

# Lang101 Workbook

## Linguistics Exercises & Activities for Starters

Madalena Cruz-Ferreira  
Sunita Anne Abraham



*Lang101 Workbook* offers 460 commented exercises and activities, designed for absolute beginners to the study of language. Whether you're doing introductory linguistics or are just curious about language, this thought-provoking workbook will help you discuss (why) language matters, based on empirical observation of 20 typologically distinct languages, including English and other languages you're familiar with.

We designed *Lang101 Workbook* as a companion tool to our textbook *The Language of Language. A Linguistics Course for Starters*. Part 1 of the workbook contains 360 exercises and activities corresponding to the textbook's 12 chapters (30 per chapter), meant to broaden your thinking beyond the material addressed in the textbook. There are also 100 cross-chapter exercises, aimed at synthesis alongside analysis. Part 2 contains commented answers to all exercises.

Topics include the nature of scientific investigation; the structure of words, sounds and sentences; typical vs. disordered uses of language; child language, language learning and language play, as well as politeness, persuasion and humour.

The companion website, *Lang101*, contains more activities for self-study or for the classroom, instructors' resources which include teaching slides and class handouts, and a blog dedicated to linguistics for starters. Visit <http://lang101.com/>

### Contents outline

#### Exercises & Activities – Chapter by chapter

1. Language and linguistics;
2. Language and languages;
3. The grammar of words: words and word parts;
4. The grammar of words: word building;
5. Speech sounds;
6. The grammar of sounds;
7. The grammar of sentences: slots and phrases;
8. The grammar of sentences: slots and functions;
9. The meaning of meaning;
10. Meaning in action;
11. Language in use;
12. Language and speakers

#### Exercises & Activities – Cross-Chapter

#### Commented Answers

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## Lang101 Workbook – User’s Guide

*Lang101 Workbook* contains 460 commented exercises and activities, dedicated to absolute beginners to the study of language, whether you’re doing introductory linguistics or are simply interested in language, languages and linguistics. We mean “absolute beginners” quite literally: in order to make good use of this Workbook, all you need is curiosity about how language works and how linguists think.

We designed *Lang101 Workbook* as a companion tool to our textbook *The Language of Language. A Linguistics Course for Starters* (see our *Lang101* website and blog at <http://lang101.com/>), in response to feedback asking us to expand the over 100 exercises and activities contained in the textbook. Accordingly, Part 1 of the Workbook mirrors the textbook’s structure, offering 360 exercises and activities corresponding to the textbook’s 12 chapters (30 per chapter), which are meant to broaden your thinking beyond the material addressed in the textbook. We have also included 100 cross-chapter exercises and activities, which target revision and/or consolidation of learning by combining topics and methodology from different chapters in the textbook. Part 2 includes commented answers to all exercises. Exercises and activities are self-contained and numbered for reference purposes only, in no particular order, to serve your own learning pace – or instructors’ choices concerning individual practice or assessment, in class, at home, in group discussions, or in tests and examinations.

In keeping with the spirit of our textbook, which aims to foster independent and informed thinking about language, Workbook exercises and activities require no rote learning, and are thus suited to open-book assessment. A few of the exercises and activities deliberately include issues which are not overtly covered in the textbook, and discussion topics which are phrased in such a general way as to apply to as many languages and linguistic situations as possible. Our Workbook encourages you to generalise your thinking to any language known to you, because linguistics is the science of *language*, not of specific *languages*. The Workbook features over 20 typologically distinct languages, including Angas, German, Hindi, Japanese, Malay, Mandarin Chinese, Māori, Pame, Spanish, Swahili, Tok Pisin and Turkish, besides several varieties of English, the language that we share with you.

Our goal in making *Lang101 Workbook* available to you is twofold: to raise awareness that knowledge is constantly evolving, and to bolster your confidence in addressing novel issues which may concern you as a user of particular languages. Suggested answers to exercises and activities include alternatives, because the questions under discussion are controversial depending on personal perspectives, or because linguists themselves have not reached a consensus about how to approach them. Throughout, our purpose is to generate discussion and more questions about (why) language matters, based on empirical observation and coherent argumentation.

We hope you will enjoy embarking on this journey of discovery as much as we enjoyed designing it for you.

Madalena Cruz-Ferreira  
Sunita Anne Abraham

Singapore, March 2012

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