

Answer Key for 2012 Printing of *An A-Z of Common English Errors*

These are the answers that I had in mind when I wrote the questions in the workbook. In many cases, other answers may be possible. Please note that many of the examples are deliberately long in order to make it more difficult for learners to identify the mistake. Please feel free to email me at info@btbpress.com if you have any questions or suggestions relating to this answer key.

Section 1: Talking about yourself and your family

1. My younger sister is in high school, and the other sister works in a bank.
2. Including my grandparents, there are six people in my family.
3. In my free time, I (like to) take / I like taking my dog for a walk.
4. This is Sayoko.
5. My older/elder brother works in Osaka.
6. Our dog is very small.

Section 2: Talking about places

1. After class, I have to go (back) home.
2. My best friend is from Okazaki.
3. My grandmother's house is in the country / countryside.
*or "My grandmother's house is in the middle of nowhere."
4. Shihoro is known locally for its potato chips. / Shihoro's specialty is potato chips.
5. Ken invited me to his party next Saturday, but I don't know how to get to his house.
6. We went shopping, and after that, we went home.
7. I love my hometown because it has (there are) a lot of fields and trees.
8. Emi walks past the park on her way to school.
9. Exile is one of the most popular groups in Japan.
10. I studied hard when I was in high school / ...when I was a high school student.
11. It takes me thirty minutes to walk to school.
12. I want to go to London because it is an exciting place.
- 13 (a). My house is near Tokyo Dome. / Tokyo Dome is near my house.
- 13 (b). The movie I wanted wasn't in the rental store. / The rental store didn't have the movie I wanted.
14. I live in Tajimi, which is the hottest place in Japan.

Section 3: In the classroom

1. I will be absent next week because I have to go to the hospital.
2. What is the difference between “talk to” and “talk with”?
3. B: Yes, I have.
4. I want to improve my English listening.
5. Hello everyone. Sorry I’m late.
6. What does “It’s up to you” mean?
7. I’m sorry, but I made a mistake when I told you my address.
8. I didn’t understand. Can you say that again, please?
9. My brother broke his arm playing soccer.
- 10 (a). How do you spell your first name?
- 10 (b). My family name is spelled U-E-N-O.
- 11 (a). How do you say *ringo* in English?
- 11 (b). In Paris, you can see a lot of beautiful buildings.

Section 4: Tenses and tense words

- 1 (a). B: Not yet.
- 1 (b). I called my father at 9 p.m., but he was still working.
- 2 (a). I have been to Korea.
- 2 (b). I like Kyoto, but I haven’t been there this year.
3. I have studied calligraphy since I was five years old.
* “...have been studying” would also be acceptable, and possibly more natural.
4. In my free time, I read comic books.
5. The man is holding a book.
6. The man was crying. He looked very sad.
*or “The man is crying. He looks very sad.”
7. I was sleeping when you called me.
* “I was asleep” would also be acceptable.
- 8 (a). I have lived / been living in Aomori since I was born.
- 8 (b). My grandmother is 87. She has lived in Kyoto all her life.
9. I learned the violin for five years when I was a child.
10. I used to have very short hair when I was a child.
* “I had short hair” would also be acceptable.

11 (a). What are you doing tomorrow evening?

* “What are you going to do?” would also be acceptable.

11 (b). B: I’ll lend you some money.

11 (c). The sky looks very dark. I think it’s going to rain.

12. The baby’s eyes were open.

* Depending on how you interpret the incorrect sentence, “The baby opened his / her / its eyes” may also be acceptable.

Section 5: Time words and expressions

1. I have to be in Tokyo by 4 p.m.

2. We are living in the 21st century.

3. That day, I had to go to work, so I was tired.

4. My friend learned a little Spanish while / when she was living in Madrid.

5. I have to work hard, so I am always tired.

6. It was the first time I had seen that movie. / I had never seen that movie before.

7. I have to go home now.

8. I didn’t go to work last Monday.

9. I am going to take the TOEIC test in three months.

10. My father sometimes has to work nights.

11. I’m coming to school by bus at the moment because my car is being repaired.

* “Now” is not incorrect, but it sounds more permanent. It would be more appropriate if, for example, the speaker had sold his / her car.

12. I haven’t been to karaoke recently. / I don’t go to karaoke these days.

13. The movie starts at half past seven.

14. I go to English conversation school three times a week.

15. I like SMAP, so I often listen to their songs.

Section 6: Writing mistakes

1 (a). My brother plays the guitar, and my sister plays the drums.

1 (b). I want to study abroad, so I have to work hard to save money.

2. I have been to Korea, China, and some other countries.

3 (a). I didn’t work very hard today because I was tired.

3 (b). Our flight was canceled because of the bad weather.

4. I want to lose weight, so I exercise every day.
5. My favorite food is fruit. For example, I like apples and bananas.
6. This shop is very cheap, and the staff are really helpful.
* This could also be “This shop is very cheap. Also, the staff...”

Section 7: Japanese English

1. I’m going to the sale(s) with my friends on Saturday.
2. Mr. Sato gets a lot of complaints because he is often rude to customers.
3. I am going to a concert this weekend.
4. I’m taking part in a five-kilometer fun run this weekend.
5. I like working in the bar, but I don’t like the owner / manager.
6. The people (who are) coming to the Christmas party are Kenji, Shouhei, and Ichiro.
7. I am saving money to buy a car.
8. I want to work in an office after I graduate.
* “I want to be an office worker” would also be acceptable, but less natural.
9. There are many beautiful guest houses in Nagano.
10. I have lost (one of) my earrings!
11. I am a very safe / careful driver. / I drive very safely / carefully.
12. My friend Taro works for a printing company.
13. I met the soccer player Nakata, and I got his autograph!
14. Your new girlfriend is really slim!
* Note that the original sentence is not incorrect, but the word “smart” is often used mistakenly by Japanese people when they mean “slim” or “slender.”
15. I work in a shoe store.
16. We were all (very) excited because our tests had finished.
* “We were all (very) hyper” is also possible, but it would be very informal.
17. I’m going to Saipan next week, so I need to buy some new clothes.

Section 8: Student life

1. I want to live by myself, but my parents won’t let me.
* “My parents won’t permit me” is also grammatically possible, but unnatural.
2. My friends can drink a lot (of alcohol), but I cannot.
- 3 (a). I come to school in my friend’s car.

- 3 (b). Mari comes to school by bus, but I live very near, so I walk / come on foot.
- 4. I went to Soccer Club after class yesterday.
- 5. The TOEIC test is very difficult, so you will have to study hard if you want to get a good score.
- 6. I was in the volleyball club for two years in high school.
- 7. My sister is an assistant for the rugby club.
- 8. Our teacher yells at us / gives us a hard time if we are late for class.
- 9 (a). I have a part-time job at Mos Burger. / I work part-time at Mos Burger.
- 9 (b). I'm very tired today because I was working until 11 o'clock last night.
- 10. I like Akashiya Sanma because he is interesting.
- 11. I have Mr. / Ms. / Professor Smith's class next period.

Section 9: Difficult distinctions

- 1 (a). I like to read comic books in my free time.
- 1 (b). I went to meet my friend at Haneda Airport.
- 1 (c). There was a tall man standing next to me. The man was wearing a blue jacket.
- 1 (d). I am going to clean the kitchen tomorrow.
- 1 (e). B: The blue one on the right.
- 1 (f). I was born in Kagoshima in Kyushu.
- 1 (g). My older brother is a doctor.
- 1 (h). The man was sent to prison for five years.
- 1 (i). I was the tallest person in my class in high school.
- 2. Your watch is the same as mine.
- 3 (a). I have an uncle who lives in a big house in New York and an aunt who works at a university in Boston.
- 3 (b). My sister works in an office, and my brother works in a factory.
- 4 (a). I feel ashamed because I said a terrible thing to my friend this morning and made her cry.
* "Embarrassed" would not be impossible here, but "I said a terrible thing" makes "ashamed" more appropriate because the speaker has a sense of having done something wrong.
- 4 (b). A lady said "hello" to me in a shop today, but I didn't know her. She looked very embarrassed.
* "Ashamed" would be inappropriate here.
- 5 (a). I was born in Asahikawa in Hokkaido on June 31, 1982.
- 5 (b). It is very hot in Aichi in the summer, even at night.
- 5 (c). I'll meet you at / in the station at half past seven in the evening on Monday.
- 6. Kenji said he doesn't like Sachiko, but I don't believe him.

- 7 (a). Do you like this? I borrowed it from my brother.
- 7 (b). My father said he will lend me his car next weekend. He has never let me borrow it before.
- 8 (a). The report has to be finished by the end of this month.
- 8 (b). You cannot leave until you have finished all your work.
9. That man is a regular customer at the restaurant where I used to work.
10. My father came home early last night, so we all had dinner together.
11. It was easy to understand even though I hadn't seen the first movie.
12. I'll come to your house tomorrow morning.
13. I finished reading that book you lent me. It was quite interesting at the beginning, but I started to get bored about halfway through the story.
14. B: I didn't know that.
15. When I got off the train, I didn't know where I was at first.
16. There are no big roads near my house, so you can hear the frogs at night.
- 17 (a). I saw a lot of beautiful mountains when I went to Nepal.
- 17 (b). I went to watch my son playing basketball last night.
18. My father made my mother angry because he let my younger brother watch TV when she had told him to do his homework.
19. I'm really looking forward to seeing Emma again.
20. If you want to make sure that something is done correctly, you should do it yourself.
- 21 (a). Nobody noticed that Aiko had changed her hairstyle.
- 21 (b). I heard the driver say the name of the next bus stop, and I realized that I had gone too far.
22. You never told me that your father works in Malaysia.
23. It was such a lovely day.
24. My sister and I never stopped fighting when we were children.
- 25 (a). A: How was your trip to China?
- B: The journey was not too bad because the flight was only two hours, but the trip was quite hard because I had a lot of meetings.
- 25 (b). I want to travel to other countries after I retire.
26. Always use a ruler when you want to draw a straight line.
27. There are five people apart from / besides / other than me in our band.
- 28 (a). I heard that your mother has been sick. I hope she gets / will get better soon.
- 28 (b). I wish I had more free time.
29. I found out my TOEIC score yesterday.
- 30 (a). You look a bit like Celine Dion.
- 30 (b). Yukari always looks happy.

Section 10: Direct translations

1. I had to go the hospital because I had an accident.
2. He said he agreed with me.
3. Most of my friends love Mickey Mouse. / Almost all of my friends love Mickey Mouse.
4. I started liking / to like tennis in high school.
5. I think that learning French will be very difficult for me, but I am going to try / have a go (at it).
6. I quit my part-time job because the pay was very low.
7. This is Mina. She is a friend from work / the office.
8. I ran to the station, and I managed / was able to catch the train.
9. I can't invite you to my apartment because it is too messy!
10. My brother's dream is to be / become a doctor.
11. I especially / particularly want to visit Niagara Falls.
12. I went to karaoke with my friends last night. We had fun!
13. Single parents have to raise / bring up their children alone.
14. I have been going out with her for six months.
15. Our shop is closed on Mondays, so that is my day off.
16. I used to walk to school when I was a child. It was a long way, so it was very tough.
17. I didn't know how to use the cash register, so I asked my coworker to help me.
18. Please follow the rules when you use the bath.
19. My brother is qualified / certified to teach the guitar.
20. If you feel sick, taking medicine will make you better.
21. I live by myself. My apartment is nice, but it's small.
22. I'll call you sometime.
23. I don't have a favorite singer.
24. Nakamura is my favorite soccer player. The way he plays is great.
* "His playing style is great" would also be acceptable, but probably not as natural.
25. My grandfather gave me this car on my birthday.
26. Can you recommend any supermarkets in this area?
27. The car was being driven very fast.
28. I went to Disneyland with my friends from university.
29. Emi's new cell phone is the same as mine.
30. Let's go to the beach this weekend.
31. I want to go for a drink. Do you know any good bars?
32. That cake smells good.

33. After we got to the airport, we picked up our bags immediately / straight away.

* This could also be corrected using “as soon as....”

34. When I heard Eri talking about her trip to America, I wanted to go too.

* “...it made me want to go too” would also be acceptable.

35. I am sleepy today.

36 (a). My mother gets angry with my brother a lot. / My mother often gets angry with my brother.

36 (b). I know a lot about Disney characters.

37. My apartment number is three oh five.

* Of course, “three zero five” is not incorrect, but this item has been included to familiarize students with “oh,” which is common in British English and some varieties of American English.

38 (a). Fifty-three thousand

38 (b). One hundred (and) twenty-one thousand five hundred

38 (c). One million six hundred (and) thirty thousand

* *or* One point six three million

Section 11: Questions and answers

1 (a). Do you know what our homework is?

1 (b). Atsuko doesn't know what she should do next year.

2 (a). What did you do on your birthday last year?

2 (b). How do you know my name?

3. Mariah Carey is my favorite singer. Have you heard of her?

4. It's 35 degrees, and you are wearing a jacket! Aren't you hot?

* Note that if written in full, this would be “Are you not hot?” “~~Are not you hot?~~” is incorrect.

5. I'll meet you at the station at six thirty. Is that okay for you?

6. You will come, won't you?

7 (a). What kind of music do you like?

7 (b). Why don't you want to come with us?

8 (a). B: No, I can't.

8 (b). B: No, it isn't. B: No, (she isn't).

8 (c). B: Yes, I did. B: Yes, (I am).

* If students get the auxiliary verbs wrong in this exercise, ask them to read the section on “auxiliary verbs.”

Section 12: Tricky grammar

- 1 (a). B: Yes, I do.
- 1 (b). B: Yes, I do.
- 1 (c). B: No, I haven't.
- 1 (d). B: No, I won't.
- 1 (e). B: Yes, it is.
2. We had / got our house painted last year. We had to pay the painters a lot of money.
* The original sentence is not necessarily incorrect, and some native speakers might actually say it like this. The purpose of including this item is simply to make students aware of the structure "have / get something done."
3. (a). I don't like karaoke because I can't sing. Maybe if I were a good singer, I would like it.
* Some teachers may also accept "If I *was* a good singer." This is common in modern English. The whole sentence could also be reworded as "If I were a good singer, I might like it."
- 3 (b). If it's sunny tomorrow, we're going to the beach.
- 3 (c). If you hadn't eaten so much last night, you wouldn't feel sick.
- 3 (d). It's a ten-hour flight, so the plane lands early in the morning. I'll call you when I arrive.
4. I want to get a job where I can earn a lot of money.
5. I don't worry about the people around me when I speak English.
6. My teacher always tells me that I need to practice my pronunciation.
- 7 (a). Would you like some orange juice?
- 7 (b). I don't have any money.
- 8 (a). My friend gave me a lot of advice about studying abroad.
- 8 (b). I ate a lot of food over the Christmas vacation, so I need to go on a diet now.
- 8 (c). I heard some good news last night.
9. Naomi's purse was stolen when she went to London. / Naomi had her purse stole when she went to London.
- 10 (a). Alan said (that) he didn't want to go to the game because he didn't like baseball.
* "...because he doesn't like baseball" would also be acceptable.
- 10 (b). Susan asked the old lady if she knew where the post office was.
* "Susan asked the old lady where the post office was" would also be acceptable.
- 10 (c). Paul asked his father to help him to fix his bicycle.
- 10 (d). Andrew told his children to sit down and be quiet.

Section 13: Everyday conversation

1. Ryuichi Sakamoto is a famous Japanese composer.
2. I have to leave early because I'm meeting my friend this evening.
3. We had breakfast, and then we went for a walk.
4. I bought a new jacket. It's blue.
5. I made this cake for you. How is it?
* "Is it okay?" and "Is it nice?" would also be possible.
6. Good luck tomorrow. I know you will do well / be okay / do a great job.
7. We set off / lit fireworks by the river.
8. English pronunciation is quite difficult for me.
9. I go to Kyoto every spring to see the cherry blossoms.
10. If you are free / have some free time this weekend, let's go for a drive.
11. I usually wake up at 7 o'clock.
12. When I am not working, I like to hang out with my friends.
* Saying exactly what you like to do (go shopping, watch movies, etc.) would also be acceptable.
13. There are no tomatoes in the fridge.
14. I can't go tonight because I'm meeting / have arranged to meet my friend.
15. As it was raining, I took a taxi to work this morning.
16. I want to go shopping tomorrow.
17. Did you ski / go skiing when you lived in Hokkaido?
18. I want to see the movie you talked about / mentioned yesterday.

Section 14: Health and the human body

- 1 (a). Masaya didn't come to school today because he has a cold.
* "...because he caught a cold" would also be acceptable.
- 1 (b). My grandmother had cancer last year, but we think she is going to be okay.
- 2 (a). I felt bad all last week.
- 2 (b). How is your leg?
- 3 (a). Are you okay? Keisuke said that you are not (feeling) well.
- 3 (b). I was not very well last week, but I'm fine now.
4. Mari exercises every day, so she has a nice butt / rear.
5. I fell down and hurt my knee this morning. It is very painful.
6. I want to lose weight before the summer vacation.

Section 15: You know the meaning, but can you use it? (verbs)

- 1 (a). The movie was fantastic. I enjoyed it very much. / I really enjoyed it.
- 1 (b). If you come to my hometown, you can do a lot of things.
2. I left my textbook in the classroom.
* "I forgot my textbook. It's in the classroom" would also be acceptable.
3. Waking up early was hard at first, but I'm (getting) used to it now.
4. I gave up on the idea of going to Canada this summer because I don't have enough money.
5. Everyone who goes to Kyoto should visit *Kinkaku-ji*.
6. Something happened in school today.
7. The man is holding chopsticks.
8. You told me that twice already.
9. I often have to hurry / rush to get to work on time.
10. The number of people who smoke is decreasing in Japan.
* "The number of people in Japan who smoke is decreasing" would also be acceptable.
11. Let's go to the baseball game.
- 12 (a). I don't like snakes.
- 12 (b). I like playing / to play computer games in my free time.
- 12 (c). B: Yes, I do.
- 12 (d). Which do you prefer, wine or beer?
- 12 (e). I eat anything.
- 12 (f). I love / really like the smell of freshly baked bread.
13. I am looking forward to meeting your parents.
14. Please check the timetable before you buy your ticket.
15. I decided to quit my job because I hate my boss.
16. Hiroki seems to have had a good time in Thailand.
* "It seems that Hiroki had a good time in Thailand" would also be possible.
17. I like to spend time with my friends at school.
18. Yuko had her hair cut very short, so I was surprised.
19. If you tell / give me your phone number, I will call you tomorrow.
20. I thanked my father for driving me to school.
21. I want you to teach me how to sing this song.

Section 16: You know the meaning, but can you use it? (other)

1. My mother wants to go abroad, but she is worried because she can't speak English.
2. Both my parents can speak English.
3. I am going to America for one month, but I wish I could go for a longer time / for longer.
4. My brother came to visit our house this weekend with his six-year-old daughter.
5. My house is very inconvenient because it is a long way from the station.
6. I am very scared of my boss because he gets angry easily.
7. This computer is light enough for you to carry it every day.
8. Everyone was looking at the strange man on the bus.
9. This new CD is fantastic! I am glad I bought it.
10. I saw many different kinds of cars at the Tokyo Motor Show.
11. B: Me neither.
12. I love watching baseball games, so I try to go as often as I (possibly) can.
* "...as often as possible" would also be acceptable.
13. I'm going to rent a car when I go to Okinawa, so I will be able to go anywhere.
14. I listened to music while I studied in my room.
* "I studied while I listened to music" and "I studied and listened to music" would also be acceptable.

Section 17: It's not grammatically wrong, but...

1. My English is terrible, so I want to improve my speaking before I go to Australia.
2. Yesterday was a really nice / pleasant day.
3. Yasuko's boyfriend is really good-looking.
- 4 (a). It takes me a long time to get to work because my house is a long way from the city.
- 4 (b). There is a convenience store near my house.
5. My mother and I went shopping for clothes yesterday.
6. My high school English teacher was very kind.
7. I might / may go to Kyoto this weekend.
8. I went to New Zealand last year. The scenery was beautiful.
9. I don't think John is worried about the test.
10. Six people can fit in my new car.
11. My sister likes to sing.
12. It was very / really hot, and I was thirsty.

13. B: It's okay.

14. I am not interested in places like that. / those kinds of places.

15. Only 3,000 yen! That's very / really cheap!

16. I will be waiting for your call.