

**Handed Out:** 3 April, 2014

**Reply Due:** 10 April, 2014, in class

Please respond to **three** of the following five prompts, which all pertain to the book *Syntactic Structures* (Chomsky, 1957). Your answers need not be overly long — about 1 page each — and they should use precise, direct language in continuous prose. In summarizing the arguments of a text, you must strike a good balance between using textual supports like direct quotation and using your own words to restate, reorder, clarify, or amplify particular claims. When you use direct quotation, be sure to indicate the section and page number.

1. Summarize Chapter 2. Make sure your summary provides an answer to the question: “what is a generative grammar”?
2. What is a finite-state machine? What is the main argument that a finite-state machine is an inadequate model for the grammar of natural languages?
3. Locate and explicate the following excerpt:

“To put the same thing differently, in the auxiliary verb phrase we really have discontinuous elements — e.g., in (30) the elements *have .. en* and *be..ing*. But discontinuities cannot be handled within  $[\Sigma, F]$  grammars.”

  - For starters, what are the characteristics of  $[\Sigma, F]$  grammars?
  - In what way are they in conflict with properties of the auxiliary verb phrase?
  - What role does this claim play in Chomsky’s larger argument?
4. In your own words, rehearse the argument about the active-passive relation. What kind of challenge does passivization pose to phrase structure grammars?
5. In the preface to the 2002 edition of *Syntactic Structures*, Lightfoot refers to the “celebrated discussion in chapter 6.” What is Chomsky talking about in this celebrated discussion? Contrast how Chomsky plainly intends it to be interpreted versus how Lightfoot claims it is often interpreted.

*Formatting conventions:* - 12pt font, 1” margins, 1.5 spacing, logically & attractively organized  
- Last name and page number in top right header