ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

English Grammar MCQ Test With Answers Advanced – 13

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Explanations

1. Aristotle is known to have said something like this: _____ *man is a political animal is pretty obvious.*
✔ **D) That**
A whole clause can be the subject of a sentence if it begins with **that**: **That man is a political animal** is pretty obvious. Here **that** is a conjunction, not a pronoun. Not **the** or **a**: these would turn 'man is a political animal' into a noun phrase with an extra verb, and with no word the sentence would have two main verbs (**is … is**).

2. Why don't you pay some attention? I _____ be talking to a brick wall!
✔ **D) might as well**
Might as well + infinitive can describe an imagined situation that is no better than the real one. **I might as well be talking to a brick wall** means 'you are ignoring me, as a wall would'. Not **should better**: the correct form is **had better**, and it does not fit the meaning anyway.

3. _____ when the phone started ringing. This is the sort of situation that I find really annoying.
✔ **C) Hardly had I got in the house**
Hardly … when means 'immediately after'. When **hardly** starts the sentence, the subject and auxiliary are inverted: **Hardly had I got in the house when the phone started ringing.** Not **Immediately after I came home**: it cannot be followed by **when**.

4. Let's face it: The salary of an ordinary grave-digger is much higher _____.
✔ **C) than that of a doctor**
In a comparison you must compare like with like: a salary with a salary. **That of** replaces 'the salary of': **higher than that of a doctor**. Not **than a doctor**: this compares a salary with a person, which is illogical.

5. Let me tell you about a funny thing that happened to a friend of mine the other day: Well, he'd just had a new tyre _____ on his car and he was going to drive the family out for a picnic. (The story continues.)
✔ **D) fitted**
The causative **have + object + past participle** means someone else did the job for you: **he'd had a new tyre fitted** (a mechanic fitted it). Not **been fitted**: the causative uses only the past participle, with no **been**.

6. Don't you agree with me that learning a foreign language is great fun? _____ is to pick up a little Italian.
✔ **D) What I am planning to do now**
This is a pseudo-cleft (wh-cleft) sentence, used for emphasis: **What I am planning to do now is (to) pick up a little Italian.** A **what … do** clause is naturally followed by **is + (to) infinitive**. Not **The language that I want to practise**: a language cannot 'be to pick up' something.

7. The bus I intended to catch had an accident on the way and many people got badly injured. Just think of it: If I hadn't missed it, I myself _____ recuperating in some hospital now.
✔ **A) would be**
This is a mixed conditional: a past condition (**If I hadn't missed it**) with a present result (**now**). The result uses **would be** + -ing: **I would be recuperating in some hospital now.** Not **wouldn't have been**: it is the wrong form for a present result and gives the opposite meaning.

8. _____ for -- what you call -- his "reckless courage", all lives would have been lost.
✔ **C) Had it not been**
Had it not been for is the inverted, more formal form of **If it hadn't been for**, meaning 'without'. It is used in third conditionals: **Had it not been for his courage, all lives would have been lost.** Not **If it had been for**: it has no negative, so the meaning is reversed.

9. I know you want him badly; but don't you worry: I'm pretty certain that, unless he's offered more money elsewhere (which is unlikely), he _____ our offer.
✔ **C) 'll accept**
Unless means 'if … not', and this is a real future possibility, so the first conditional is used: **unless he's offered more money elsewhere, he'll accept our offer**. The speaker is 'pretty certain' he will accept. Not **won't accept**: it contradicts 'don't you worry'.

10. How long has your husband been away now? Well, next Saturday he _____ for three weeks.
✔ **D) will have been gone**
The future perfect describes a state that lasts up to a point in the future (**next Saturday … for three weeks**). Here **gone** works like an adjective meaning 'away': **he will have been gone for three weeks**. Not **will have been**: on its own it needs a word such as **away** or **there** after it (**he will have been away for three weeks**).

11. He's been working very hard just recently. So _____! He has an exam coming up, hasn't he?
✔ **A) he should**
So + subject + should/ought to expresses agreement or approval of something just mentioned: **He's been working hard. – So he should!** (= that is right, because he has an exam). Not **so has he**: inverted **so has he** means 'he has too', which makes no sense here.

12. Isn't it time you _____ sparkling new hair shampoo!
✓ **A) did yourself a favour and tried this**
It's (high) time + subject is followed by the past simple, even though the meaning is present: **Isn't it time you did yourself a favour and tried this shampoo?** Not **would bought**: this form is ungrammatical, and **would** is not used after **it's time**.

13. _____ had he drunk what was in the cup _____ he began to feel drowsy again.
✓ **D) No sooner / than**
No sooner … than means 'immediately after'. When **no sooner** starts the sentence, it takes inversion: **No sooner had he drunk it than he began to feel drowsy.** Not **As soon as / then**: **as soon as** does not cause inversion and is not paired with **then**.

14. The ambassador does nothing _____ sit idle and complain all the time.
✓ **B) but**
Do nothing but + bare infinitive means 'only do': **He does nothing but sit idle and complain.** Note that **sit** has no **to** and no -ing. Not **instead of**: it would need an -ing form and gives the wrong meaning.

15. I shall say no more _____ I be misunderstood.
✓ **C) lest**
Lest is a formal word meaning 'so that … not' or 'for fear that'. It is often followed by the subjunctive: **I shall say no more lest I be misunderstood.** Not **so that** or **in order that**: they would mean I want to be misunderstood.

16. He was thought, by all, to be undergoing some kind of training abroad, but he now appears _____ all through these months in a remote part of the country.
✓ **E) to have been camping**
Appear/seem + perfect continuous infinitive (**to have been + -ing**) describes an activity that went on over a past period: **he appears to have been camping all through these months**. Not **to be camping**: that refers to the present only and does not match 'all through these months'.

17. This friend of mine visited his doctor the other day with some stomach problems and the doctor simply suggested that he _____ away from alcohol for some time.
✓ **E) stay**
After **suggest that**, formal English uses the subjunctive, which is the base form for every person and tense: **the doctor suggested that he stay away from alcohol**. British English also allows **should stay**. Not **stays**: the -s form is not used in the subjunctive, and it does not fit a past reporting verb.

18. _____, he didn't want to risk it for the third time.
✓ **D) Having failed twice already**
The perfect participle clause **Having + past participle** shows an action completed before the main action, and it often gives a reason: **Having failed twice already, he didn't want to risk it again.** Not **Now that he has finally failed**: the present tense clashes with the past main clause, and **finally** makes no sense here.

19. _____, we decided to go swimming.
✓ **A) The day being fine**
This is an absolute participle construction. The clause has its own subject (**the day**) and means 'Because the day was fine': **The day being fine, we decided to go swimming.** Not **Although it was a fine day**: the contrast is illogical, since good weather is a reason to swim.

20. I've been trying to make you understand for the last half hour: If you have posted that letter, it _____ there by now.
✓ **E) will have got**
Will have + past participle can express a confident deduction about the present: **If you have posted that letter, it will have got there by now** (= I'm sure it has arrived). Not **would have got**: that belongs to an unreal (third) conditional, but posting the letter is a real possibility here.

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