ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

English Grammar MCQ Test With Answers Upper Intermediate – 10

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Explanations

1. You _____ it. I was going to do it anyway.
✔ **B) needn't have done**
Needn't have + past participle means someone did something that was not necessary. The clue is **I was going to do it anyway**: the person did it, but there was no need. Not **ought to have done**, because that means it was necessary and they didn't do it.

2. It seems that I _____ there at all. I could have saved myself a lot of trouble.
✔ **E) needn't have gone**
Needn't have gone means I went, but it was not necessary. The clue is **I could have saved myself a lot of trouble**, so going was a waste of effort. Not **might have gone**, which only shows possibility.

3. I _____ that heavy bookcase myself, because someone else had already moved it out of the way.
✔ **A) didn't need to move**
Didn't need to + verb means something was not necessary, so the person did not do it. Here someone else had already moved the bookcase, so I didn't move it. Not **needn't have moved**, because that means I did move it, but it wasn't necessary.

4. It seems that I _____ so cautious; I found the place completely deserted, anyway.
✔ **B) needn't have been**
Needn't have been means I was cautious, but it turned out to be unnecessary. The clue is **I found the place completely deserted**: there was nobody there to be careful of. Not **must have been**, which is a guess about the past.

5. My wife _____ the dinner, because I had already cooked it.
✔ **E) didn't have to cook**
Didn't have to + verb means it was not necessary, so she did not do it. I had already cooked the dinner, so my wife didn't cook. Not **needn't have cooked**, because that would mean she did cook, although it wasn't necessary.

6. A little boy would rather _____.
✔ **B) play than study**
Would rather is followed by the bare infinitive (no **to**), and so is the verb after **than**: **would rather play than study**. Not **to play than to study**, because **would rather** never takes **to**.

7. The incident has been witnessed by a number of _____.
✔ **D) passers-by**
In the compound noun **passer-by**, the plural **-s** goes on the main word **passer**: **passers-by**. **A number of** needs a plural noun, so **passer-by** is wrong, and **passer-bys** puts the **-s** in the wrong place.

8. What makes a man (or a woman) the happiest is his (or her) _____ arrival to stay for a few months!
✔ **E) mother-in-law's**
For the possessive of a compound noun, add **'s** at the end of the whole compound: **my mother-in-law's arrival**. The sentence talks about one mother-in-law (**his or her**), so it is singular. **Mothers'-in-law** and **mother's-in-law** put the apostrophe in the wrong place.

9. I _____ eat all this food.
✔ **A) 'd better not**
Had better (short form **'d better**) gives advice and is followed by the bare infinitive. The negative is **'d better not + verb**: **I'd better not eat all this food**. Not **would better not to**, because the form is **had**, not **would**, and there is no **to**.

10. I _____ eat all this food.
✔ **E) 'd rather not**
Would rather (short form **'d rather**) shows preference and takes the bare infinitive. The negative is **'d rather not + verb**: **I'd rather not eat all this food**. Not **would rather not to**, because **would rather** never takes **to**.

11. He listened to them with great patience _____ he was obviously infuriated.
✔ **B) though**
Though is a conjunction that joins two contrasting clauses: he was patient, but he was angry. **However** and **nevertheless** are adverbs; they need a full stop or semicolon before them. **In spite of** must be followed by a noun or **-ing**, not a clause.

12. I don't like _____.
✔ **E) having my photograph taken**
Have something done (causative) means someone else does it for you: **have my photograph taken**. After **like**, we use the **-ing** form: **having my photograph taken**. Not **to take my photograph**, because that means I take the photo myself.

13. I am sorry, but I don't know where he lives. I wish I _____.
✔ **A) did**
Wish + past simple expresses a wish about the present. **I don't know** becomes **I wish I knew**, shortened to **I wish I did**. Not **had known**, because that refers to the past, and the speaker is talking about now.

14. She asked _____, if I went downtown that afternoon, I _____ buy a few things for her.
✓ **C) whether / would**
A reported yes/no question is introduced by **whether** or **if**, and the tense moves back: **will** becomes **would**. So: **She asked whether, if I went downtown, I would buy a few things**. Not **me / should**, because there is no **whether/if** to introduce the reported question.

15. How he manages to keep going is _____ me.
✓ **E) beyond**
Be beyond someone is an idiom meaning it is impossible for that person to understand: **How he does it is beyond me** = I can't understand it. The other prepositions don't form this idiom.

16. _____ you said to him matters a lot to me.
✓ **D) What**
What here means **the thing that** and starts a noun clause that is the subject of the sentence: **What you said** = the words you said. Not **Which**, because **which** needs a choice from a known group.

17. _____ AIDS threatens to spread further in the near future was discussed in a recent meeting.
✓ **E) Whether or not**
Whether or not can start a noun clause that is the subject of the sentence: **Whether or not AIDS threatens to spread ... was discussed**. Not **If**, because an **if**-clause cannot be the subject at the start of a sentence. **The question of** would need **whether** after it.

18. _____ I don't see her tomorrow, I am sure that I will run into her before the week is over.
✓ **A) Even if**
Even if means 'whether or not this happens, the result is the same': even without seeing her tomorrow, I'll meet her this week. **In spite of** and **despite** need a noun or **-ing**, not a clause, and **even** alone cannot join two clauses.

19. "Neither you nor I understood what he was saying" means:
✓ **C) You didn't understand what he was saying. I didn't either.**
Neither ... nor makes both parts negative: you didn't understand and I didn't understand. So it means **You didn't understand ... I didn't either**. Not **Either you or I understood**, because **either ... or** is positive.

20. Choose the correct sentence:
✓ **C) The threat was overwhelming; it could not be overestimated.**
The threat was overwhelming; it could not be overestimated is correct: a semicolon joins two related clauses. The others have errors: **traveler** should be **travelers**, **has also made** should be **have** (subject **many of the advances**), **that I can** should be **so that I can**, and **to that** should be **to which**.

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