

# LLAMA\_F v3.0 Grammar Rules

## The Manual

### Short Instructions

#### LLAMA\_F v3.0 Grammar Rules

**LLAMA\_F** tests how well you can pick up the grammar rules of an unfamiliar language. The reason for this test is that lots of learners find it difficult to realise that languages use words in ways that are unusual in their first language. For instance, in English we say **the man saw the black cat**, but in other languages, you often find the Verb at the beginning of the sentence, and the adjective after the noun: so **Saw the man the cat black** would be the proper word order. Some languages don't have a word that corresponds to **the** in English. Some languages use special markers to show you which words in a sentence go together, and so on. An important part of learning a language is that you should be able to notice these patterns and use them effectively.

The opening page of the LLAMA\_F program looks like this:

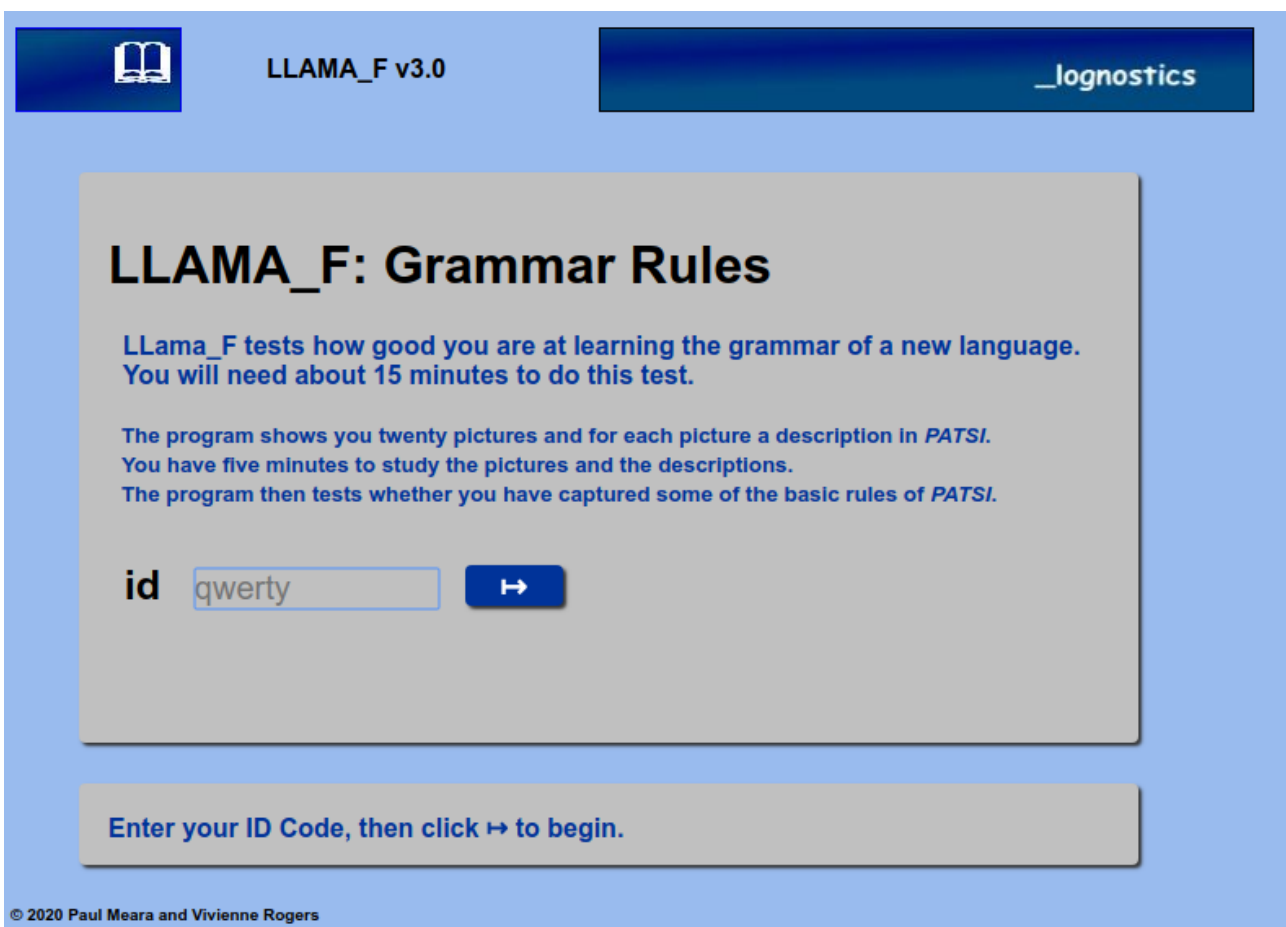

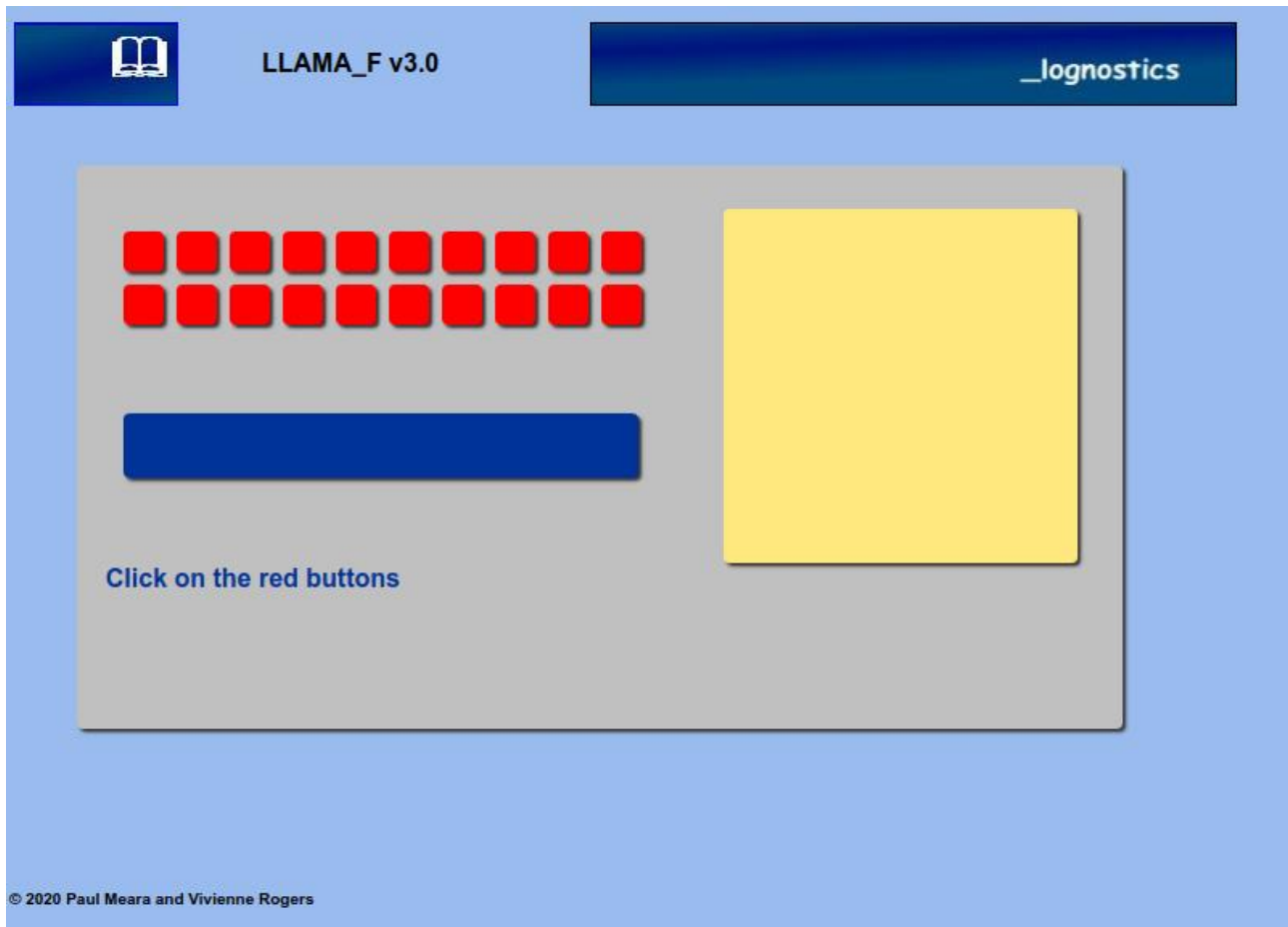


Figure 1: The LLAMA\_F initial page

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First enter your personal ID code. This should be a string of six characters that uniquely identifies you, and is not likely to be used by anybody else. This will normally be a six letter code like JOSMA or CF56EJ .

Next click the  button. This will take to to the display page, which is shown in Figure 2 below.



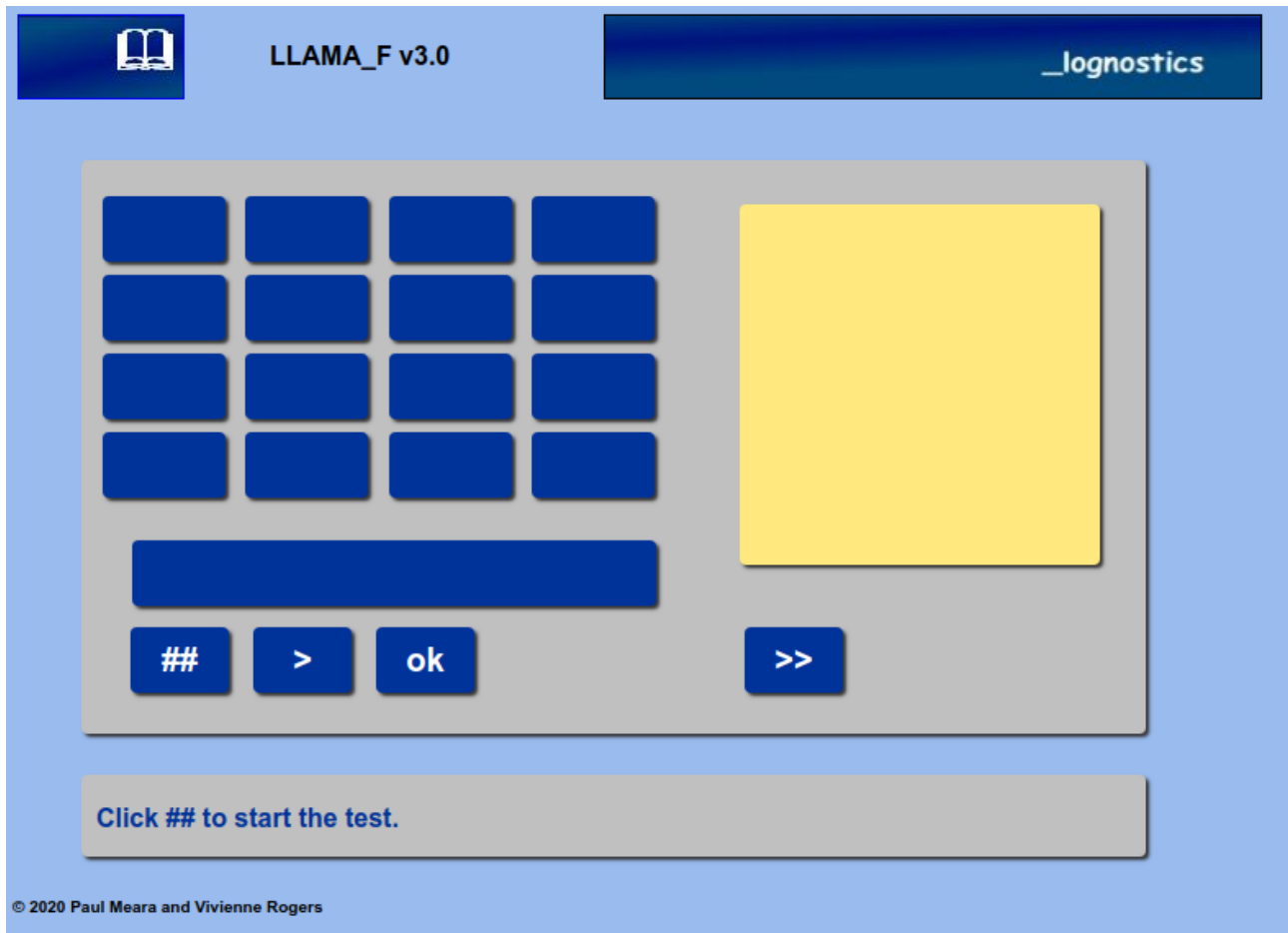
**Figure 2: The LLAMA\_E learning page**

This screen contains a set of 20 red buttons. When you click on one of these buttons, the program will display a picture in the yellow square, and a short sentence in *Patsi* that describes the picture will appear in the yellow square. Each button gives you a different picture.

The program allows you just five minutes to explore this material. You can click as many buttons as you like, in any order that you like, and you can take any notes that you need to help you work out how *Patsi* sentences work. You will need to work quickly on this task. Make sure that you click on all of the red buttons before your time runs out.

After five minutes exploration time, the program will automatically move on to test how much you have learned.

The LLAMA\_F3 testing page is shown in Figure 3, on the next page. Make sure that you understand what the buttons do before you start the test. There is no time limit for this test, but it should take less than 10 minutes.



**Figure 3: The LLAMA\_F3 test page.**

The test page contains a new set of buttons. Click on the ## button to start the test. This will make sixteen *Patsi* words appear on the blank buttons.

Now click on the > button. This will make the program display a picture in the yellow square. Your task is to describe the picture using the words on the buttons. If you click on a button, it will copy the relevant word onto the blue rectangle. If you make a mistake, and want to start again, then you can erase what you have written so far by clicking the blue rectangle. Once you are happy with your answer, click the OK button. This will record your answer. Click the > button for the next picture.

There are ten test questions in all. When you have described the last picture, the program will ask you to click the >> button and submit your answers.

LLAMA\_F3 will score your answers, and make a report something like the report shown in Figure 4. The maximum score on the test is 20 points. Figure 4 shows a report for HADRIANVI. HADRIANVI scored 17 points. The figure also shows you that 38 people, including HADRIANVI have taken the test, and their scores are shown in the chart. HADRIANVI's score is well above the average for this test, but he is not one of the highest scorers.

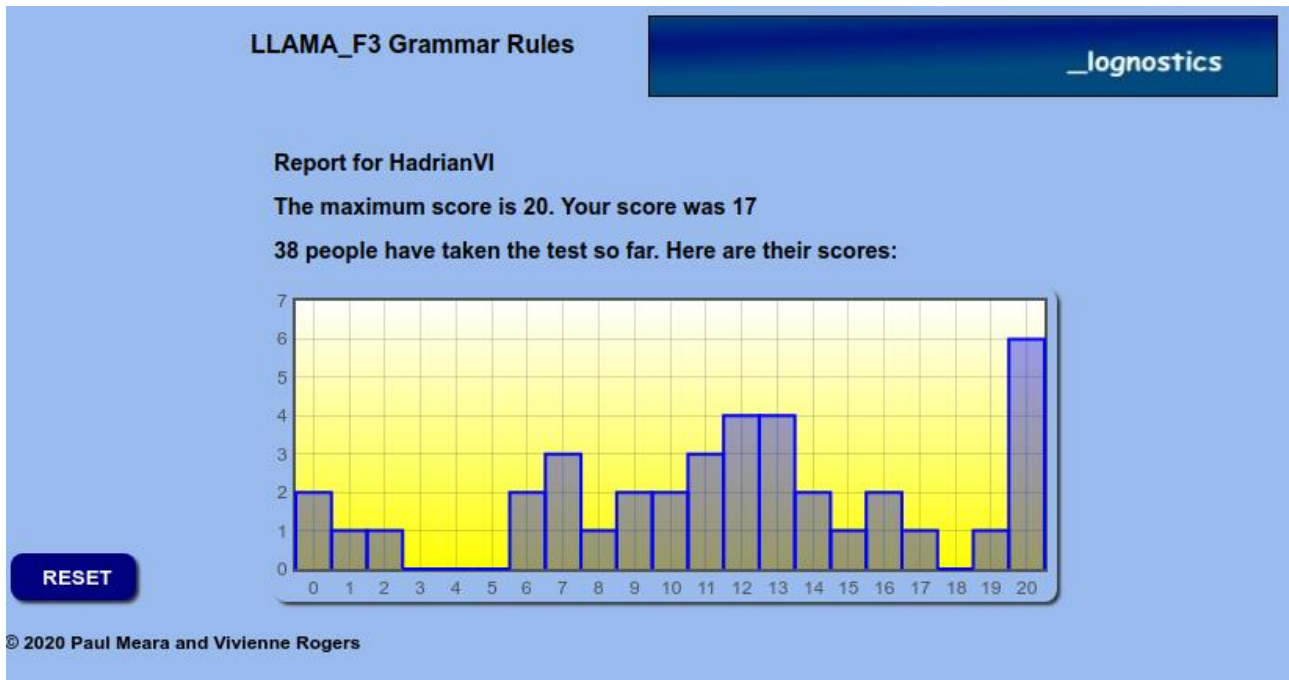


Figure 4: The LLAMA\_F3 report page.

## TECHNICAL NOTES FOR RESEARCHERS

This document is a brief placeholder manual for the new release of LLAMA\_F. LLAMA\_F v3.0 was released on 01.04.2020 in a beta version. Comments are welcome.

This new version is part of our plan to replace ALL the free-standing LLAMA tests with test versions that run over the web, rather than on free-standing PCs. This is partly in response to the frequent updating of MicroSoft operating systems, which requires us to constantly update the existing versions of the tests and secure new licensing certificates. The new versions avoid these issues, and they allow us to make rapid changes in response to errors and bugs. The web versions make it possible for us to collect data from users and build normed versions of the programs.

LLAMA\_F was probably the best of the original LLAMA programs, but there were some issues with the scoring system that we used in the earlier versions. The original LLAMA\_F test was a forced choice test where test-takers were presented with a picture and two possible sentences that might describe it. This severely restricted the range of scores generated by the test: basically, you could score 50% by blind guessing, so the LLAMA\_F scores varied in practice between 50% and 100%. The new version tries to avoid this problem. Test takers are asked to generate *Patsi* sentences by clicking on buttons that make up a small dictionary. This makes the test considerably harder than the earlier versions - it is more of a productive test than a receptive test. But the trade off is that the

new test generates a wider spread of scores, and makes the test a better predictor.

The new scoring system is complex. There are ten test items, and each item is scored twice: each test item provides an opportunity for the test taker to show their grasp of two specific grammar rules in *Patsi*. Example X, for example, might be set up to test the Adjective/Noun rule and the Verb Initial rule. An answer submitted to this item would be scored **ONLY** on these two features: an answer that matched both these criteria would score two points, while an item that matches only one criterion would score a single point. Other correct features or errors are ignored. This means that a sentence which is grossly incorrect might be able to score two points as long as it preserved the features that we are looking for. This is a rather unusual way of evaluating grammar knowledge, and we will need to do some detailed item analysis at a later stage in order to evaluate whether it works or not. LLAMA\_F3 does record the actual answers made by test-takers, and we are happy to make this data available to bona fide researchers who want to follow this up. Contact the authors if you are interested in this.

The previous section of this manual contains a brief set of instructions for test-takers. These instructions are currently available only in English. We will incorporate other languages if there is a need for this. Researchers should feel free to develop their own instruction set, or to prepare these instructions in other languages. It would be helpful, and greatly appreciated, if you could let us have copies of any such translations.

It is important to note that you should not override the instructions in the manual, or introduce new conditions that are not already in the instruction set. For example, it would be a mistake to tell test-takers not to write notes for this test.

In order to comply with the EU's General Data Protection rules, the program asks test-takers to provide a six-letter ID code which is stored along-side the test-taker's data. This is the only personal information that is stored by the program, and does not allow us to identify individual users. However, the scores are recoverable so that they can be used for research purposes. Data is scored in the form **HADRIANVI,17** (indicating that test-taker **HADRIANVI** scored 17 correct answers). The program does not record which items HadrianVI got correct. However, this data is recoverable if you really need it. Contact the authors if this applies to you: the scoring system is actually quite complex, and you will need some help to unravel the actual data that your test-takers submit.

If you are a researcher running LLAMA\_F as part of a project with a number of test-takers, then you will find it helpful to issue them with ID codes that uniquely identify your test-takers. For example, if your project is being carried out in JohnPaul II University, then you might give the test-takers a code such as JP2001, JP2003, JP2004, and so on. This will probably allow us to archive all your data as a retrievable set.

Please note that the previous test-takers data shown in the report page will not be reliable until the beta version is replaced by a fully working version. If this is a problem for you, please contact us. We will extend the report stage to include a standardised score once we have collected sufficient data for this to be sensible. It would help us to prepare this feature if you could let us know when you are using the LLAMA\_E test, and approximately how many test-takers will be involved.

**Comments on this beta version are very welcome.** We will make every effort to correct bugs that users identify, and to incorporate improvements to the program. Please bear in mind that we don't

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work full-time on this project, and corrections may take some time. You will find an updated list of frequently asked questions and a record of bug fixes in the appendices to this manual.

**Please send your comments and suggestions to:**

**[p.m.meara@gmail.com](mailto:p.m.meara@gmail.com)**

If you are using this program to collect data then please reference it as:

*Meara, PM and V Rogers*

*LLAMA\_F v3.00 Grammar Rules (beta)*

*Cardiff: Lognostics. 2019.*

*The small print*

LLAMA\_E v3.00 is made freely available to bona-fide researchers in exchange for comments and suggestions as to how to improve the format. **The test should NOT be used in high stakes situations where reliability and accuracy are at a premium.** No liability of any kind arising from the use or misuse of the test is accepted by the Authors. By using the test you agreeing to this condition.

## Frequently asked Questions

### **Can I use LLAMA\_F3 with young children?**

Probably not, but we don't know. Our guess is that the task might be too hard for young children. LLAMA\_F is designed to work with adult L2 learners. but it might work for adolescents.

### **What grammatical features does LLAMA\_F3 test?**

There are five basic rules in *Patsi*.

- a) Adjectives precede their Nouns.
- b) Locators precede their Noun Phrases.
- c) singular Nouns are marked by a singular affix, plural nouns are not.
- d) adjectives and singular marks vary with the class of their nouns.
- e) Locators are followed by one of two markers if their subjects are dual or triple.

### **Is LLAMA\_F biased in favour of European language speakers?**

We don't know, but we don't think so. Some of the features of *Patsi* are not familiar in Indo-European languages, though they do occur in other languages. We don't have enough data from this new version. This question would make a good research project.

### **Is LLAMA\_F basically a vocabulary learning test?**

Again, we don't know the answer to this question, and it will be interesting to see if LLAMA\_F3 correlates with the LLAMA\_B3 vocabulary learning task. This question would also makew a good research project.

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## **Bugs and Fixes**

**No bugs so far.**