't like to fail. This part — 1,001 grammar questions — is set up so you *won't* fail. When you have trouble, you can check the answer and read the explanation in Part 2 and then return to the questions, better prepared to answer the next one correctly. Specifically, here's what you'll find in this part:

Basic parts of speech and essential elements of a proper sentence (Chapters 1–7)

Descriptive elements and mechanics of capitalization and punctuation (Chapters 8–13)

Ways to add style to your writing (Chapters 14–17)

Considerations when writing for electronic media and varying levels of formality (Chapters 18–19)

Commonly misused words and expressions (Chapters 20–22)

Chapter 1

Telling Time: Identifying the Verb and Choosing the Correct Tense

What time is it? You can answer that question by glancing at a clock or by looking at verbs. Yes, verbs — words that express action or state of being in the past, present, and future. In this chapter, you practice locating the verb and selecting the appropriate tense, or time, for each. You also tackle singular and plural forms, plugging the right one into every sentence.

The Questions You'll Work On

Here you find sentences that allow you to sharpen your verb skills in these ways:

- » Locating the verb(s) in a sentence
- » Selecting simple past-, present-, or future-tense verbs to fit the meaning of a sentence
- » Choosing progressive verb forms to indicate ongoing action
- » Placing past perfect, present perfect, or future perfect forms where they're needed
- » Finding the right tense to summarize speech and discuss literary or artistic works
- » Expressing unchangeable facts in present tense
- » Determining whether you need a singular or plural form

What to Watch Out For

Verb tense can be tricky, as can *agreement* — the matching of singular verbs to singular subjects and plural verbs to plural subjects. When you work through these questions, watch out for these issues:

- » Zero in on the time period(s) covered in the sentence.
- » Establish a timeline if more than one action or state of being is expressed in the sentence.

- » Stay in the same tense unless the meaning of the sentence justifies a shift.
- » Check whether the subject is singular or plural and match the verb to the subject.
- » Ignore words that resemble verbs but function as descriptions or nouns.

Locating the Verb

1–15 Identify the verb(s) in the sentence.

1. Eric and his band played five songs by the Beatles, to the delight of the audience.
2. Maria slipped out of the room quietly at the end of the lecture on the causes of World War I.
3. The twins will be happy on their birthday when they receive your present!
4. Perhaps because of my brother's illness, my dog Tweet seems sad today.
5. The child searched for a tissue but found only a dirty candy wrapper.
6. The screaming figure at the left of the painting represents a mother's grief.
7. Glenn has always carried the sizzling pizza in a special, heat-proof box.
8. The puppies, along with the kittens, were displayed in the shop window for all to see.
9. The last meeting of the council was bittersweet, as the members were now scattering for distant destinations.
10. To go faster, try not to look at the keyboard as you type.
11. Smiling, Barbara wrestled with the math problem until she calculated the correct answer.

12. Daniel's pen, having run out of ink, sat on the shelf, unused and forgotten.

13. While copying the letter, Mike stuck his finger in the moving paper tray.

14. Norman has been judged "normal" by his doctor, but his friends view him differently.

15. Sliding down the mountain, the ski instructor guided his students.

17. Sheryl and her friend always _____ (to shop) on a Tuesday, when the store offers double discounts.

18. Next year, four wrestlers _____ (to compete) for a single spot on the team.

19. Emma _____ (to snap) a picture of her brother Eric every year on his birthday, including today.

20. Last week I tossed a bit of my dinner under the table because the dog _____ (to beg) for scraps while I ate.

21. Start working on your lab report as soon as you _____ (to arrive) home.

22. Mr. Martin _____ (to trim) the tree after he had watered it.

Choosing Simple and Perfect Tense Verb Forms

16–55 Select the tense and form of the verb in parentheses that fits the meaning of the sentence.

16. I _____ (to start) my podcast a year ago, and I do not intend to stop now.

23. While Harry _____ (to wash) the clothes, Oliver was brushing the dog's matted fur.
24. Jackie _____ (to learn) Arabic when she lived in Tunisia.
25. Carla _____ (to fill) the gas tank before she realized that her credit card was not in her wallet.
26. By the time George gets home, Maria _____ (to gobble) all the cookies, and George hates all the other snacks.
27. When I _____ (to bake) the cookies, I placed them on the dining room table.
28. Although the king commands instant obedience, his followers sometimes _____ (to disobey).
29. Marlene _____ (to lecture) for two hours before she noticed that several audience members were asleep.
30. I _____ (to live) in this neighborhood for about a year, and despite its problems, I still love my home.
31. The yellow and brown leaves began to fall; the autumn soon _____ (to end).
32. No one _____ (to work) harder than Ellen, who spent eight or nine hours a day on this project for the first two weeks and is now allotting ten or twelve hours a day to it!
33. Jared _____ (to jog) four miles every day as soon as he wakes up.
34. From now on, David _____ (to complete) his homework on time, to avoid detention and poor grades.

35. Elliot always _____ (to return) his library books late, so he pays many fines.
36. While Meredith _____ (to paint) the ceiling, a dog jumped on the ladder.
37. Place the dough in a warm spot, and in a few hours it _____ (to double) in size.
38. It _____ (to rain) every day for a month, including today, but tomorrow's forecast calls for sunshine.
39. The soda had soaked into the carpet by the time the janitor _____ (to arrive) with a mop.
40. Right now, Catherine's friends _____ (to gather) for her surprise party.
41. Once George _____ (to chop) down the cherry tree, the fruit was lost.
42. I paid the electric bill on the 17th, so I _____ (to receive) the next bill in about a week.
43. Although Eddie _____ (to dance) happily, Shirley turned off the music.
44. Clancy never _____ (to brush) his teeth by himself, even though he is five years old now.
45. As we speak, our enemies _____ (to attack) with great force, but we will not surrender.
46. The teacher _____ (to staple) the drawings on the bulletin board so that the parents could admire their children's artwork.
47. By the time Eleanor and Henry are satisfied with the renovation, they _____ (to exceed) their budget by a wide margin.

48. Where the tulips _____ (to bloom), weeds eventually covered every inch of the garden.
49. In Maya's fantasy novel, a wizard's curse _____ (to turn) a little boy into a frog.
50. Amanda and her friends _____ (to study) Chinese for four years by the time they travel to that country.
51. Joe _____ (to practice) karate for many years and still takes an advanced class every Saturday.
52. In Shakespeare's *Othello*, the title character wrongly _____ (to trust) Iago, one of the most evil villains in literature.
53. LGA Manufacturing has an old-fashioned policy; the company _____ (to market) its products only in a store, not on the internet.

54. If my dog buries a bone every three days, how many _____ (to bury) by the end of the month?
55. In Dickens's classic novel *Great Expectations*, Pip _____ (to learn) the identity of his benefactor in a chilling scene.

Consistently Choosing the Right Verb Tense

56–65 Select the tense and form of the verb in parentheses that fits the meaning of the sentence. Take care to avoid unnecessary shifts from one tense to another.

56. In my dream, a giant dinosaur ran into my dining room, and then he _____ (to stroll) around the room.
57. Perhaps because the president _____ (to campaign) for the mayor, the mayor won by a huge margin.
58. Linda _____ (to enter) the cafeteria and sits next to the most hated teacher in the entire school!

59. The orchestra _____ (to insure) the instruments every year, so no one ever worries about storm damage after the hurricane.

60. Last year I traveled to Europe, but next year I _____ (to tour) Asia.

61. In response to the reporter's question, the zookeeper said that the lion _____ (to be) very friendly.

62. Morty declared that eight added to ten _____ (to equal) eighteen.

63. Arthur told me that he _____ (to need) a loan until payday and asked me to give him \$10.

64. Shana reported that at the end of every show, the ballet dancers _____ (to bow) and ignored the boos from the audience.

65. The astronomer told the youngsters that the earth _____ (to revolve) around the sun.

Chapter 2

Working with Irregular, Helping, and Descriptive Verb Forms

Life would be boring if everything followed the same pattern, wouldn't it? A little variety can pep up your day. It can also ruin your day if the variation is an irregular verb — and the English language has many. Not to worry: In this chapter you practice selecting irregular verbs, changing meaning with helping verbs (*should, can, may, do, does, did*, and the like), and employing verb forms that can act as descriptions, which grammarians call *participles* and *infinitives* and the rest of us call “pains in the neck.”

The Questions You'll Work On

In this chapter, you work on questions that develop these skills:

- » Using irregular past-tense and participle forms correctly
- » Selecting the proper form and tense of the irregular verbs *to be* and *to have*
- » Adding shades of meaning with the helping verbs *should, must, can, could, may, might*, and *would*
- » Creating questions with helping verbs
- » Identifying participles functioning as descriptions
- » Choosing the best form of participles and infinitives used as descriptions

What to Watch Out For

Keep these points in mind when you answer the questions in this chapter:

- » Check whether the past-tense form or participle is regular or irregular.
- » Choose the correct tense of irregular verbs based on the meaning of the sentence.
- » Employ reading comprehension skills to detect the need for a helping verb expressing obligation, possibility, condition, or ability.
- » Rearrange word order and add helping verbs to create questions.
- » Select present participles or infinitives as descriptions for actions in the past, present, or future.

Handling Irregular Verbs

66–90 Choose the proper past, present perfect, past perfect, or future perfect form of the irregular verb in parentheses so that the verb fits the meaning of the sentence.

- 66.** Joe _____ (to catch) the ball as it reached the top of the outfield fence.
- 67.** The car was cruising along the highway smoothly until it _____ (to hit) a huge bump.
- 68.** Dorothy and the baby _____ (to sleep) for two hours when they returned from a visit to Grandma.
- 69.** At the end of the trial, Judge Ann Marie Smith _____ (to rise) from her chair and left the courtroom.
- 70.** Last week, the Yankees _____ (to beat) their fiercest rivals.
- 71.** From 2010 through 2011, the confused clerk _____ (to put) all the forms in the wrong file cabinet.
- 72.** The helicopter _____ (to fly) straight up into the sky and then headed south.