B Grammar Power

Twelve units. Each has the rule in one box, two drills, and a **Trap** box naming the exact error that costs Malaysian candidates marks in this area. Do the trap box slowly — that is the part that changes your grade.

Unit 1 Present perfect vs past simple

RULE

Past simple = a finished time. The time may be stated (*last year, in 2019, yesterday*) or merely understood from context.
Present perfect = the time frame is still open, or the past event matters *now*.

Finished time	She **joined** the choir in Form One.
Open time	She **has sung** at three assemblies this year. (this year is not over)
Result now	I **have lost** my card. (so I cannot get in)
Duration to now	He **has been** a prefect **since** January / **for** eight months.

DRILL 1.1 — CHOOSE THE CORRECT FORM

57. Our team _____ (win) the district final last August.
58. I _____ (not finish) my project yet, so I cannot go out.
59. My father _____ (work) at the same mill since 2008.
60. When _____ you _____ (start) learning the guitar?

DRILL 1.2 — CORRECT THE SENTENCE

61. I have gone to Penang last December. _____
62. She is working here since three years. _____

TRAP — *SINCE* VS *FOR*, AND THE AGO RULE

Since takes a point in time (*since Monday, since I was ten*). *For* takes a length of time (*for three years*). And any sentence containing **ago** is past simple — never present perfect. ✗ *I have seen him two days ago.* ✓ *I saw him two days ago.*

Unit 2 Narrative tenses: past perfect and past continuous

RULE

A story usually needs three past tenses working together.

Past continuous	the background, already in progress	The rain **was falling** heavily…
Past simple	the events, in order	…when the lights **went** out.
Past perfect	the earlier event, out of order	Someone **had left** a window open.

DRILL 2.1 — PUT THE VERB INTO THE RIGHT PAST TENSE

63. By the time we reached the hall, the ceremony _____ (already begin).
64. She _____ (wait) for twenty minutes before the bus finally came.
65. While I _____ (revise), my brother _____ (play) music at full volume.
66. He could not enter because he _____ (forget) his identity card.

Unit 3 The passive

RULE

be + past participle. Use it when the doer is unknown, obvious, or simply not the point — which is why reports and notices are full of it.

TENSE	ACTIVE	PASSIVE
Present simple	They collect the forms.	The forms **are collected**.
Past simple	Someone stole the fan.	The fan **was stolen**.
Present perfect	They have repaired it.	It **has been repaired**.
Modal	You must submit it.	It **must be submitted**.
Future	We will announce the result.	The result **will be announced**.

DRILL 3.1 — REWRITE IN THE PASSIVE

69. The council has closed the field for two weeks.

70. Students must return all library books by Friday.

71. Somebody had already switched off the projector.

DRILL 3.2 — PASSIVE OR ACTIVE? FILL IN THE CORRECT FORM

72. The new canteen _____ (open) next month by the district officer.

73. Nobody _____ (tell) us that the trip was cancelled.

TRAP — THE MISSING *BE*

The commonest passive error in SPM scripts is dropping *be* or using the wrong participle. ✗ *The hall was clean by the prefects.* ✓ *The hall was cleaned by the prefects.* Also: ✗ *It is discuss in the meeting.* ✓ *It was discussed in the meeting.*

Unit 4 Reported speech

RULE

Move the tense back one step, and change the words that point at the speaker.

DIRECT	REPORTED	DIRECT	REPORTED
present simple	past simple	today	that day
present continuous	past continuous	tomorrow	the next day
past simple	past perfect	yesterday	the day before
will	would	here	there
can	could	this	that

DRILL 4.1 — REPORT THESE

74. “I am revising for the trial paper,” said Wei Ling.

75. “We will announce the results tomorrow,” the teacher told us.

76. “Did you bring the form?” he asked me.

77. “Don't touch the wiring,” the technician warned them.

DRILL 4.2 — CHOOSE THE RIGHT REPORTING VERB

advised · admitted · suggested · refused · complained

78. He _____ that he had copied the answers.
79. She _____ me to apply early.
80. They _____ to pay for the damage.

TRAP — QUESTION WORD ORDER IN REPORTED SPEECH

A reported question is **not** a question any more, so it takes statement order and no question mark. ✗ *He asked me where did I live.* ✓ *He asked me where I lived.* For yes/no questions, use **if** or **whether**: *She asked whether I had finished.*

Unit 7 Modals: obligation, permission, speculation

RULE

must / have to	strong obligation. *must* often from the speaker, *have to* from outside
mustn't vs don't have to	*You mustn't park here* = forbidden. *You don't have to pay* = optional. These are opposites, not variants.
should / ought to	advice
must be / can't be	certainty now: *She must be tired. He can't be serious.*
must have / can't have / might have	certainty about the past: *He must have left early.*

DRILL 7.1 — CHOOSE THE CORRECT MODAL

92. Candidates _____ bring mobile phones into the hall. It is strictly forbidden.
93. You _____ come with us if you would rather rest.
94. The lights are off, so they _____ gone home.
95. You look pale. You _____ see the school nurse.

DRILL 7.2 — WRITE THE DEDUCTION

96. His bag is still on the chair. (He / not leave) _____
97. She got 92 without studying. (She / already know / the topic) _____

TRAP — *MUST NOT* IS NOT THE NEGATIVE OF *MUST*

If a rule disappears, the negative is **need not** or **do not have to**, never *must not*. ✗ *The fee is waived, so you must not pay.* ✓ *The fee is waived, so you do not have to pay.*

Unit 8 Gerund or infinitive

RULE

-ing after	enjoy, avoid, mind, suggest, finish, keep, practise, consider, deny, risk, imagine — and after **every preposition**
to + base after	want, hope, decide, agree, promise, refuse, manage, offer, afford, learn, plan, seem
both, same meaning	begin, start, continue, like, love, hate, prefer
both, different meaning	*stop smoking* (quit) vs *stop to smoke* (pause in order to) *remember locking it* (memory of the act) vs *remember to lock it* (don't forget)

DRILL 8.1 — PUT THE VERB IN THE RIGHT FORM

98. She suggested _____ (move) the meeting to Thursday.
99. They cannot afford _____ (replace) the whole roof.
100. He is good at _____ (explain) difficult ideas simply.
101. I must remember _____ (return) this book tomorrow.
102. We finally managed _____ (contact) her.

Unit 9 Articles, quantifiers and countability

RULE

a / an	one of many, mentioned for the first time
the	we both know which one: mentioned before, unique, or defined by what follows
no article	plurals and uncountables in general: *Teenagers need sleep.*
much / little / amount of	uncountable: information, advice, homework, furniture, equipment, luggage, news, research, staff
many / few / number of	countable plurals

DRILL 9.1 — A, AN, THE OR —

104. She has _____ uncle who runs _____ stall at _____ market near our house.

105. _____ honesty is not _____ weakness.

106. He was _____ only candidate who answered _____ last question.

DRILL 9.2 — CORRECT THE QUANTIFIER

107. The teacher gave us many homeworks. _____

108. I need some advices about the form. _____

109. There were a large amount of students in the hall. _____

TRAP — THE UNCOUNTABLE EIGHT

These take no *-s* and no *a*: **information, advice, homework, equipment, furniture, luggage, research, news**. If you need a number, borrow a counter: *a piece of advice*, *two items of equipment*. And *news* is singular: *The news **is** good.*

Unit 10 Linkers and discourse markers

RULE

JOB	WORDS	WATCH THE PUNCTUATION
Adding	moreover, furthermore, in addition, besides	usually starts a sentence + comma
Contrasting	however, nevertheless, on the other hand / although, though, whereas / despite, in spite of	*although* + clause; *despite* + noun or -ing
Cause	because, since, as / because of, owing to, due to	same split: clause vs noun
Result	therefore, consequently, as a result, so	*so* joins with a comma; *therefore* needs a full stop or semicolon
Example	for instance, such as, namely	*such as* + noun, no comma before a short list

DRILL 10.1 — FILL IN A SUITABLE LINKER

110. _____ the heavy rain, the parade went ahead.

111. The library closes at four. _____, we must finish the research today.

112. He rarely speaks in class, _____ his written work is the best in the group.

113. _____ she had been warned twice, she still came late.

DRILL 10.2 — REWRITE SO THE LINKER FITS GRAMMATICALLY

14. Despite he trained daily, he did not qualify.

15. Although the rain, we finished the clean-up.

TRAP — *ALTHOUGH… BUT…*

This is the single most common linker error in Malaysian scripts, straight from Malay *walaupun… tetapi….* English uses **one** contrast word, not two. ✗ *Although he was tired, but he finished.* ✓ *Although he was tired, he finished.* The same goes for *Because… so…* — pick one.

A5 Multiple matching

25 A "everyone in my class was applying"

26 B "the only person… who has already burnt himself"

27 D the business closed in December

28 C "one hour of accurate information… more than a year of encouragement"

29 A the lecturer noticed she had stopped handing things in

30 B the father *stopped calling it that in the seventh month*

31 D "I am not going to pretend that is fine"

32 C "the loudest thing in the house for a month"

33 B taught himself welding, then charged for repairs

34 A "choose the place, not the timetable your friends chose"

WHY — Q30 EXPLAINED

Aina mentions her mother, so both B and C name a parent. Only Krishnan's text shows an opinion **changing over time**. The verb decides matching questions.

A6.1 Multiple-choice cloze

35 B *turns* — the fixed pattern is *turn into*; *become* takes no preposition **36** A *has run* — *since 2011* → present perfect **37** A *take* — take part in

38 A *spite* — in spite of **39** B *accept* — only B fits *seem to + base* with a *that*-clause **40** B *leave* — leave someone nothing to talk about

A6.2 Open cloze

41 since **42** with **43** which **44** but **45** had **46** In **47** as **48** only

ACC 42 *with* only. 44 *but / although / though*. 47 *as / that*.

WHY — GAP 45

The second half reads *she would have signed*, which is third-conditional. The *if* half must therefore be past perfect: *If she* ***had*** *found…* Gaps like this are decided by the **other** half of the sentence, so always read past the gap.

A6.3 Word formation

49 failure

50 unreadable ACC illegible is right in meaning but not formed from READ

51 summary

52 reliable y → i before -able

53 behaviour ACC behavior

54 anxiety

55 unclearly the gap follows *so* and describes *written* → adverb

56 willingly

B Unit 1 — Present perfect vs past simple

57 won **58** have not finished **59** has worked ACC has been working **60** did … start

61 I **went** to Penang last December. **62** She **has been working** here **for** three years.

B Unit 2 — Narrative tenses

63 had already begun **64** had been waiting **65** was revising / was playing **66** had forgotten

67 By the time we submitted our papers, the bell had rung. **68** Aina did not realise she had lost her phone until she got home.

B Unit 3 — Passive

69 The field has been closed for two weeks (by the council).

70 All library books must be returned by Friday.

71 The projector had already been switched off.

72 will be opened **73** told — *Nobody* is the doer, so this one stays active

B Unit 5 — Conditionals

81 is **82** knew **83** would not have missed **84** freezes

85 Unless you submit the form, you cannot sit the paper.

86 Charge the laptop tonight; otherwise it will die during the presentation.

WHY 81 is a first conditional, so the *if* half stays present simple even though the meaning is future. 84 is zero conditional — a scientific fact, so both halves are present simple.

B Unit 6 — Relative clauses

87 That is the shop where my mother buys her thread. ACC …the shop at which my mother buys her thread

88 Puan Salmah, whose son is in Form Three, teaches Chemistry.

89 The letter which arrived on Monday explained everything. ACC that

90 none — you have four cousins, so the clause identifies which one: defining, no commas

91 Our principal, who has been here for eleven years, is retiring. — a school has one principal, so the clause is extra: commas

B Unit 7 — Modals

92 must not **93** do not have to ACC need not **94** must have **95** should ACC ought to

96 He cannot have left. ACC He can't have gone home yet.

97 She must have already known the topic.

B Unit 8 — Gerund or infinitive

98 moving **99** to replace **100** explaining **101** to return **102** to contact

103 *He stopped helping her* = he no longer helps her; the helping ended. *He stopped to help her* = he interrupted something else in order to help.

B Unit 9 — Articles and quantifiers

104 an uncle · a stall · the market

105 — honesty · a weakness

106 the only · the last

107 The teacher gave us **a lot of homework**. ACC much homework

108 I need some **advice** about the form.

109 There were a large **number** of students in the hall.

B Unit 10 — Linkers

110 Despite ACC In spite of **111** Therefore ACC Consequently, As a result **112** but ACC yet, whereas **113** Although ACC Even though, Though

114 Despite training daily, he did not qualify. ACC Although he trained daily, he did not qualify.

115 Despite the rain, we finished the clean-up. ACC Although it rained, we finished the clean-up.

B Unit 11 — Agreement and parallel structure

116 has **117** was **118** work — the nearer subject is *speakers* **119** is — a sum of money is one idea

120 The camp taught us discipline, cooperation and time management.

121 He is responsible, hardworking and patient.

B Unit 12 — Word order, questions, punctuation

122 They entered the hall quietly at seven.

123 He has never been late.

124 didn't you **125** shall we — the fixed tag for *Let's*

126 The dog wagged **its** tail.

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