

## How to use correct grammar

### Before you begin

#### What you need:

Related text: **“Dance with a Giraffe” by Christine Jurzykowski**  
*Exit with Success* and *The Bare Essentials Plus* (optional)

Approximate time this exercise should take you: **30 minutes**

### Reminder

The following is reprinted before each of the exercises in Module 16 as it includes useful reminders for all the grammar exercises.

Grammar is one of the more difficult areas of the English language to perfect. There are many rules, verbs, verb tenses, pronouns, articles, agreement forms and other points of grammar to learn. In *Exit with Success* you will find explanations and examples of the typical errors students tend to make in grammar. As well, if you are using *The Bare Essentials Plus*, you will find a fuller review of grammar with exercises. If grammar is a particular area of weakness for you, do not hesitate to consult your tutor for extra tips and help. In the grammar exercise below you are going to review the following:

- **Subject-verb agreement**

- The most frequent subject-verb agreement error is in the third-person singular present: **he/she/it walks**
- The second most frequent error is caused when the writer thinks the subject of the sentence is in the prepositional phrase. Error: **The thought of cranes are enough to excite the depressed old man.** Correction: **The thought (subject) of cranes is enough to excite the depressed old man.**

- **Faulty use of pronouns**

- When the pronoun refers to the subject of the sentence, use the subject pronouns: **I, you, he/she/it/one, we, you, they**
- If the pronoun does not refer to the subject, use the object pronouns: **me, you, him/her/it/one, us, you, them**. Note this common error: **The boy is stronger than *him***. Correction: **The boy is stronger than *he (is)***.
- The pronoun must also agree with its antecedent. **The father supported *his son's* decision**. Remember that the pronoun reference must be clear. It should not be able to refer to more than one antecedent. Error: **The mother knows *her son* and *her father* so *she* probably knows *he* is the one who instigated the trip to see the cranes**. Revision: **The mother knows *her son and her father* so *she* probably knows *the old man* is the one who instigated the trip to see the cranes**.

- **Dangling and misplaced modifiers**

- A modifier is a word or phrase that adds description or explanation about another word in a sentence. The modifier must be placed as close as possible to the word it modifies. If it is placed incorrectly, it is a misplaced modifier: ***Only* the grandson can help him. /The grandson can help *only* him**. Here is another example: **Looking for redemption before he dies, the boy takes the grandfather to the slough**. Here the modifier is beside “the boy,” so the writer is inadvertently stating that it is the boy who is looking for redemption. Finally, the modifier is said to be dangling when it refers to something or someone that is absent from the sentence. Here is an example: **While riding to the slough, a crane flew into the sky**. Correction: **While riding to the slough, *the grandfather and the boy* saw a crane fly into the sky**.

- **Misuse of articles**

- The article before a noun indicates whether the noun is specific or non-specific. “The” is specific; “a” or “an” is non-specific. “An” is used before words beginning with a vowel sound or a silent “h.” **The hour has arrived for action. An hour is all that we require**.

- **Verb tense consistency**

- It is acceptable to write your analysis of the text in either the present or the past tense. Once you have decided which tense you will use, however, do not change tense unless the change is required for the meaning.

## Instructions

The following exercise is keyed to Christine Jurzykowski’s essay “Dance with a Giraffe” and reinforces and tests your understanding of the grammar lessons in *Exit with Success*.

**Rewrite the following sentences, correcting the grammar errors.** Focus on subject-verb agreement, proper use of articles, tense consistency, and pronoun-antecedent agreement.

# Exercise

Incorrect

Poetic imagery **are used** in order to involve the reader in Jurzykowski's experience.

Correct

Poetic imagery **is used** in order to involve the reader in Jurzykowski's experience.

1. The desolation witnessed by the visitors are understood only by the reader and Jurzykowski.

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2. She describes how the bull led the female giraffes in a series of dance movements, and how she could still follow the choreography after the bull was moved out of sight.

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3. The author, who grows up living beside a jungle, forgot her connection to nature when her mother takes her to New York and Paris.

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4. Fascinated by the death dance, the author makes the ritual of Old Nick's passing a major theme of the essay.

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5. Because the author was spending the night beside Old Nick, she understands that there is interrelatedness within all living beings.

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6. The animal caregivers try to interrelate with the giraffes so you know how to honour Old Nick's "rite of passage" into death.

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7. The epiphany is when Jurzykowski and Old Nick seems to become united in their breathing and "were matched to a piece of music written in four-four time."

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8. The essayist intend to persuade a reader that we may still, under the right circumstance, experience an primeval connection to nature.

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9. We do not normally read newspaper report about the events that is recorded by this author.

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10. Moving bull giraffe into the another room, caregivers hope that female giraffe will calm down.

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# Answer key

1. The desolation witnessed by the visitors **is** understood only by the reader and Jurzykowski.
2. She describes how the bull led the female giraffes in a series of dance movements, and how **the animals** (or “they”) could still follow the choreography after the bull was moved out of sight.
3. The author, who **grew** up living **beside** a jungle, **forgets** her connection to nature when her mother takes her to New York and Paris.
4. Fascinated by the death dance, the author makes the ritual of Old Nick’s passing a major theme **in** the essay.
5. Because the author **spent** the night beside Old Nick, she understands that there is interrelatedness within all living beings.
6. The animal caregivers try to interrelate with the giraffes so **they** know how to honour Old Nick’s “rite of passage” into death.
7. The epiphany is when Jurzykowski and Old Nick **seem** to become united in their breathing and are “matched to a piece of music written in four-four time.”
8. The essayist **intends** to persuade **the** reader that we may still, under the right **circumstances**, experience **a** primeval connection to nature.
9. We do not normally read newspaper **reports** about the events that **are** recorded by this author.
10. Moving **the** bull giraffe into **another** room, **the** caregivers hope that **the** female giraffe will calm down.