Here you will find answers to the exercises contained in the book.

Chapter 1

1a. *I haven’t had lunch* typically seems to convey that the speaker hasn’t had lunch today, but this time reference isn’t made explicit in the utterance; it’s part of pragmatic, but not semantic, meaning.

1b. *I haven’t had my holidays yet* also has restricted time reference: it typically means ‘this year’. Again this is a pragmatic enrichment to the semantic meaning. The difference between 1a and 1b relies on the assumption that the relevant timeframe for having lunch is different from that for having holidays.

1c. *It is what it is* semantically expresses a **tautology**: that is, a statement that is inevitably true. It doesn’t appear to convey any information to its hearer semantically. That doesn’t preclude it from having a pragmatically meaningful interpretation, typically along the lines of ‘we can’t do anything about it’.

1d. *If John turns up, I’ll eat my hat* expresses a conditional proposition, on its semantics. Pragmatically we might think of it as expressing a promise, but of course it’s a defective promise because it commits the speaker to an impossible action (or at least one we don’t expect them to undertake). The speaker’s intention appears to be simply to convey their strong belief that John won’t turn up, so we could think of that as the pragmatic meaning of the utterance.

1e. *I don’t think John will come* semantically appears to deny that the speaker thinks that John will come. But in practice we would normally interpret this utterance as expressing a stronger claim, namely that the speaker actively thinks that John will not come (rather than merely not thinking that he will). This doesn’t appear to be part of the semantic meaning.

1f. *Mary saw the man with the binoculars* is syntactically ambiguous, in that it’s not clear whether Mary or ‘the man’ has the binoculars. Both
readings are semantically available. If we have a preference for the reading in which Mary has the binoculars, this appears to be a pragmatic preference; and if we infer that Mary used the binoculars in order to see the man, this is arguably a pragmatic enrichment too.

2a. The utterance here invites the hearer to confirm something that the speaker thinks to be the case: one possible interpretation of the hearer’s silence is to take it as confirmation of the speaker’s surmise. In this case, the hearer may have deliberately intended their silence to have this effect, in which case we could think of it as intentionally communicative.

2b. In this case, the speaker may take a silence on the part of the hearer as evidence that their suspicion (that the hearer is not listening) is correct. However, this is because it constitutes direct evidence in support of that suspicion: the hearer’s action (or inaction) is compatible with a view in which they’re not listening, because if they were listening, they should have responded (perhaps by saying ‘yes’). So in this case we probably couldn’t credit the hearer with any communicative intention underlying their silence.

2c. Here the speaker has asked for the hearer to wait a moment; their silence appears to constitute compliance with this request. Thus it would probably be reasonable to credit the hearer with deliberately using silence in order to convey their willingness to wait.

Chapter 2

1a. B violates Quantity (specifically, the first submaxim of Quantity): answering ‘yes’ to this question fails to provide enough information.

1b. Niles violates both Relation and Quantity (the first submaxim): although his utterance is factually correct, it doesn’t appear to connect to the preceding discourse, and doesn’t appear to offer any information that the hearer doesn’t already know. The subsequent exchange makes clear that Niles’s violation of Quantity-1 is intentional, but that the utterance is intended to be relevant, as it is a comment on the usefulness (or lack thereof) of Frasier’s initial remark. The deliberate violation of Quantity could be considered a case of the speaker flouting a maxim for pragmatic effect, as discussed in section 3.1.1.

1c. Sir Humphrey violates both Quantity (the first submaxim) and Manner: he gives insufficient information by failing to answer the question, and he does so in an unnecessarily verbose way. In fact, the various hedges that are used (as far as we can see, in general terms) serve very little purpose given that the final answer is noncommittal in any case.

2a. The unmarked form would be *Mary stopped the car*. The marked form of the utterance suggests that Mary made the car stop in some
non-stereotypical way, such as by flagging it down, rather than the stereotypical way (applying the brakes while driving it).

2b. The unmarked form would be *The general killed the soldier*. The marked form of the utterance continues to apportion responsibility to the general, but again suggests indirectness in the way the action was brought about. The marked form also doesn’t convey such a strong suggestion that the general intended to cause the soldier’s death.

2c. The unmarked form would be *I agree with you*. The marked form seems to suggest a slightly less strong form of agreement on the part of the speaker.

3a. In this exchange, it’s not clear that the passer-by is cooperative, as assumed by Grice’s account. A cooperative speaker who didn’t express an objection in this scenario could be seen to be granting permission – if the motorist wasn’t allowed to park there, they would say so – but that’s not obvious in this case.

3b. In this exchange, B’s apparent agreement with A might be a consequence of politeness, which isn’t included within Grice’s maxims. B may have concluded that disagreeing with A (who asks a leading question which strongly suggests that they love the food) is too controversial, regardless of what B actually thinks about the food. B may be willing to violate Quality in order to adhere to this social obligation.

Chapter 3

1a. A relevant stronger alternative is *This meal is delicious*. The speaker who says *This meal is tasty* might implicate that it’s something less than delicious.

1b. A potentially relevant stronger alternative is *This church is ancient*. The speaker who says *This church is old* might implicate that it isn’t ancient. This implicature is intuitively somewhat less clearly available than that in 1a, perhaps because *ancient* is not such a striking alternative to *old* (it is a much less common word and might be considered more marked).

1c. A relevant stronger alternative is *Nothing has a price*. In this case, the negation reverses the entailment direction: *Not everything has a price* already semantically negates that *Everything has a price*, but it only implicates the falsity of *Nothing has a price*.

1d. A relevant stronger alternative is *Nothing that glisters is gold*. The intended semantic meaning of *All that glisters is not gold* is that ‘not all that glisters (= glitters) is gold’. In this case, the meaning is non-isomorphic, in the sense that it doesn’t transparently relate to the syntax (see section 7.1.3 for further discussion of isomorphism). Under this interpretation,
the utterance implicates the falsity of the stronger alternative, and thus conveys that ‘some things that glister are gold’. If we were to interpret the original utterance isomorphically, and thus give it the semantic meaning ‘nothing that glisters is gold’, there would be no pragmatically relevant stronger alternative utterance.

2a. On the default interpretation of *some*, this utterance conveys that exactly five snowboarders landed some, but not all, of their tricks. On the contextual account, it conveys that exactly five snowboarders landed some tricks, and (by implicature) not exactly five landed all of their tricks. In order to get from this to the default reading, we could use any of a wide range of assumptions, but none of them seems particularly likely: for instance, that if anyone had landed all their tricks that would be important enough to be specifically mentioned; or that, if any one of the five had managed to land all their tricks, all the others would have done so.

However, one interpretation of the contextual meaning here is that the speaker is not committed to a view on how many snowboarders landed all of their tricks: that is, there might be other boarders outside of the five mentioned who landed all their tricks. On a default account, we couldn’t access that meaning, even with additional assumptions, because we are committed to the semantic claim that exactly five boarders landed a non-zero number of tricks.

2b. In this utterance, *decently* is a weak scalar term, with *well* being a stronger scalemate: a default interpretation would give us the inference that Rick said that Malia would do decently, but not well. A contextual interpretation would be just that Rick didn’t say that Malia would do well. We could enrich this further to the default account if we can assume that Rick will have explicitly said whether or not Malia would do well.

2c. In this utterance, *most* is a weak scalar, with *all* being its stronger scalemate. The default interpretation of the utterance is that Mary wants Joe to write most, but not all, of their Christmas cards; the contextual interpretation would be that it’s not the case that Mary wants Joe to write all of them (that is, that she doesn’t necessarily have an opinion on that, as long as he writes most of them). We can enrich the contextual interpretation to match the default interpretation if we can also assume, for instance, that Mary would want Joe to write all of the cards unless she wanted to write some of them herself. This would allow us to conclude, on the basis of the contextual pragmatic enrichment, that Mary wants Joe to write most but not all of the cards.

3a. The interviewer is asking the applicant generally about their qualifications, and lists possible answers that are not mutually exclusive.
By naming just one of these, the speaker would often give rise to an implicature that they didn’t have the other qualifications. However, in this case, it’s not clear that the needs of the situation require a full and exhaustive answer; in fact, giving such an answer might violate Quantity. Therefore the usual implicature does not apply in this case.

3b. Sue’s utterance specifies that she only has partial information about the course feedback, so we cannot assume that she is fully knowledgeable about the truth or falsity of the stronger alternative All of the students are unhappy, which suggests that the usual implicature (‘not all’) should not arise. In this case, her utterance seems to be compatible with a situation in which – as far as she knows – it is still possible that all the students are unhappy.

3c. The lecturer’s response might normally trigger an implicature to the effect that it is not the case that the student must submit their coursework online. However, given that the student wants to do so and is merely seeking permission to, whether or not they have to do so is not immediately relevant to the current discourse purpose. Consequently, the implicature doesn’t arise. It seems legitimate even for a lecturer who knows that online submission is mandatory merely to reply You can do that in this situation.

Chapter 4

1a. Tom managed to pass the exam presupposes that passing the exam was difficult. This is conveyed by the use of manage, and is usually argued to be presupposed rather than conventionally implicated (or asserted) on the basis that the meaning persists under negation ( . . . didn’t manage . . . ).

1b. The police remain convinced of the suspect’s guilt presupposes that, at some relevant time prior to the utterance, the police were already convinced of the suspect’s guilt. As with still, continue, and so on, remain doesn’t provide any clear indication of the timeframe involved, although the utterance would normally suggest that the police’s belief has persisted through some event that might have given them cause to change their minds (e.g. Despite the suspect being found not guilty in court, . . . ). Convinced doesn’t appear to be presuppositional, as someone can clearly be convinced of something without that turning out to be true, and the speaker of this example is presumably aware of this possibility and therefore doesn’t convey a personal commitment to the factuality of the suspect’s guilt.

1c. The police discovered the suspect’s guilt, by contrast to 1b, does seem to presuppose the suspect’s guilt. Again, . . . didn’t discover . . . would tend also to convey that the suspect is guilty. 1c as it stands would appear to
require the suspect to be guilty in order to be true (if not, we might want to avoid saying *discovered* and prefer an option like *became convinced of*).

1d. *The police didn’t manage to prove the suspect’s guilt* carries the usual presupposition associated with *manage*, in this case that proving the suspect’s guilt was not easy. In principle this could be because the suspect was not in fact guilty, which would make proving their guilt impossible, by definition. *Prove* isn’t clearly factive by itself – it’s not clear that *The police didn’t prove that the suspect was guilty* would presuppose that the suspect actually was guilty – so it doesn’t seem to contribute any presuppositional meaning here.

2a. The main presupposition here seems to be that Mary has a husband. This appears to follow because the use of a conditional suggests (implies, in fact) that the speaker doesn’t know whether or not the antecedent (*Mary doesn’t enjoy parties*) is true. If the antecedent is in fact true, then the speaker has committed themselves to the truth of the consequent, which semantically requires the existence of Mary’s husband. Therefore, the speaker must be committed to the fact of Mary’s husband’s existence, or they may have spoken falsely, if it turns out that Mary doesn’t enjoy parties. As a result, the utterance as a whole can be taken to presuppose (and potentially to convey) the existence of Mary’s husband.

2b. This utterance lacks the presupposition of 2a, principally because the speaker again implicates – through the use of a conditional – that the antecedent might or might not be true, and in this case that antecedent is that Mary is married. Hence, it’s clear that the speaker isn’t committed to the proposition that Mary has a husband. The reason that this utterance is logically coherent is that the speaker only requires the existential presupposition of *her husband* to be satisfied in the event that the antecedent is true, because if the antecedent is false, the consequent doesn’t come into play at all. Therefore, the speaker doesn’t necessarily need to assume that Mary has a husband: they only require the weaker assumption that ‘if Mary is married, she has a husband’. We could say that 2b presupposes this assumption. (If we replace *husband* with *spouse*, the presupposition becomes vacuous.) Notably, the same analysis applies to 2a: thus, we could argue that the presupposition of 2a technically isn’t ‘Mary has a husband’, but ‘if Mary doesn’t like parties, then she has a husband’. This is all we need in order for the utterance to make sense. Nevertheless, apparently because of the lack of causal relation between the two parts of this meaning, hearers tend to take utterances like 2a to presuppose and potentially to convey the stronger meaning, in this case ‘Mary has a husband’. Romoli et al. (2011) present more detailed discussion and experimental data on this point.
3a. The use of *realise* in this utterance presupposes that ‘the hotel is/was at the top of a big hill’. In the context of a narrative, it seems reasonable to use this utterance to introduce that fact to a hearer who doesn’t already know it, by exploiting accommodation.

3b. *Stop* in this utterance presupposes that the world is spinning, but this is presumably common ground to speaker and hearer, and therefore isn’t being conveyed here.

3c. The use of *back* presupposes having been in a specific place before. However, in this case, the place in question is the place in which the utterance is occurring (*here*), and the people coming back are speaker and hearer, who already know where they are: hence, nothing new is being conveyed presuppositionally by this utterance, hence accommodation isn’t occurring.

3d. *Marley was dead* carries an existential presupposition which could be accommodated. This is the first sentence of a work of fiction, and thus intended to introduce a new character to a reader obviously unfamiliar with them. Hence this does appear to exploit accommodation.

Chapter 5

1a. Using the pronoun *her* would be unlikely to cause a misunderstanding: in this case, it would be impossible for *her* to refer to Jane, as although Jane could be the recipient of the pay rise, in that case we would be syntactically obliged to use *herself* to refer to Jane. Consequently, it’s not necessary to use Anne’s name in order to refer to her, and using that name feels redundant and somewhat awkward in this context.

1b. In principle, *she* could refer either to Anne or Jane, but given the implicit causality bias of the verb *criticised*, the hearer would be very likely to understand *she* to refer to Anne. Given the content of the utterance, it makes much more sense for the subject of the *because*-clause to be Anne rather than Jane, as that provides a plausible motivation for Jane’s criticism. Thus, again, the use of a name to refer to Anne is somewhat redundant here, but not to quite such an extent as in 1a.

1c. Here, again, the use of *she* could refer either to Anne or Jane. On implicit causality grounds, we would expect *she* to refer to Anne, as in 1b; however, based on the content of the rest of the utterance, it might make more sense for *she* to refer to Jane. Consequently, the pronoun would be quite strongly ambiguous between these two possible interpretations. It seems natural in this case for the speaker to use a name in the second clause to avoid the risk of being misunderstood.

1d. This example is like 1c except that the implicit causality bias of the verb is not so striking. Again, the use of a pronoun in the *because*-clause
leads to ambiguity, as the utterance would make sense on either interpretation (it could be either Jane or Anne who is keen to talk to more people in the arts, and either of these facts could in principle explain Jane’s decision to invite Anne). Hence, again, the pronoun would be ambiguous, and it is probably advisable for the speaker to use a name instead.

2a. Using big would cause it to be interpreted as ‘the trophy’, while using small would cause it to be interpreted as ‘the suitcase’. This relies on our real-world knowledge about spatial relations. Here, and in the following examples, other words with similar meanings will influence the interpretation in similar ways (so for instance tall or wide would cause it to be interpreted as ‘the trophy’, narrow or short would cause it to be interpreted as ‘the suitcase’).

2b. Using a word like successful would cause he to be interpreted as ‘Paul’; using a word like available, or there, would cause he to be interpreted as ‘George’.

2c. Using a word like quickly would cause it to be interpreted as ‘the delivery truck’; using a word like slowly would cause it to be interpreted as ‘the school bus’.

2d. Using a word like delighted or vindicated would cause he to be interpreted as ‘Frank’; using a word like angry or disappointed would cause he to be interpreted as ‘Bill’.

3a. Here, the pronoun he is used, which reflects the fact that this can successfully refer to just one of the three individuals in the immediately preceding discourse (the earlier part of the sentence). Given that the names are also not unique – there are lots of people called John, Mary and Esther – we could think of those as also being reduced referring expressions: the speaker is assuming that the hearer will know which individuals with these names are being referred to, presumably drawing upon previous shared experience as to which people with these names are mutually known to both speaker and hearer.

3b. The use of the Palace to refer (presumably) to Buckingham Palace relies on shared knowledge of which palace is most salient in London. The use of Her Majesty to refer to Queen Elizabeth II again relies on shared knowledge about people who are known by that title and sometimes resident in that palace. In both cases, we could think of this knowledge as likely to be shared by speaker and hearer as a consequence of very broad community co-membership. The successful use of we to refer to the people in question – the speaker and some other person, presumably not the hearer – probably relies on shared prior linguistic context, not presented here.

3c. Again, Professor Hawking is not a unique name, but in the context of this sentence it is likely that the hearer will understand the
intended reference, again by virtue of broadly construed community co-membership.

Chapter 6

1a. This is metaphoric, with be as the tenor and whirlwind as the vehicle, and attributes frantic or continual motion to the tenor. Apparently this is a sufficiently conventional metaphor that the addition of the words of activity doesn’t immediately strike the hearer as odd: these words don’t seem to modify the vehicle, but rather serve to clarify the metaphoric interpretation intended.

1b. This combines two similes: like fire and ice (used to describe two people mentioned in the previous context) and like lukewarm water (used to describe the speaker). The former is conventional, and evokes a strong contrast in personality between two people; the latter is a novel simile intended to describe someone as either the average of that or as the border between them (but which has the effect of characterising them as having no strong personality).

1c. This is hyperbole: the word die is used to describe a (probably) much lesser negative effect.

1d. This utterance evokes some kind of pragmatic enrichment: assuming that the addressee is mortal, it is not literally true as it stands. The usual interpretation of this would be to take it as conveying that the hearer is not going to die imminently, or in the foreseeable future, or for a specific reason that is presently under discussion. In answer to 1c, it would be naturally understood as asserting that the hearer won’t in fact die of boredom even if they go to the lecture, rather than asserting that they won’t experience other negative effects.

2a. Jane is a bulldozer attributes some of the properties traditionally associated with a bulldozer to Jane: usually these would involve her being forceful, and capable of sweeping away obstacles. Although it might be used with reference to Jane’s physical or psychological attributes, it would not normally evoke any of the specific physical features of a bulldozer (caterpillar tracks, metal plate, etc.)

2b. This place is a pigsty (fairly conventionally) attributes the properties of being messy and disorderly to the place in which it is uttered. It clearly doesn’t attribute the definitional characteristic of a pigsty, namely having pigs living in it. It might or might not attribute other stereotypical properties of a pigsty, such as having an unpleasant odour.

2c. Jake’s eyes are limpid pools appears to attribute to the tenor, Jake’s eyes, almost all the relevant properties of limpid pools: that they are composed of clear, transparent fluid. Possibly the only reason that this
would count as metaphorical at all is the use of *pools* to describe eyes, when we would normally think of pools as constituting much larger collections of liquid.

3a. *That’s a good idea* could be interpreted as ironic, based on the context, without the speaker giving any specific clues to their intention: however, placing heavy focal stress on *That’s* would be one way of using intonation to promote an ironic interpretation. As this stress pattern could also indicate contrast (with something else that isn’t a good idea, for instance), the intonation does not guarantee an ironic interpretation, but it does seem to make that perception more likely.

3b. *I’d love to be there* could also be interpreted as ironic without any specific prosodic cue: however, stressing *love* would have the effect of making the ironic interpretation more likely. Again, this doesn’t guarantee an ironic interpretation: the stress pattern might merely reflect the speaker’s intention to make their utterance more emphatic.

3c. *What a surprise* seems to attract an ironic interpretation when uttered with a neutral or flat intonation contour, presumably because this conflicts with the hearer’s expectation about how a mirative utterance like this (one expressing the speaker’s surprise) should be intoned. A non-ironic interpretation would be supported by stress on *surprise*.

Chapter 7

1a. *The tallest man in the world* is discourse-new, but the existence of such a person might be considered hearer-old, in that the existence of some person answering to this description is mutually evident to speaker and hearer. *Two dolphins* and *shards of plastic* are discourse-new. *Their stomachs* are inferable, as we can reasonably assume that dolphins have stomachs.

1b. *The annual ceremony . . .* is discourse-new, although it’s presented using a definite as though it were already hearer-old, as it might be. *The swans on the River Thames* are discourse-new but potentially hearer-old. *The River Thames* is hearer-old.

1c. *The first rule . . .* is discourse-new. *Fight Club* is potentially discourse-new at first mention, and discourse-old at re-mention.

2a. Among other possibilities, we could connect these with *because*, in which case the second sentence is an explanation of the first; *so*, in which case the first sentence is an explanation of the second; or *and* (*then*), in which the second sentence is a narrative continuation of the first. Another possible interpretation of the *so* continuation is one in which the second sentence describes a goal brought about by the action described in the first, in that the speaker’s late arrival was intended to achieve the effect described in the second sentence.
2b. We could connect these with *but*, in which case the sentences stand in a relation of contrast, or antithesis; *so*, in which the first sentence expresses a cause and the second sentence a consequence; or *because*, in which case the second sentence expresses a cause and the first sentence a consequence.

2c. We could connect these with *so*, in which case the first sentence expresses a cause and the second sentence a consequence. We might also be able to connect them with something like *In fact*, which would present the second sentence as an elaboration of the first sentence.

3a. If *they* refers to the critics, we would understand the second sentence to be intended as an explanation of the first sentence. If *they* refers to the artists, we would understand the second sentence as something more like an elaboration of the first sentence.

3b. If *he* refers to Bob, we would understand the second sentence as an elaboration of the first (or potentially consider the first to be evidence for the conclusion presented in the second sentence). If *he* refers to Mike, we would interpret the second sentence as something like an explanation of the first sentence.

3c. If *she* refers to Monica, the second sentence might be an explanation of the first sentence (Monica’s anxiety explaining Rebecca’s inaction) or potentially a consequence of the first sentence. If *she* refers to Rebecca, the second sentence seems more like an elaboration of the first sentence.

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**Chapter 8**

1a. *Please shut the door* is a request using an imperative sentence: we’d normally think of this as a direct speech act.

1b. *Please could you shut the door* is a request using an apparently interrogative sentence: this is an indirect speech act.

1c. *I'd really like a cup of tea* is probably a request, and uses a declarative sentence: this is an indirect speech act.

1d. *I'd really like to finish the job* is apparently an assertion, using a declarative sentence: this is a direct speech act. Given the content of the utterance, this seems to be an assertion of the speaker’s wishes rather than a request (although it could imaginably be a request not to be redeployed).


2b. *Jane said that . . .* appears to describe a purely locutionary act (saying), although this could be an indirect description of something that was more like a promise, and therefore illocutionary.

2c. *Jane convinced me . . .* describes a perlocutionary act (convincing someone cannot be illocutionary, as discussed in the main text).
2d. Jane pretended . . . also describes a perlocutionary act: pretending clearly can’t be an illocutionary act, as signalling pretence would undermine its effect.

3a. This appears to be a request. The sentence type supports this interpretation; however, the check-question at the end (and presumably the rising intonation that supports it) might argue against it.

3b. This appears to be a complaint. The words justify and absurd decision are relevant to that interpretation; the use of I would like and particularly invite suggest some other interpretation.

3c. This appears to be an invitation. The words you and come to dinner support that interpretation; the phrase won’t you might suggest that this is just a confirmatory question.