

Check your ALCE Grammar Skills: Activity 1

Key and item analysis

Question 1

Research has shown that _____ leather can cause health problems.

- A. being manufactured poorly
- B. manufacturing the poor
- C. poor manufacturing
- D. poorly manufactured

ANSWER KEY

D.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Medium

ITEM INFORMATION

D fits the gap because it consists of adverb + adjective for the noun 'leather' and the phrase 'poorly manufactured leather' forms the subject of the clause which follows. A would mean that all leather is poorly manufactured, and would need commas; B contains 'the' and so is too specific; C would mean leather used for manufacturing something. Therefore, D is the correct answer choice.

Question 2

The World Health Organization is pessimistic about _____ bird flu in Asia.

- A. eliminating the prospects
- B. the prospects for eliminating
- C. the prospects for the elimination
- D. the eliminated prospects

ANSWER KEY

B.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Medium

ITEM INFORMATION

B fits the gap because it gives the correct meaning and combines 'prospects' + 'for' with a gerund which does not need to be followed by a preposition. A has the meaning that the prospects are being eliminated and not bird flu; C requires the preposition 'of' after the noun 'elimination'; D means that the prospects have been eliminated and not bird flu. Therefore, B is the correct answer choice.

Question 3

_____ China more than \$54 billion a year.

- A. Polluting costs
- B. Pollution costs
- C. The cost of pollution in
- D. The pollution cost of

ANSWER KEY

B.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Medium

ITEM INFORMATION

B fits the gap because it has the meaning that the existence of pollution costs China money, whereas A focuses on the action of polluting and requires an object. C and D do not contain a verb, so the sentence would not contain a verb. Therefore, B is the correct answer choice.

Question 4

_____ is low, many Norwegians get welfare benefits.

- A. Despite the unemployed
- B. Even if the unemployed
- C. Though unemployment
- D. However, unemployment

ANSWER KEY

C.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

More challenging

ITEM INFORMATION

C fits the gap because it contrasts low unemployment with receiving welfare benefits, using 'though'. A. requires a gerund after 'despite'; B refers to people, and people cannot be 'low'; D does not provide for a contrast within the same sentence. Therefore, C is the correct answer choice.

Question 5

Armed with new devices and new discoveries, _____.

- A. a number of ailments can be treated
- B. a number of ailments treated
- C. can treat a number of ailments
- D. doctors can treat a number of ailments

ANSWER KEY

D.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Medium

ITEM INFORMATION

D fits the gap because it is a complete clause with subject and verb, whereas B and C are not. A is also a complete clause, but 'ailments' cannot be 'armed' and so it does not fit the meaning of the sentence. Therefore, D is the correct answer choice.

Question 6

The government has passed laws that _____ on school grounds.

- A. has prohibited the sale of junk food
- B. prohibit junk food sold
- C. prohibited junk food sold
- D. sold the prohibited junk food

ANSWER KEY

B.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Medium

ITEM INFORMATION

B fits the gap because it has subject-verb agreement – 'laws' + 'prohibit' – and has a reduced clause 'sold', meaning 'that is sold'. A does not have subject-verb agreement; C does not have the correct tense; D means that the laws sold junk food. Therefore, B is the correct answer choice.

Question 7

- _____ 2,200 full grown trees to furnish timber for a single ship.
- A. It requires
 - B. It is required of
 - C. Requiring that
 - D. The requirement of

ANSWER KEY

A.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Less challenging

ITEM INFORMATION

A fits the gap because it contains a dummy subject 'it' with the correct tense. B means that the trees are required to do something; C and D do not contain a verb and so the sentence would not contain a main verb. Therefore, A is the correct answer choice.

Question 8

- Scientific research aims to develop drugs _____ people's health.
- A. limiting degenerated
 - B. limiting the degeneration by
 - C. the limited degeneration of
 - D. that will limit degeneration in

ANSWER KEY

D.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Less challenging

ITEM INFORMATION

D fits the gap because it contains a subordinate clause with 'that'. A would mean that the people are degenerated; B would mean that people's health is doing the degenerating as it is in passive voice; C has a noun phrase which cannot fit after the noun 'drugs', as there is no connector. Therefore, D is the correct answer choice.

Question 9

Only _____ can archaeologists reconstruct human societies in prehistoric ages.

- A. by examining ruins
- B. examining the ruins
- C. the examination of ruins
- D. they examine the ruins

ANSWER KEY

A.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Less challenging

ITEM INFORMATION

A fits the gap because 'only by + gerund' is a fixed grammatical unit and is followed by inversion of subject and verb, as in the sentence. B would make 'only examining the ruins' the subject of the sentence, whereas 'archaeologists' is already the subject, and the same is true for C. D is missing 'if' after 'only'. Therefore, A is the correct answer choice.

Question 10

Health-care spending will continue to increase in the developed world _____.

- A. as populations age
- B. since populations aged
- C. while populations have aged
- D. whose populations' age

ANSWER KEY

A.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

More challenging

ITEM INFORMATION

A fits the gap because it means 'at the same time as populations age', meaning become older. B means 'because populations who are aged' and needs a number after 'aged'; C has a different tense, but the 'while' means at the same time, so there would be an inconsistency between the two parts of the sentence; D would refer to the age of the developing world's populations, but without a reference meaning 'as opposed to...' and so is not a complete sentence. Therefore, A is the correct answer choice.

Question 11

The government's first set of reforms _____ more competition into health markets.

- A. aims to introduce
- B. aiming to introduce
- C. are aiming at introducing
- D. which are aimed at introducing

ANSWER KEY

A.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Medium

ITEM INFORMATION

A fits the gap because it contains a main verb 'aims' with the correct subject-verb agreement 'set' + 'aims', followed by the appropriate infinitive form. B and D do not contain a main verb to complete the sentence; C does not contain the correct subject-verb agreement. Therefore, A is the correct answer choice.

Question 12

_____, investors are optimistic about Japan.

- A. Because politics is uncertain
- B. Despite all political uncertainty
- C. Due to the politics being uncertain
- D. Owing to the political uncertainty

ANSWER KEY

B.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Medium

ITEM INFORMATION

B fits the gap because it contains 'despite' and refers to the contrast of political uncertainty with optimistic investors. A, C and D all would mean that investors are optimistic because the politics are uncertain which would be unlikely in terms of meaning. Therefore, B is the correct answer choice.

Question 13

The next 50 years will be decisive in determining _____ a future for itself.

- A. had the human race been ensured
- B. whether the human race can ensure
- C. unless the human race can ensure
- D. provided the human race be ensured

ANSWER KEY

B.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Medium

ITEM INFORMATION

B fits the gap because the verb 'determine' is followed by a noun or 'whether', and A, C and D do not contain a noun in initial position. Therefore, B is the correct answer choice.

Question 14

Cheap irrigation _____ rural poverty and hunger in the developing world.

- A. key to alleviate
- B. the key for alleviating
- C. is the key to alleviating
- D. is the key for the alleviation

ANSWER KEY

C.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Less challenging

ITEM INFORMATION

C fits the gap because it contains a verb and does not require a preposition. A and B lack a verb; D requires the preposition 'of'. Therefore, C is the correct answer choice.

Question 15

Gender differences _____ into account when researching drugs aimed at brain disorders.

- A. are taking
- B. being taken
- C. should be taking
- D. have to be taken

ANSWER KEY

D.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Medium

ITEM INFORMATION

D fits the gap because it contains a main verb and is in the passive voice. A and C are in the active voice and would mean that gender differences are performing an action; B is not a main verb. Therefore, D is the correct answer choice.
