Answers Unit 4

1. John **works** for IBM.
   These **days**, my mother **reads** a lot of historical **novels**.
   We **liked** it there a lot last year, but this year we **are looking** for
   a **cheaper** hotel.
   Can you identify the person to **whom** you **handed** the parcel?

2. He's the **most polite** person that you can imagine.
   I find the **cover of the book** very misleading.

3. **John's sister's children** are joining us for part of the trip.
   The door is now even **narrower** than before.

4. Although the most recent **OED** entry for *utterest* dates from 1884,
   this superlative was most common in the 15th and 16th centuries
   and hardly used after. From the present-day point of
   view, *utterest* is considered obsolete in the OED. This is confirmed
   by **Webster's** *Third New International Dictionary of the English
   Language,* which does not record the word at all. The most recent
   entry of *merest* in the OED, on the other hand, is from 1984. Its
   usage in present-day English is recorded also in Webster's
   Dictionary.

   Both Quirk/ Greenbaum's *Student's Grammar of the English
   Language* and Huddleston/ Pullum's *Student's Introduction to
   English Grammar* list *utter* as a peripheral adjective whose only
   adjectival characteristic is its attributive function. According to these
   grammars, *utter* is not gradable, i.e. cannot be used in the
   superlative.

   Evidence from present-day English corpora corroborate the
   assumption that the superlative *utterest*, in contrast to *merest*, is
   not current any longer. In the Freiburg-Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen
   corpus (written British English from the 1990s), in the Frown corpus
   (written American English from the 1990s) and in the BNC (written
   and spoken British English from the 1960s to the
   1990s), *utterest* does not occur at all. *Merest*, on the other hand,
   occurs 123 times in the BNC (121 times in the written part, and
   twice in the spoken material), three times in the Freiburg-Lancaster-
   Oslo/Bergen corpus and five times in the Frown corpus.

Although about 1,000 entries come up when searching for *utterest* in English-language websites, a large number of these are either the archaic second-person singular form of the verb *utter* ("thou utterest") or, if used as the superlative, occur in quotations from translations of the Bible into English which cultivate an archaic style or in older literary work by Geoffrey Chaucer or Emily Dickinson. On the basis of this evidence, the assumption that the superlative *utterest* is not current in present-day English seems to hold. A search for *merest* on English-language sites, on the other hand, produces about 689,000 hits.

If you want to use the Web as corpus, you should consider the following points:

- If a corpus is merely considered as a collection of texts, the Word Wide Web can easily be used as a corpus. However, if corpus is defined as a collection of texts compiled according to specific linguistic criteria and aiming at representativeness, the Web can hardly be compared to linguistic corpora such as the *British National Corpus* or the *International Corpus of English*. In the Web, the number of texts is ever increasing (i.e. the corpus size is not defined; only estimates of the actual size of the Web exist), the websites have different lengths, and no genre distinction is made. The Web can therefore not be considered a corpus in the classic linguistic sense.

- The lack of information about actual corpus size means that it is difficult to put quantitative results in a wider perspective. Is the information that *utterest* occurs about 975 times in English-language websites at all useful? Purely quantitative analyses on the basis of the Web are therefore not very practical unless you compose your own corpus based on a limited number of texts so that the corpus size is clearly defined. The Web can, however, be used to test the existence of specific words or idiomatic phrases or to view words or phrases in context.

- Remember that an English-language website need not be written by a native speaker of English.

- A good way to systematically search the Web for specific terms are the following websites offering concordance programmes specifically designed for the Web:

www.webcorp.org.uk

5. *Long live the Emperor!* - simple; finite

   Down with the Emperor! - simple; verbless

   I don't want (you to be present at my birthday party). - complex; main clause finite, object clause non-finite

   (Living in Scotland), you pick up one or two words (which would not be used South of the Border). - complex; adverbial clause non-finite, main clause finite, relative clause finite

   Would you believe it? - simple; finite

   He just upped and left. - simple (with coordinated finite verbs in the predicate); finite

   I arranged (for an old friend of mine to meet me at the airport). - complex; main clause finite, object clause non-finite

   Students (wishing to take the exam before the end of the summer term) must register by 30 April. - simple; finite, non-finite relative clause defining the main-clause subject *students*. Note that the presence of a relative clause does not make a sentence into a complex one. Relative clauses are post-modifications within a constituent noun phrase, not expansions of constituents into sub-clauses.

   The committee's report was not expected to be published before the elections. - complex; main clause finite; object clause non-finite. The structure of this clause is complicated to unravel because of double passivisation. Think of:

   Noboby expected (the government [S] to publish [P] the committee's report [O] before the elections [(A)]

   as a possible underlying form. Passivisation of the bracketed non-finite object clause yields:

   Nobody expected (the committee's report to be published before the elections)

   Now assume a reanalysis of the following type, which is permitted in this case:

   (Nobody [S] expected [P] the committee's report [O]) to be published before the elections

   Passivisation of the main clause yields the version you were asked

to analyse.

6. *evlerde*: in (the) houses
   evim: my house
   evde: in (the) house
   evimde: in my house

7. The following books might help you with this question:
   Brown, Edward K. (ed.). 2006. *Encyclopedia of language &
   linguistics*. Amsterdam et al.: Elsevier.
   Comrie, Bernard. 1996. *Language universals and linguistic typology:
   syntax and morphology*. Oxford: Blackwell.
   Croft, William. 2004. *Typology and universals*. Cambridge:
   Cambridge University Press.
   Crystal, David. 1998. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*.
   Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.