

Sample exam questions

The final exam for the *Foundations of Linguistics* lecture course consists of two sets of assignments. The first set, for a total of 20 points, contains twenty statements for which you are asked to determine whether they are true or false. The second set, for a total of 30 points, contains ten three-way multiple-choice assignments, each with only one correct answer. You are expected to attempt all the assignments, for a grand total of 50 points. A minimum of 26 points will be deemed sufficient for a passing grade. Please read the instructions for each assignment carefully.

Section 1

1 Are the following statements *true* (T) or *false* (F)?

- [1] A root that cannot surface by itself but requires the attachment of an affix is called a bound root; an example of a bound root is the English verbal root *-tain*, found in *attain*, *contain*, *pertain*, *retain*.
- [2] A descriptively adequate characterisation of the passive rule in English syntax states that it promotes to subject all and only NPs that immediately follow V in the corresponding active sentences.
- [3] The semantics of the English sentence *The FBI kept tabs on him for years* is compositional except for the combination of the verb *keep*, the object *tabs* and the preposition *on*, which forms an idiomatic expression.
- [4] The rhyme is the subconstituent of the syllable consisting of the nucleus (usually a vowel) and any consonant(s) preceding the nucleus.

Section 2

- [5] Against the background provided, consider three statements below. Select the statement that you think is accurate. Please bear in mind that there is just one correct statement included in the set.

Background: The formation of the past tense of both *to write* and the derived forms *to handwrite* and *to typewrite* involves a change in the vowel of the root: *wrote*, *hand/type-wrote*. But while the past tense of *to ride* is *rode*, the verb *to joyride* has a regular past-tense form, *joyrided*.

- A *Ablaut* never applies to verbs that consist of multiple morphemes.
 - B The verb *to joyride* is derived from the noun *joyride*, which yields a morphological structure in which there is no local relation between the verb *ride* and the morpheme [PAST]; this prevents [PAST] and *ride* from merging together into *rode*.
 - C The verb *to babysit* is derived from the noun *babysitter*. The past-tense form of *to babysit* is *babysat*. From this, it can be concluded that being a back formation from a noun is an insurmountable impediment to past-tense formation via *Ablaut*.
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