

TOEFL Reading Practice Test 27

Grammar at a Deeper Level

(1) Grammar is complex, and no foreign language learner has to be told that. We can express slight differences in meaning by modifying word sequences and adding a variety of auxiliary verbs and suffixes. To indicate small variations in meaning, we can turn a statement into a question, state if an action has occurred or is about to occur, and use a variety of other word tricks. This complexity is not unique to the English language. Even so-called “primitive” tribes’ languages feature complex grammatical components. For example, the Cherokee pronoun system can differentiate between ‘you and I,’ ‘several other people and I,’ and ‘you, another person, and I.’ All of these connotations are encapsulated in the single, basic pronoun ‘we’ in English. Grammar is ubiquitous and is present in all languages, regardless of their popularity. So, who developed grammar? This is an issue that many linguists have struggled with.

(2) At first glance, it appears that this question is unanswerable. Someone should be existing at the time of a language’s emergence to document its emergence in order to learn how grammar is formed. Many historical linguists can trace present complex languages back to older languages, but the researcher must examine how languages are created from scratch in order to answer the question of how complex languages are developed. Surprisingly, though, this is doable.

(3) The Atlantic slave trade influenced the development of some of the most recent languages. Slaves of many nationalities were forced to work together under the colonizer’s rule at the time. They created a make-shift pidgin language because they didn’t have the opportunity to learn each other’s languages. Pidgins are a collection of terms taken from the landowner’s native tongue. They don’t use much grammar, and it’s

often impossible for a listener to figure out when an event occurred and who did what to whom. (A) In order for their meaning to be understood, speakers must utilize circumlocution. (B) Surprisingly, all it takes for a pidgin to develop into a complicated language is for a group of youngsters to be exposed to it while learning their mother tongue. (C) Slave children did not merely repeat their elders' string of words; they altered their phrases to create a new, expressive language. (D) Creoles are complex grammar systems that arise from pidgins and are created by children.

(4) Studying sign languages for the deaf provides more proof of this. Sign languages are more than just a collection of gestures; they employ the same grammatical machinery as spoken languages. Furthermore, numerous different languages are spoken all across the world. In Nicaragua, the formation of one such language was recently recorded. Previously, all deaf individuals were separated from one another, but in 1979, a new administration established deaf schools. Although children were taught speech and lip-reading in the classroom, they began to construct their own sign language in the playgrounds, employing motions they already knew. It was essentially pidgin. There was no consistent grammar, and each youngster utilized the signs differently. However, students who went to school later than others, when this original sign scheme was already present, established a quite diverse sign language. Their language was more fluid and concise, and it used a wide range of grammatical devices to clarify meaning, despite being based on the older children's signals. Furthermore, all of the children made the identical signs. There was the birth of a new creole.

(5) Many of the world's most well-known languages, according to some linguists, began as creoles. The -ed ending in the English past tense may have developed from the verb 'do.' 'It ended' may have been spelled 'It end-did.' As a result, it appears that even the most widely spoken languages were formed in part by children. Children's brains appear to have built-in grammatical machinery that comes to life when they're initially trying to

make sense of the environment. Even when there is no syntax to imitate, their thoughts can help them develop logical, complicated structures.

Questions:

A. Why did the writer offer information about the Cherokee language in paragraph 1?

- 1. To show how tough it is to learn Cherokee*
- 2. To demonstrate how English grammar varies from Cherokee grammar*
- 3. To demonstrate that the Cherokees built complicated grammar systems*
- 4. To demonstrate how even simple, traditional cultures can have complex grammatical patterns.*

B. What may be deduced about the pidgin language of the slaves?

- 1. It has a lot of complicated grammar in it.*
- 2. It was created using a variety of languages.*
- 3. Even among slaves, it was impossible to comprehend.*
- 4. The landowners were the ones who came up with the idea.*

C. All of the following statements about natural sign language in Nicaragua are true EXCEPT:

- 1. Younger children perfected the language.*
- 2. Since 1979, the language has been developed.*
- 3. The language is based on lip-reading and speaking.*
- 4. Signs that children use at home are included in the language.*

D. All are features of the new Nicaraguan language EXCEPT:

- 1. The movements of the hands were smoother and smaller.*
- 2. To convey meaning, all of the children utilized the same motions.*
- 3. For ordinary objects and activities, new gestures were developed.*
- 4. The meaning was easier to understand than the prior sign language.*

E. Where should the following sentence go in paragraph 3?

It includes prescribed word ordering and grammatical markers that did not exist in either the pidgin or the colonizers' languages.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

F. In paragraph 2, the phrase "from scratch" is most closely related to:

1. *from the start*
2. *in basic cultures*
3. *with the aid of written data*
4. *through the use of a template*

G. In paragraph 3, 'make-shift' is most similar to:

1. *personal and private*
2. *simple and transient*
3. *complex and expressive*
4. *extensive and various*

H. In paragraph 4, look at the term 'consistent.' Which of the following would be the best replacement for this word?

1. *natural*
2. *uniform*
3. *imaginable*
4. *predictable*

I. Which of the following sentences is closest to the highlighted sentence in terms of meaning?

Grammar is universal and is used in all languages, regardless of their popularity.

1. *No matter where they evolved, all languages have the same syntax.*
2. *Some languages have a great deal of grammar, whereas others have very little.*

3. *Grammar is present in all languages, whether spoken by a small group or a large group.*
4. *Languages with a lot of grammar are more prevalent than languages with a small amount of grammar.*

J. In the final paragraph, which concept is presented?

1. *The past tense system in English is incorrect.*
2. *Creole was most likely formerly an Englishman.*
3. *Linguists have shown that children invented English.*
4. *Adults and children speak English past tenses in different ways.*