ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Advanced Grammar MCQ Test With Answers + PDF Exercise 01

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Explanations

1. **(Please note: The following questions are part of a cloze test. They are interrelated, meaning that the information provided in each question is connected to the others.)**

I had been sitting _____ in my usual compartment _____ at least ten minutes, waiting _____.
✓ **C) by myself**
By myself means 'alone, with nobody else': **I had been sitting by myself**. Not **in my own**, because the correct idiom is **on my own**; **for myself** means 'for my own benefit', not 'alone'.

2. I had been sitting _____ in my usual compartment _____ at least ten minutes, waiting _____.
✓ **A) for**
With a length of time (**at least ten minutes**), use **for**. Not **since**, which needs a starting point (**since nine o'clock**); **during** goes with a noun such as **during the journey**.

3. I had been sitting _____ in my usual compartment _____ at least ten minutes, waiting _____.
✓ **D) for the train to start**
The pattern is **wait for somebody/something to do something**: **waiting for the train to start**. Not **waiting the train to start**, because **wait** needs **for** before its object.

4. The trains from Littlebury never seemed to start _____ and I often thought that I could have _____ in bed a little longer or had _____ cup of tea before _____.
✓ **B) on time**
On time means 'at the planned time, not late': **The trains never seemed to start on time**. Not **at time**; that is not an English expression (compare **in time** = early enough).

5. The trains from Littlebury never seemed to start _____ and I often thought that I could have _____ in bed a little longer or had _____ cup of tea before _____.
✓ **A) lain**
Lie (to rest in a flat position) has the forms **lie – lay – lain**, so after **could have** we need the past participle **lain**. Not **laid**, which comes from **lay** (to put something down: **lay – laid – laid**); **lied** comes from **lie** meaning 'say something untrue'.

6. The trains from Littlebury never seemed to start _____ and I often thought that I could have _____ in bed a little longer or had _____ cup of tea before _____.
✓ **C) another**
Another means 'one more' and is used with a singular countable noun: **had another cup of tea**. Not **other**, which needs a determiner or a plural noun (**the other cup**, **other cups**).

7. The trains from Littlebury never seemed to start _____ and I often thought that I could have _____ in bed a little longer or had _____ cup of tea before _____.
✓ **C) leaving home**
After a preposition such as **before**, use the **-ing** form: **before leaving home**. Not **to leave home**, because the infinitive cannot follow a preposition; **leave home** needs no **from**.

8. Suddenly, I heard someone shouting _____ the platform outside.
✓ **D) on**
We say **on the platform**, just as we say **on the train** or **on the station platform**. Not **at**, which would point to the platform as a general place rather than where the shouting happened.

9. A young girl was running towards the train. The man _____ put out his hand to stop her but she ran past him and opened the door of my compartment.
✓ **B) on duty**
On duty means 'working at that moment', so **the man on duty** is the railway official working there. The other options (**at place**, **in post**, **for control**) are not used this way.

10. Then the whistle blew, and the train started. “I nearly missed it, _____?” the girl said.
✓ **D) didn’t I**
A question tag repeats the auxiliary of the main verb. **Missed** is past simple, so the tag is **didn't I?** Not **wasn't I**, because there is no **be** in the sentence.

11. “How long does it take to _____ London?”
✓ **A) get to**
Get to a place means 'arrive at' it: **How long does it take to get to London?** Not **reach to**, because **reach** takes a direct object (**reach London**); **arrive** takes **at** or **in**, never **to**.

12. “It depends on the _____,” I said.
✓ **D) engine driver**
Engine driver is a compound noun (noun + noun), like **bus driver** or **taxi driver**. Not **engine's driver**, because we don't use the possessive for this kind of job title.

13. “Some days, it’s _____ others.”
✓ **B) much slower than**
A one-syllable adjective forms its comparative with **-er** (**slower**), and **much** can make it stronger: **much slower than**. Not **a lot more slow than**, because **slow** doesn't take **more**; **far slower that** uses **that** instead of **than**.

14. “I’ll have to _____, _____ late again tomorrow,” she said.
✓ C) have my watch mended
The causative **have + object + past participle** means someone else does the job for you: **have my watch mended**. Not **have mended my watch**, because the object must come before the participle; with that word order it is the present perfect, meaning she did it herself.

15. “I’ll have to _____, _____ late again tomorrow,” she said.
✓ B) so as not to be
To express a negative purpose we use **so as not to** or **in order not to** + infinitive: **so as not to be late**. Not **for not being**, because English doesn't use **for + -ing** for a negative purpose; **in order not are** has the wrong verb form.

16. “It’s my first day _____ with a new firm today, and they told me that the man _____ is very strict.
✓ D) at work
At work means 'at one's job / working': **my first day at work with a new firm**. Not **in work**, which means 'having a job' (the opposite of unemployed); **at job** and **in job** are not used.

17. “It’s my first day _____ with a new firm today, and they told me that the man _____ is very strict.
✓ A) I’m going to work for
This is a defining relative clause with the object pronoun left out and the preposition at the end: **the man (who) I'm going to work for**. Not **for which**, because **which** is not used for people; **what** cannot follow a noun.

18. I _____ him yet so I don’t know _____ but he sounds a bit frightening.
✓ B) haven’t met
Yet is a clue for the present perfect, especially in negatives: **I haven't met him yet**. Not **didn't meet**, because the past simple refers to a finished time; **haven't known** is wrong because **know** describes a state, not the first meeting.

19. I _____ him yet so I don’t know _____ but he sounds a bit frightening.
✓ A) what he is like
What is he like? asks about someone's character. In an indirect question the word order becomes statement order: **I don't know what he is like**. Not **how he is**, which asks about health; **what is he like** keeps question order, which is wrong after **I don't know**.

20. She talked about her new job _____ the way to London, and before long, I realized that she was going to work for my firm.
✓ C) on
On the way (to) means 'during the journey': **She talked about her new job on the way to London**. The other prepositions don't form this fixed phrase.

21. My _____ secretary had just left so I must be her new boss.
✓ B) own
My own emphasises that something belongs to me: **My own secretary had just left**, so the girl must be coming to replace her. Not **same**, which would need **the** and means something different; **self** and **proper** do not fit here.

22. _____ only fair to tell her.
✓ C) It was
We use **It** + **be** + adjective to give an opinion about an action: **It was only fair to tell her**. Not **There was**, which introduces the existence of something; **That was** would point back to an earlier action instead of forward to **to tell her**.

23. “Oh, dear,” she said. “_____ mistake!
✓ A) What a terrible
In exclamations with a singular countable noun, use **What a** + adjective + noun: **What a terrible mistake!** Not **How terrible**, which is used with an adjective alone (**How terrible!**); **What terrible** lacks the article **a**.

24. I wish I _____.”
✓ A) had known
To express regret about the past, use **wish** + past perfect: **I wish I had known** (but I didn't know). Not **knew**, which expresses a wish about the present; **would have known** is not used after **I wish** about my own past.

25. “Never mind,” I said. “At least you’ll know when your train’s late that _____.”
✓ D) mine will be, too
The possessive pronoun **mine** (= my train) stands alone without **the**, and **too** adds that the same is true: **mine will be, too**. Not **so will mine**, which is a short reply and does not fit after **that** in a reported clause; **the mine** is always wrong.

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