

●●● Pauline Cullen

Common mistakes at

IELTS Intermediate

... and how to avoid them

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Contents

- 1 Are there any special times I should use *the*? 5
- 2 Singular or plural? 6
- 3 Which nouns don't have a plural form? 7

Test 1 8

- 4 When do I use the present simple tense? 10
- 5 How do I write large numbers? 11
- 6 *There is / there are* 12

Test 2 13

- 7 Which relative pronoun should I use? 15
- 8 How do I choose between *and*, *but* and *or*? 16
- 9 Auxiliary verbs 17

Test 3 18

- 10 How do I use modal verbs? 20
- 11 *-ing* or *to* + infinitive? 21
- 12 Verbs after adjectives and prepositions 22

Test 4 23

- 13 The gerund or infinitive after *allow*, *advise*, *make*, *suggest*? 25
- 14 *Stop*, *try*, *forget* and *remember* 26
- 15 Prepositions after adjectives and nouns 27

Test 5 28

- 16 Prepositions after verbs 30
- 17 Prepositions of time and place 31
- 18 The preposition *of* 32

Test 6 33

19 How do I make a verb passive? 35

20 When do I use the passive? 36

21 What is register? 37

Test 7 38

22 Adjectives and adverbs 40

23* Noun or adjective? 41

24 Verb confusion 1 – courses and study 42

Test 8 43

25 Verb confusion 2 – describing charts and figures 45

26 Verb confusion 3 – money and problems 46

27 Noun confusion 1 – money and work 47

Test 9 48

28 Noun confusion 2 – advertising, travel and young people 50

29 When do I need to use an apostrophe? 51

30 Common spelling errors 52

Test 10 53

Answer key 55

5 How do I write large numbers?

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

- a The government spent ten millions dollars on education last year.
b The government spent ten million dollars on education last year.
- a There were thousands of people at the football match.
b There were a thousand of people at the football match.

When we talk about a specific large number, we do not add *s* to the number:

200,000 = *two hundred thousand* (not ~~*two hundred thousands*~~)

10,000,000 = *ten million* (not ~~*ten millions*~~)

The noun that follows is always plural:

*There must have been at least three thousand **students** at the protest.*

We use the plural form of large numbers + *of* to give an approximate idea of how many:

*There must have been **thousands of** students at the protest.*

We can use *a* instead of *one*. *One* is more formal:

*If I won **a million** dollars, I would probably take a year off and travel around the world.*

*The president promised to increase the health budget by **one million** dollars.*

☆ We usually use numerals for numbers that cannot be written in one or two words:

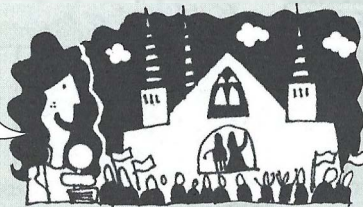
*More than **two million** people attended last year: but, 2,001,967 people attended last year.*

You should write fractions in words: *half a (million); a/one third of a (million); three quarters of a (million); one and a quarter (million); one and three quarter (million):*

*According to the chart, in 2004 over **half a million** Ukrainians went to the cinema.*

2 Correct the mistake below.

A thousands of people came to see the royal wedding.



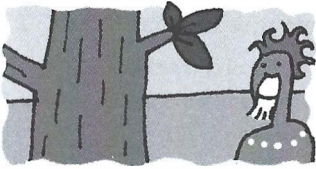
..... came to see the royal wedding.

3 Underline the correct number in the sentences below.

- The skeleton had remained hidden for *a thousands* / *thousands* of years.
- The chart shows that *three hundreds* / *three hundred* whales were seen here in 1990.
- Three and a half billion* / *three and a half of a billion* will watch the ceremony .
- I pay *six hundred dollars* / *six hundred dollar* rent each month.
- Real estate in my city is very expensive; a small house can cost *three quarter of a million* / *three quarters of a million* dollars.
- A million of* / *Millions of* dollars are spent on space exploration each year.
- By 2005, more than *six hundred* / *six hundreds of* children were enrolled in the school.
- The company has sold *one and a half billions* / *one and a half billion* computers so far.

3 Fill in the gaps in the following paragraph using the information in the diagrams.

How to make a traditional canoe



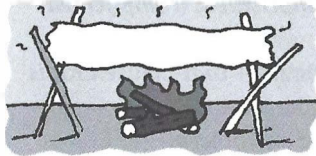
1 Choose a suitable tree.



2 Strip the bark.



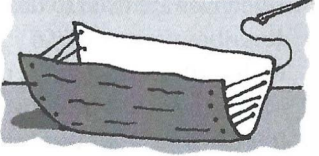
3 Soak the bark.



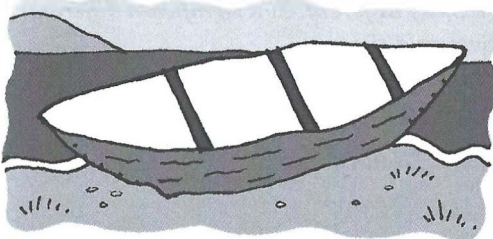
4 Heat the bark over a fire.
Do not allow it to burn.



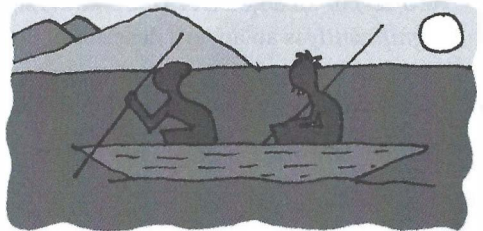
5 Place the bark between
trees to shape it.



6 Sew the edges together.



7 You have finished your canoe.



8 Indigenous people use them to catch fish.

The diagrams show how a traditional canoe (1)..... First, a suitable tree (2)..... and then the bark (3)..... off in one piece. Next, the bark (4)..... in a river so that it becomes soft and pliable. It (5)..... (then) over a fire but it should (6)..... (not) to burn. In order to shape the bark, it should (7)..... between two trees that are growing close together. Finally, once the bark has cooled, the edges (8)..... together. Your canoe (9)..... . These canoes (10)..... for fishing.

4 Correct the 10 mistakes in the following text.

The graph shows the no. of people who shop online and the types of stuff that bought. It is clear that most money spend on travel and accommodation, and the smallest amount of money is spending on groceries. The first figures available are for the yr 1995, because shopping online was not common before then. The % of people shopping online was very small initially, and it took ages for people to begin using this service. However, the majority of people still wanna visit shops in person to do their shopping, and only 20% of the population say they have ever bought anything online. Of the 20% who have used online shopping, 75% say they have been received good value for money and they would definitely use it again.

4 Correct the 10 vocabulary mistakes in the following extract.

If we want to reduce unemployment, we need to pay workers more money for manual jobs. This will encourage people to work. To what extent do you agree or disagree?

In some countries, employed people are given money by the government to help them until they can find a suitable job. However, manual workers often receive salaries that are too low to live on; this means that there is little incentive for these people to work. One way to prevent the problem of unemployment would be for employees to pay their employers more money for jobs which do not require a great deal of knowledge, such as cleaning jobs.

Paying more wages is only one way to encourage people to work, however. We also need to consider the working place. We need to ensure that it is safe and comfortable at all times, so that people can feel happy about going to work.

If we want to resolve unemployment from increasing, then we need to do what we can to encourage people to continue working. This situation will not be solved unless we deal with the issue of working conditions as well as money.

5 Complete the following conversation with the correct form of either *spend* or *buy*.

Teacher: What kinds of things do young people generally spend their money on?

Student: That's difficult to say because girls tend to (1) different things from boys. Many of the young girls I know prefer to (2) their money on clothes, for example. They also like (3) lots of accessories like jewellery or make-up. But my brother, for example, (4) most of his money on video games. He (5) at least one new one per month; I'd say he (6) about \$100 a month on video games.

Teacher: Can you tell me about something you have bought recently?

Student: Erm, I (7) a new mobile phone last month. It cost me quite a lot, and then I (8) over \$200 on phone calls, so it's been a really expensive purchase so far!