Gleitman: Ch. 10, pp. 379-385

1. Describe each of the units in the hierarchy that constitutes language.
2. Describe how languages differ in the *phonemes* that they employ, the phoneme sequences that are allowed, and the distinctions made at the sound level (e.g., of tone, rhythm, and stress).
3. What are *morphemes*? How do function morphemes differ from content morphemes?
4. Using examples, describe *syntax*. Your description should distinguish phrases from sentences and include how a *tree diagram* can provide a *phrase structure description* of a sentence. You should also make clear how syntax differs from *meaningfulness*?

Reader: Baker, pp. 108-114

5. What are some of the ways that Navajo and English differ? What are some of the ways that they are the same?
6. What might this pattern of similarities and differences suggest about the nature of *Universal Grammar*?
7. Given these differences between English and Navajo, how difficult would it be for a fluent speaker of both to translate back and forth between these two languages?

Zap #17: Feature Net

8. What are the *features* in this feature net?
9. The simulation assumes that only some features from each letter are correctly recognized each time a word is being read. Given how noisy this process is, describe why the correct letters and then words are usually recognized.
10. Describe how this network, which is thought to mimic human perceptual processes, can explain *frequency effects, repetition priming,* the word superiority effect, and the *well-formedness* effect.
11. Assuming that our reading system functions like a feature net, how might this help explain why so many proof reading errors are easy to make.

Gleitman: Ch. 10, pp. 385- 396

12. What are *form-meaning correlations*? Why might they matter?
13. What does it mean to say that although some words may function like “atoms” most words are like “molecules”?
14. Outline the *definitional theory of word meaning*. What is the role of *semantic features* in this theory? How does this theory describe relatedness of words?
15. Outline the *prototype theory of word meaning*. What is a *prototype* in this theory? What role does *family resemblance structure* play in this theory?
16. How does the prototype theory of word meaning improve on the definitional theory of word meaning? What observations support it? Despite these advantages, the definitional theory appears to still have a role; why?
17. What is a *proposition*? Include in your answer the distinction between a *subject noun phrase* and a *predicate verb phrase*.

18. What are some of the ways that we can distinguish the *semantic roles* that each phrase plays in a sentence?
19. What is a *complex sentence*? What can make it complex?
20. Using an example, describe what an *ambiguous* sentence is?
21. Understanding spoken language involves a complex, rapid, nonconscious processing system that recovers structure and semantic roles as the speaker's utterance arrives word by word. Using examples, discuss the kinds of clues that this process uses and how they work together.
22. What is a *garden path* sentence? Why is it that much of the time, we do not notice ambiguity in sentences?
23. Describe how eye movement monitoring can be used to make inferences about how the structure of sentences is recovered during reading.
24. Describe how eye movement monitoring can be used to make inferences about how sentences are being interpreted during speech processing and how this process depends on the current context.
25. What is *conversational inference*? Provide an example.
26. What does it mean to suggest that the mind trades off rate and accuracy of comprehension? Explain why this might be necessary. What are some examples that suggest this occurs?

Gleitman: Ch. 10, pp. 396-408

27. What observations lead to the conclusion that children are better at language learning than even the wisest adults? Why might language be so different in this way than most other kinds of learning?
28. Why is it reasonable to assert that even for pre-linguistic infants, language plays a role in social communication?
29. Describe the *methods* that have been used, even with newborn infants, to determine that they are sensitive to the differences between different languages. What sorts of differences can infants detect by two months of age?
30. A potentially serious problem for someone trying to learn the meanings of words in a complex world is that of distinguishing whether an unknown word refers to some complete thing or one of its parts, properties, functions, some larger category to which the thing belongs, or something else entirely. Use an example to illustrate how/why this could be a problem for infant language learners (or even adults trying to learn a second language). Summarize the social cues and the heuristics that infants have been shown to use to solve this problem. Be sure you understand and can describe the research that supports these ideas.
31. At what age do children begin to use what they know about language structure to help learn new words? What is the evidence supporting this claim?
32. Identify important landmarks in the progression of spoken language ability from infancy to adulthood.
33. What are *overregularization errors*? What insight to they provide about how children learn language and the role of imitation in that process?
34. What is the distinction between "wild" children and "isolated" children? Why is this distinction important? What conclusions can be (albeit tentatively) drawn for the cases of isolated children such as "Isabelle" and "Genie"?

35. What evidence supports the conclusion that language does not depend on the auditory-vocal channel of expression?
36. Summarize the evidence that children will actively "invent" a language if there is none available in the environment to "learn" and they are in an environment that allows communication?
37. How do blind children understand sight-dependent concepts?

Gleitman: Ch. 10, pp. 408 – 421

38. Summarize the evidence that *crib bilingual* children not only learn both languages as well as a monolingual child learns just one, but that she also obtains other cognitive benefits from this experience.
39. What are *aphasia*, *Specific Language Impairment*, and *Williams syndrome*? Describe the argument based on these populations that language and general intelligence are at least somewhat distinct.
40. What is the *sensitive period hypothesis*? Describe evidence supporting this hypothesis from second-language learners and those exposed late to a first language. Discuss a second interpretation of these data based on the idea that the first language interferes with learning of subsequent languages.
41. What is the evidence that supports the claim that animals can have rich communicative systems, but that these systems are qualitatively different from those of human language?
42. What is the *Whorfian* hypothesis? How is this different for the more general (and obviously true) claim that language can influence thought? Is there much support for this hypothesis?
43. Some languages (e.g., Dani) have many fewer color terms than does English. Summarize first the evidence that this discrepancy may lead to differences in the brain mechanisms used to process color terms by the speakers of these languages and second the evidence that the speakers of these languages actually do not perceive colors differently.
44. Summarize evidence that, although some languages (e.g., English and Korean) differ in the sets of terms they include to refer to relations involving spatial position and direction, these differences do not change fundamentally how speakers of the languages think about space and spatial relationships.