INSTITUTO DE ENSEÑANZA SUPERIOR EN LENGUAS VIVAS "J.R. FERNÁNDEZ"
ENTRANCE EXAM - FEBRUARY 2016

EXERCISE A: READING COMPREHENSION.
Read the following passage carefully, then CIRCLE the right answer below:

The Creators of Grammar

1) No student of a foreign language needs to be told that grammar is complex. By changing word sequences and by adding a range of auxiliary verbs and suffixes, we are able to communicate tiny variations in meaning. We can turn a statement into a question, state whether an action has taken place or is soon to take place, and perform many other word tricks to convey subtle differences in meaning. Nor is this complexity inherent to the English language. All languages, even those that are widely considered "primitive", have quite sophisticated grammatical structures. The Cherokee pronoun system, for example, can distinguish between 'you and I', 'several other people and I' and 'you, another person and I'. In English, all these meanings are summed up in the one, crude pronoun 'we'. Grammar is universal and plays a part in every language, no matter how widespread it is. So the question which has baffled many linguists is - who created grammar?

2) At first, it would appear that this question is impossible to answer. To find out how grammar is created, someone needs to be present at the time of a language's creation, documenting its emergence. Many historical linguists are able to trace modern complex languages back to earlier languages, but in order to answer the question of how complex languages are actually *formed*, the researcher needs to observe how languages are started from scratch. Amazingly, however, this is possible.

3) Some of the most recent languages evolved due to the Atlantic slave trade. At that time, slaves from a number of different ethnicities were forced to work together under the colonizers' rule. Since they had no opportunity to learn each other's languages, they developed a **make-shift** language called a *pidgin*. Pidgins are strings of words copied from the language of the landowner. They have little in the way of grammar, and in many cases it is difficult for a listener to deduce when an event happened, and who did what to whom. Speakers need to use circumlocution in order to make their meaning understood. Interestingly, however, all it takes for a pidgin to become a complex language is for a group of children to be exposed to it at the time when they learn their mother tongue. Slave children did not simply copy the strings of words uttered by their elders, they adapted their words to create a new, expressive language. Complex grammar systems which emerge from pidgins are termed *creoles*, and they are invented by children.

4) Further evidence of this can be seen in studying sign languages for the deaf. Sign languages are not simply a series of gestures; they utilize the same grammatical machinery that is found in spoken languages. Moreover, there are many different sign languages used worldwide. The creation of one such language was documented quite recently in Nicaragua. Previously, all deaf people were isolated from each other but, in 1979, a new government introduced schools for the deaf. Although children were taught speech and lip reading in the classroom, in the playgrounds they began to invent their own sign system, using the gestures that they used at home. It was basically a pidgin. Each child used the signs differently, and there was no consistent grammar. However, children who joined the school later, when this inventive sign system was already around, developed a quite different sign language. Although it was based on the signs of the older children, the younger children's language was more fluid and compact, and it utilized a large range of grammatical devices to clarify meaning. What is more, all the children used the signs in the same way. A new *creole* was born.

5) Some linguists believe that many of the world's most established languages were creoles at first. The English past tense –ed ending may have evolved from the verb 'do'. 'It ended' may once have been 'It end-did'. Therefore, it would appear that even the most widespread languages were partly created by children. Children appear to have innate grammatical machinery in their brains, which springs to life when they are first trying to make sense of the world around them: their minds can therefore serve to create logical, complex grammatical structures based on very limited input.

1) In paragraph 1, why does the writer include information about the Cherokee language?
A) To refute a commonly held belief about languages and grammar.
B) To show how English grammar differs from Cherokee grammar
C) To prove that complex grammar structures have always existed.
D) To demonstrate how difficult it is to learn the Cherokee language

2) The word "make-shift" in paragraph 3 is closest in meaning to:
A) complicated and expressive
B) simple and temporary
C) extensive and diverse
D) private and personal

3) What can be inferred about the slaves' pidgin language?
A) It contained complex grammar.
B) It was based on many different languages.
C) It made communication difficult at times.
D) It was created by the land-owners.

4) All the following sentences about the Nicaraguan sign language are true EXCEPT:
A) The language has been in use since 1979.
B) The language is based on speech and lip reading.
C) The language incorporates signs which children used at home.
D) The language was perfected by younger children.

5) Why does the author mention children in paragraph 5?
A) To argue that they play a critical role in developing language.
B) To show how they shape language.
C) To prove that they tend to simplify language.
D) To present evidence that they can learn complex grammar patterns.

FOR EXAMINER'S USE: _____ / 10

EXAMINER'S NAME: _____

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EXERCISE B: WRITING.
Choose ONE of the following and write between 250 and 300 words on it:

A) Write an **ARTICLE** entitled: "Learning English: a luxury, a necessity or a pleasure?" You may wish to consider the following points:

- The role of English in the context of a globalized world.
- Learning a foreign language for the pleasure of it.
- Learning foreign languages as a way of building bridges across cultures.

B) You have just started learning a new foreign language *other than* English. Write an **EMAIL** to a friend of yours recounting your experience.

C) Your teacher has asked you to write a **STORY** for a school magazine. The story must be about a successful language learning experience.

USE THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW TO WRITE YOUR CLEAN COPY.

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YOU MAY CONTINUE WRITING OVERLEAF

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EXERCISE C:
Read the text below and decide which answer A, B, or C best fits each space. The first one
(0) has been done for you as an example:

Girls and Technology
If you want your daughter **(0)** _____, buy her a toy construction set. That is the advice from Britain's foremost female engineers and scientists. Marie Noelle Barton, **(1)** _____heads an Engineering Council campaign to encourage girls **(2)** _____ science and engineering, maintains that some of Britain's most successful women **(3)** _____ their careers shaped by the toys they played with as children. Even girls who **(4)** _____ nowhere near a lab or a computer could benefit **(5)** _____ a better grasp of science and technology. "It's a matter of giving them experience and confidence with science and technology **(6)** _____ when they are **(7)** _____with a situation requiring some technical know-how, they feel they can handle it and don't just **(8)** _____defeat immediately," says Mrs. Barton. "I believe that lots of girls feel unsure of themselves when it comes to technology and therefore they might be losing out on jobs because they are reluctant **(9)**_____to apply for them." Some research that **(10)** _____carried out recently suggests that scientific and constructional toys **(11)** _____ be available to girls from an early age, otherwise the result is "socialization" into stereotypically female roles, which may explain why relatively **(12)**_____ girls study science and engineering at university in Britain. Only 14 % of those who have gone for engineering at university this year are women. **(13)**_____this figure does represent an improvement on the 7 % recorded some years ago, there is **(14)** _____a long way to go.

0	(A-)TO SUCCEED	B- SUCCESS	C- SUCCEED
1	A- WHO	B- THAT	C- WHOSE
2	A- ABOUT	B- INTO	C- ON
3	A- HAVE HAD	B- HAVE MADE	C- HAVE DONE
4	A- TURN UP	B- END UP	C- COME UP
5	A- WITH	B- THROUGH	C- FROM
6	A- SO THAT	B- IN ORDER	C- SO MUCH SO
7	A- APPROACHED	B-PRESENTED	C-ENCOUNTERED
8	A- ADMIT	B-CONFESS	C-CLAIM
9	A- ALSO	B-EVEN	C- AS WELL
10	A- HAS BEEN	B- IS BEING	C- HAD BEEN
11	A- SHOULD	B- COULD	C- MIGHT
12	A- MANY	B- LITTLE	C- FEW
13	A- DESPITE	B- HOWEVER	C- ALTHOUGH
14	A- ALREADY	B- YET	C- STILL

FOR EXAMINER'S USE: _____/ 7

EXAMINER'S NAME: _____

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EXERCISE D:
a. Rewrite each sentence, beginning as shown, so that its meaning stays the same.

1. She doesn´t have the book. That´s why she didn´t read the chapter last class.

   If she _____.

2. He keeps arriving late and I find that annoying.

   He is _____.

3. "I am sorry I let you down," Paul said to me.

   Paul apologised _____me down.

4. It is clear that Stephen did not rob the bank.

   It can't _____.

b. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given in bold type. <u>Do not change the word given</u>.

1) It is pointless to try to persuade her: she has already made up her mind. **(USE)**

   It _____: she has already made up her mind.

2) I went to class on Monday, but it wasn´t necessary because the teacher was absent. **(HAVE)**

   The teacher was absent on Monday, so I _____to class.

3) Would you have liked to move to the countryside when you were a teenager? **(YOU)**

   Do you wish _____?

4) Many experts believe that the Maya civilization was destroyed by a plague. (HAVE)

   The Maya civilization is _____?

FOR EXAMINER'S USE: _____/8
EXAMINER'S NAME: _____