

Didactic Scenarios 6 - May

Answer the following questions, being as specific as possible. Also exemplify wherever possible. You may want/need to refer back to the written topics.

VERB TENSES

1. Study the tenses in the following sentence: *I think that what you just said was very stupid.* Can you find anything worth commenting?

IT

2. Explain the use of it in *I would appreciate it very much if you sent me somebody who speaks Spanish.*

INVERSION

3. What is special about the inversion with *not until* or *only when*? Do you know other constructions which behave the same?

PRONUNCIATION

4. The group <oo> tends to pose difficulties for students. Indicate the different possible pronunciations, and provide examples for each.

PRONUNCIATION: CHANGING STRESS IN NOUNS AND VERBS WITH THE SAME SPELLING (This very same question came up in the exam in 2016)

5. Some words change their stress or pronunciation depending on whether they are verbs or nouns. Write 5 examples of such words and their exact pronunciation in both cases. You will get 0.2 points for each noun-verb pair with the right pronunciation in each case.

TO + -ING

6. The phrase *look forward to* + noun/*-ing* form is difficult for our students. Comment on it and give further examples of *to* + *-ing*.

SUGGESTED ANSWERS

Didactic Scenarios 5

VERB TENSES

1. Study the tenses in the following sentence: *I think that what you just said was very stupid.* Can you find anything worth commenting?

Topic 33

What is remarkable about the sentence is the use of the past simple tense to refer to 'recent indefinite past time', reinforced by the use of the particle *just*. The past simple tense tends to invariably refer to definite past time reference.

However, the example proposed is a common feature in American English, who favours the use of the past simple for recent actions. Therefore, the sentence is perfectly grammatically correct. British English, however, would favour the use of the present perfect: *I think that what you have just said was very stupid.*

The fact that we teach our students the use of the present perfect with *just* clearly evinces that the majority of material we employ comes from the UK or its surrounding sphere. However, in advanced levels, grammatical nuances of this kind should be introduced.

IT

2. Explain the use of *it* in *I would appreciate it very much if you sent me somebody who speaks Spanish.*

This is an instance of the so-called "anticipatory *it*", which, as the name indicates, anticipates an element which comes later in the sentence, and which is always realised by a clause. In this case, *it* anticipates the direct object *if you sent me somebody who speaks Spanish* [...]. That is what *I would appreciate very much*.

There are two reasons for the use of this "anticipatory *it*":

1. The end-weight principle, which states that long, heavy units should appear towards the end of the sentence. The following sentence would not be accepted: *I would appreciate if you sent me somebody who speaks Spanish very much.*
2. When the direct object is realised by a clause (instead of a noun phrase), it is postponed, extraposed and replaced by the anticipatory *it*, which has cataphoric (backward) reference.

Extra information:

"Anticipatory *it*" tends to pose problems for Spanish speakers, since they tend to omit it: *I find (it) hard to believe that the summer is here already; I've always made (it) clear that my family has to take priority over my work.*

Anticipatory *it* can also anticipate the subject, as in the following example: *It is amazing that he wears such clothes.* It would be analysed as the grammatical subject, whereas

that he wears such clothes would be the logical subject. Amazing would be a mere Subject Complement.

INVERSION

3. What is special about the inversion with *not until* or *only when*? Do you know other constructions which behave the same?

What is special of these structures is that the inversion takes place in the second part of the sentence rather than in the first. Compare:

- *Not until she removed her hat did I recognise who she was; Only when I saw him again was I aware of how much I had missed him.*
- *Little could I suspect that; Hardly had I left when he called me.*

This also happens with *only after* and *only if*:

- *Only after I posted the letter did I realise I had spelt the address wrong.*

Only if you promise to come back will I let you go.

PRONUNCIATION

4. The group <oo> tends to pose difficulties for students. Indicate the different possible pronunciations, and provide examples for each.

/ʊ/ (the most common)	/u:/	/ʌ/	Other
<i>good /gʊd/</i>	<i>boot /'bu:t/</i>	<i>flood /flʌd/</i>	<i>moor /'mʊə/</i>
<i>hood /hʊd/</i>	<i>moon /'mu:n/</i>	<i>blood /'blʌd/</i>	<i>brooch</i>
<i>wood /wʊd/</i>	<i>booze /'bu:z/</i>		<i>/'brəʊtʃ/</i>
<i>book /'bʊk/</i>	<i>spoof /'spu:f/</i>		
<i>foot /'fʊt/</i>			
<i>wool /'wʊl/</i>			

PRONUNCIATION: CHANGING STRESS IN NOUNS AND VERBS WITH THE SAME SPELLING (This very same question came up in the exam in 2016)

5. Some words change their stress or pronunciation depending on whether they are verbs or nouns. Write 5 examples of such words and their exact pronunciation in both cases. You will get 0.2 points for each noun-verb pair with the right pronunciation in each case.

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NOTE: You are only asked to write 5 examples.

Verb	Noun
<i>Record</i> /rɪ'kɔ:d/	<i>Record</i> /'rekɔ:d/
<i>Produce</i> /prə'dju:s/	<i>Produce</i> /'prɒdju:s/
<i>Export</i> /ɪk'spɔ:t/	<i>Export</i> /'ekspɔ:t/
<i>Import</i> /ɪm'pɔ:t/	<i>Import</i> /'ɪmpɔ:t/
<i>Contrast</i> /kən'trɑ:st/	<i>Contrast</i> /'kɒntrɑ:st/
<i>Insult</i> /ɪn'sʌlt/	<i>Insult</i> /'ɪnsʌlt/
<i>Present</i> /prɪ'zent/	<i>Present</i> /'preznt/
<i>Extract</i> /ɪk'strækt/	<i>Extract</i> /'ekstrækt/
<i>Conduct</i> /kən'dʌkt/	<i>Conduct</i> /'kɒndʌkt/

NOTE: You could use these words in example sentences to make their meaning as a verb or noun more noticeable.

TO + -ING

6. The phrase *look forward to* + noun/*-ing* form is difficult for our students, since they tend to treat *to* as a mark of infinitive (**I look forward to go*). Comment on it and give further examples of *to* + *-ing*.

After the word *to* we normally use the base form of the verb (infinitive), but there are some exceptions:

Look forward to is a phrasal prepositional verb, composed by a verb and two particles (an adverb and a preposition, respectively). Since *to* is a preposition, it must necessarily be followed by the *-ing* form of the verb: *I look forward to speaking to you soon*.

This also happens in the following contexts:

- **With the verbs *confess* and *admit***, with allow the verb pattern of prep (*to*) + *-ing* e.g. *He confessed to stealing the money; she won't admit to cheating on the test* (note that the preposition is optional).
- **With *devoted*, *dedicated* and *committed* (to doing something)**: *She's devoted to helping the poor*. This also applies to the corresponding nouns (*devotion*, *dedication*, *commitment*), e.g.: *I'm impressed by her dedication to helping the poor*.
- **With *opposed* and *object* (to doing something)**, e.g. *I'm opposed to changing the laws; I object to allowing smoking inside the building*. This also applies to the corresponding nouns (*opposition* and *objection*): *There's a lot of opposition to changing the laws; I don't understand your objection to allowing smoking inside the building*.

- **Be used/accustomed to** (doing something): *I'm not used/accustomed to waking up so early.*
- **Adjust to** (doing something): *I need to adjust to waking up earlier.*
- **Phrasal prepositional verbs:** *look forward to* and *get round to* ("find the time to do something"): *I never got round to calling her back.*