

Lesson 1: Subject-Verb Disagreement

Finding Verbs

The verb is the most important part of a sentence, but verbs aren't always easy to spot. Consider the word *swim* in the sentences *The ducks swim in the pond* and *The ducks love to swim*. In the first sentence, *swim* is the verb. In the second sentence, *swim* is part of a noun phrase. (*To swim* is the *thing* that the ducks love.) So how do we spot verbs?

A verb is what conveys the essential meaning of a clause (a string of words that convey an idea). Every idea requires a verb. The sentence *The ducks swim in the pond* says that *Something swims somewhere*, so the verb is *swim*. The sentence *The ducks love to swim* says that *Something loves something*, so the verb is *love*. Every verb requires a subject, that is, what *does* the verb. In both sentences, the subject is *ducks*. A verb may also require an *object*, that is, what *receives* the verb. In *The ducks love to swim*, the object is *to swim*, because that is the *thing* that is loved.

Example:

When David approached third base, the coach waved him home.

This sentence contains two related ideas, so it contains two clauses, and therefore two verbs:

Clause 1: *When David approached third base*
Verb: *approached* Subject: *David*
Object: *third base*

Clause 2: *the coach waved him home*
Verb: *waved* Subject: *the coach*
Object: *him*

Subject-Verb Disagreement (SVD)

Every verb must agree in number (singular or plural) with its subject. Subject-verb disagreement is one of the most common errors tested for on the SAT. If you are a native speaker of English, the best way to check for subject-verb disagreement is to find the subject and verb (ignoring all the intervening words) and *say them together*.

Example:

The people, who are easily persuaded by corporate-sponsored media, spends very little time analyzing issues.

The subject of the verb *spends* is *people*. But *people spends* sounds wrong, because *spends* is the

“third person singular” form—as in *he spends*—but *people* is plural, so the phrase should be *people spend*.

Tricky Plurals and Singulars

These rules will help you to check whether a verb agrees in “number” with its subject:

Phrases like *Sam and Bob* are plural, but phrases like *Sam, in addition to Bob*, are singular. Phrases that start *as well as . . .*, *together with . . .*, *along with . . .*, or *in addition to . . .* are interrupters, which are not part of the main subject.

These words are singular: *each, anyone, anybody, anything, another, neither, either, every, everyone, someone, no one, somebody, everything, little, and much*. To check for SVD, you can replace any of them with *it*.

These words are plural: *phenomena* (singular: *phenomenon*), *media* (singular: *medium*), *data* (singular: *datum*), and *criteria* (singular: *criterion*). To check for SVD, you can replace any of them with *they*.

All of the following can be either singular or plural, according to the noun that follows the *of*: *none (of)*, *any (of)*, *some (of)*, *most (of)*, *more (of)*, and *all (of)*.

Verbs that follow subjects of the form *either A or B* and *neither A nor B* must agree with *B*, the noun closer to the verb.

Inverted Sentences

Usually the subject comes *before* the verb, but *inverted* clauses have the subject *after* the verb. For instance, sentences that start *There is . . .* or *There are . . .* are inverted. To check subject-verb agreement in these sentences, first “uninvert” them.

Example:

There are many flies in the barn. (inverted)

V S

Many flies are in the barn. (uninverted)

S V

Concept Review I: Subject-Verb Disagreement

Next to each noun or noun phrase, write "S" if it is singular or "P" if it is plural.

1. *Neither rain nor snow* _____
2. *Crowd of rowdy fans* _____
3. *Media* _____
4. *Criterion* _____
5. *One or two* _____
6. *Everything* _____
7. *Either of the candidates* _____
8. *Phenomena* _____

Circle the subject in each sentence, and choose the correct verb.

9. *Neither of the cars (is/are) equipped with antilock brakes.*
10. *The flock of geese (was/were) startled by the shotgun blast.*
11. *The data on my computer (was/were) completely erased when the power failed.*
12. *Mathematics and history (is/are) my favorite subjects.*
13. *None of the roast (was/were) eaten.*
14. *All of the games (was/were) played on real grass fields.*
15. *Pride and Prejudice (is/are) my favorite Jane Austen novel.*
16. *Neither of the twins (is/are) allergic to penicillin.*
17. *Much of what I hear in those lectures (goes/go) in one ear and out the other.*
18. *Amy, along with Jamie and Jen, (is/are) applying to Mount Holyoke.*
19. *None of the books (was/were) considered fit for public consumption.*
20. *All of the eggplant (was/were) used to make the sauce.*
21. *Amid the lilies and wildflowers (was/were) one solitary rose.*
22. *Either Ben or his brothers (is/are) in charge of bringing the drinks.*
23. *There (is/are) hardly even a speck of dirt left on the carpet.*
24. *"Stop right there!" (shouts/shout) the Bailey brothers, who are standing in front of me.*
25. *Either the Donovans or Dave (is/are) going to bring the plates.*
26. *There (is/are) at least a hundred people here.*

"Uninvert" the following sentences so that the verb follows the subject, then choose the correct verb form.

27. *There (is/are), in my opinion, far too many smokers in this restaurant.*

28. *Over that hill (is/are) thousands of bison.*

29. *Riding on the bus among the children (was/were) over a dozen commuters.*

30. *Never before (has/have) there been such voices heard here.*

31. *Absent from the article (was/were) any mention of the director's previous Broadway failures.*

Worksheet 1: Subject-Verb Disagreement

Label each verb in the following sentences with a "V" and each subject with an "S." If any verbs are incorrect, cross them out and write the correct form in the blank.

1. *We were horrified to discover that there was more than three mice living in the attic.* _____
2. *Either the president or one of her aides are going to coordinate the project.* _____
3. *There is nearly always two or three guards posted at each entrance.* _____
4. *Every player on both the Falcons and the Rockets were at the party after the game.* _____
5. *There has been a theater and a toy store in the mall ever since it opened.* _____
6. *Either Eric or his brother is hosting the party this year.* _____
7. *There is no fewer than six crayons in this box.* _____
8. *The therapy can resume as planned because neither of the twins are allergic to penicillin.* _____
9. *The proceeds from the sale of every auctioned item goes to charity.* _____
10. *Economics, particularly with its dependence on the behavior of consumers and producers, has always struck me as more of a human science than a mathematical one.* _____
11. *There is more than three years remaining on her contract.* _____
12. *Neither of the girls were frightened by the wild animals that scurried incessantly past their tent.* _____
13. *The technology behind high-definition television, DVDs, and CDs have transformed nearly every aspect of the home entertainment industry.* _____
14. *Every player on both teams were concerned about the goalie's injury.* _____
15. *The company's sponsorship of charitable foundations and mentorship programs have garnered many commendations from philanthropic organizations.* _____
16. *Neither the children nor their parents utters a word when Mrs. Denny tells her stories.* _____
17. *How important is your strength training and your diet to your daily regimen?* _____

Answer Key I: Subject-Verb Disagreement

Concept Review I

1. S
2. S
3. P
4. S
5. P
6. S
7. S
8. P
9. s: *neither*, v: *is*
10. s: *flock*, v: *was*
11. s: *data*, v: *were* (*data* is plural)
12. s: *mathematics and history*, v: *are*
13. s: *none* (*roast*), v: *was*
14. s: *all* (*games*), v: *were*
15. s: *Pride and Prejudice*, v: *is*
16. s: *neither*, v: *is*
17. s: *much*, v: *goes*
18. s: *Amy*, v: *is*
19. s: *none* (*books*), v: *were*
20. s: *all* (*eggplant*), v: *was*
21. s: *rose*, v: *was*
22. s: *brothers*, v: *are*
23. s: *speck*, v: *is*
24. s: *Bailey brothers*, v: *shout*
25. s: *Dave*, v: *is*
26. s: *people*, v: *are*
27. *Far too many smokers, in my opinion, are in this restaurant.*
28. *Thousands of bison are over that hill.*
29. *Among the children, over a dozen commuters were riding on the bus.*
30. *Such voices have never before been heard here.*
31. *Any mention of the director's previous Broadway failures was absent from the article.*

Worksheet I

1. s: *we*, v: *were* (correct); s: *mice*, v: *was* (change to *were*)
2. s: *one*, v: *are* (change to *is*)
3. s: *guards*, v: *is* (change to *are*)
4. s: *every player*, v: *were* (change to *was*)
5. s: *a theater and a toy store*, v: *has been* (change to *have been*)
6. s: *his brother*, v: *is* (correct)
7. s: *crayons*, v: *is* (change to *are*)
8. s: *therapy*, v: *can resume* (correct); s: *neither*, v: *are* (change to *is*)
9. s: *proceeds*, v: *goes* (change to *go*)
10. s: *economics*, v: *has struck* (correct)
11. s: *years*, v: *is* (change to *are*)
12. s: *neither*, v: *were* (change to *was*)
13. s: *technology*, v: *have transformed* (change to *has transformed*)
14. s: *every player*, v: *were* (change to *was*)
15. s: *sponsorship*, v: *have garnered* (change to *has garnered*)
16. s: *their parents*, v: *utters* (change to *utter*); s: *Mrs. Denny*, v: *tells*
17. s: *your strength training and your diet*, v: *is* (change to *are*)

Lesson 2: Trimming Sentences

Why Trim?

Spotting SVD errors is often easier when you “trim” the sentence, that is, eliminate nonessential modifiers to leave the “core” of the sentence. What remains after you “trim” a sentence should still be a grammatically correct and complete sentence.

How to “Trim” a Sentence

Step 1: Cross out all nonessential prepositional phrases.

e.g., *The bird ~~in the cage~~ began singing.*

A **preposition** is a word that shows relative position or direction. It can complete one of the following sentences:

The squirrel ran _____ the tree.

Democracy is government _____ the people.

Examples include *to*, *from*, *of*, *for*, *by*, *in*, *before*, *with*, *beyond*, and *up*.

A **prepositional phrase** is the preposition and the noun phrase that follows, including its modifiers.

e.g., *from sea to shining sea*
in the beginning with hat in hand

Step 2: Cross out all interrupting phrases.

e.g., *The committee, ~~ignoring tradition~~, will approve the measure.*

An **interrupting phrase** is a modifying phrase that interrupts the flow of the sentence. Interrupters are generally separated from the main sentence by commas or dashes.

Step 3: Cross out all other nonessential modifiers and modifying phrases.

e.g., *~~Having traveled so far~~, the baseball team hardly wanted to forfeit the ~~championship~~ game.*

Modifiers are *adjectives* and *adverbs*, as well as modifying phrases like *participial phrases* (see Lesson 7). Most modifiers are not essential to a sentence, but some are. Use your best judgment. One kind of essential adjective is a *predicate adjective*, that is, an adjective that is linked to the subject by a linking verb, as in *Martha is smart.*

Trimming a sentence helps you to spot SVD more easily.

Original: *My chief concern with this budget and the other proposals on the table are the cuts in school funds.*

Trimmed: *My concern are the cuts.*

Revised: *My concern is the cuts.*

Who Kicked Whom?

When you write, trim your sentences to play the “Who kicked whom?” exercise. Look at the subject-verb-object (“Who kicked whom?”) core, and see if it clearly and forcefully conveys the thought you want to convey.

Original: *The lack of economic programs and no big country's being ready to join it symbolized the problems the League of Nations had in getting established.*

Trimmed: *The lack and no country's being ready symbolized the problems.*

Yikes! That doesn't make a shred of sense; rewrite it.

Revised: *Two problems plagued the establishment of the League of Nations: its lack of viable economic programs and its lack of support from the larger countries.*

Concept Review 2: Trimming Sentences

1. What are the three types of words or phrases that can be eliminated when "trimming" a sentence?

2. Why is it sometimes helpful to "trim" a sentence?

3. Circle all of the prepositions in the list below.

of beyond for and with the an. without some along below

4. What is a prepositional phrase?

5. Write four examples of prepositional phrases.

Write the trimmed version of each sentence on the line below it, correcting any verb problems.

6. *The team of advisors, arriving ahead of schedule, were met at the airport by the Assistant Prime Minister.*

7. *The flock of birds that darted over the lake were suddenly an opalescent silver.*

8. *Carmen, along with her three sisters, are unlikely to be swayed by arguments supporting David's position.*

Write the trimmed version of each sentence on the line below it, then rewrite the sentence to make it clearer and more forceful, changing the subject and verb entirely, if necessary.

9. *Nearly inevitably, advancements, or those being popularly regarded as such, have to do with modifications, not overhaul.*

Trimmed: _____

Revised: _____

10. *The development of the new country's governmental system was affected in a negative regard by the rebels' lack of cohesiveness.*

Trimmed: _____

Revised: _____

Worksheet 2: Trimming Sentences

Write the "trimmed" version of each sentence, circling the verbs and subjects and correcting any agreement errors.

1. *Juggling the demands of both school and my social agenda often seem too much to bear.*

2. *Others on the committee, like the chairwoman Amanda Sanders, is concerned about the lack of attention given to school safety.*

3. *The waiters' professional demeanor—particularly their keen knowledge, their attention to detail, and their cordiality—are what makes dining there such a sublime culinary experience.*

4. *The system by which candidates for local political offices are selected is archaic and, many contend, unfair.*

5. *The abundance of companies that fail in their first year of business contribute to an intimidating economic climate.*

6. *When scientists theorize about the traits that all humans have come to share, they must be keenly aware of the fact that these traits have evolved over millions of generations.*

7. *The entire industry of tobacco companies and distributors has steadfastly maintained their position that tobacco is not addictive and that smoking is an inalienable right of consumers.*

8. *The challenge of Mount Everest, its conquerors claim, is far more the lack of oxygen at its rarefied heights than even the precarious ice falls or precipitous ascents.*

9. *One in every three Americans agree strongly with the statement: "Anyone who would run for political office is not worth voting for."*

10. *The fact that humans have committed so many atrocities have forced some historians to adopt a cynical perspective on human nature.*

Answer Key 2: Trimming Sentences

Concept Review 2

1. Prepositional phrases, interrupting phrases, and nonessential modifiers
2. Trimming reveals subject-verb disagreement errors and reveals how clear and forceful the sentence is.
3. Prepositions: *of, beyond, for, with, without, along, below.*
4. A prepositional phrase is a preposition and the noun or noun phrase that follows it.
5. Examples might include *in the tree, without hesitation, beyond gimmicks, and over two million hungry customers.*
6. *The team were* (change to *was*) *met.*
7. *The flock were* (change to *was*) *silver.*
8. *Carmen are* (change to *is*) *unlikely to be swayed.*
9. Trimmed: *Advancements have to do with modifications.*
The verb (*have to do with*) is weak, vague, and inactive, and the subject (*advancements*) and object (*modification*) are abstract and vague. To improve the sentence, think about the *intended* meaning of the sentence, and use stronger and less abstract terms. Here's a good revision:
Typically, societies progress by making small modifications to their institutions, not by overhauling them completely.
10. Trimmed: *The development was affected.*
The verb (*was affected*) is weak, passive, and vague. Here's a good revision:
The incohesiveness of the rebels hindered the development of the new government.

Worksheet 2

1. *Juggling the demands seem* (change to *seems*) *too much to bear.*
2. *Others is* (change to *are*) *concerned.*
3. *The demeanor are* (change to *is*) *what makes dining there a sublime experience.*
4. *The system is archaic and unfair.* (correct)
5. *The abundance contribute* (change to *contributes*) *to an intimidating climate.*
6. *They must be keenly aware that these traits have evolved over millions of generations.* (correct)
7. *The industry has maintained their* (change to *its*) *position that tobacco is not addictive and that smoking is an inalienable right.*
8. *The challenge is far more the lack of oxygen than the precarious ice falls or precipitous ascents.* (correct)
9. *One agree* (change to *agrees*) *with the statement: "Anyone who would run for political office is not worth voting for."*
10. *The fact have forced* (change to *has forced*) *some.*

Lesson 3: Parallelism

The Law of Parallelism

When you *compare* or list items in a sentence, the items should have the *same grammatical form*. That is, if the first item is an infinitive (or a gerund, or an adjective, etc.), the other item(s) should be, too.

Wrong: *She hated **to take** charge, **draw** attention to herself, and **she hated seeming** like a know-it-all.*

The three items have different forms. The sentence sounds best if they are all *gerunds*.

Right: *She hated **taking** charge, **drawing** attention to herself, and **seeming** like a know-it-all.*

Wrong: *Believe it or not, I like **to read** more than I like **going** to parties.*

The first item is an *infinitive*, but the second is a *gerund*. Make them the same form.

Right: *Believe it or not, I like **to read** more than I like **to go** to parties.*

Also right: *Believe it or not, I like **reading** more than I like **going** to parties.*

Parallel Constructions

In all constructions like the following, the words or phrases that replace *A* and *B* must be parallel.

<i>A is like B</i>	<i>A more than B</i>	<i>prefer A to B</i>
<i>neither A nor B</i>	<i>either A or B</i>	<i>both A and B</i>
<i>the more A,</i>	<i>the better A,</i>	<i>not only A,</i>
<i>the less B</i>	<i>the better B</i>	<i>but also B</i>
<i>not A but B</i>	<i>less A than B</i>	<i>more A than B</i>

Infinitives vs. Gerunds

Infinitives are verblike phrases like *to run*, *to see*, and *to think*, which usually act as *nouns*.

Gerunds are also verblike words, like *running*, *seeing*, and *thinking*, and they also often act as *nouns*.

I like pizza. I like to swim. I like swimming.

What kind of word is *pizza*? Obviously a noun. But notice that in the sentences above, *to swim* (infinitive) and *swimming* (gerund) are playing the same role as *pizza* did in the first sentence. So they must be nouns too!

Usually, gerunds and infinitives are interchangeable. But in some situations, one is preferable to the other.

- The gerund often indicates a *general class* of activity, while the infinitive indicates a *specific* activity.

Good: ***Kayaking** (not *to kayak*) is a healthful sport, but can sometimes be dangerous.*

Good: *Curtis and Dan want **to kayak** (not *kayaking*) this afternoon.*

- The infinitive indicates a stronger *connection between subject and action* than does the gerund.

Unclear: *Cara has always loved **dancing**.*

Does Cara simply like to watch dancing, or does she herself do the dancing?

Clearer: *Cara has always loved **to dance**.*

This sentence clearly indicates that Cara herself dances.

- The infinitive often indicates *purpose or intention* better than does the gerund.

Awkward: *We have supplied cars **for transporting** the guests back to their hotel rooms.*

Better: *We have supplied cars **to transport** the guests back to their hotel rooms.*

Concept Review 3: Parallelism

1. In what situations do you have to obey the law of parallelism?

In each of the sentences below, circle the words or phrases that are parallel, then write the *form* of those words or phrases (adjectives, prepositional phrases, gerunds, infinitives, nouns, etc.) in the blank.

2. *You can register for the test by mail, by phone, or on the Web.* _____
3. *Having good study practices is even more important than working hard.* _____
4. *The more you get to know her, the more you will like her.* _____
5. *The produce is not only exceptionally fresh but also reasonably priced.* _____
6. *The show is less a concert than it is a 3-hour nightmare.* _____

Complete each of the sentences below with the appropriate word or phrase—infinitive or gerund—using the given verb.

7. (*exercise*) _____ is essential, but so is (*eat*) _____ intelligently.
8. *The purpose of this trip is (show) _____ you what life was like in the 18th century.*
9. *I have always loved (dance) _____, although my condition has always prevented me from doing it myself.*
10. *Is it better (study) _____ a little each night, or a lot the night before?*
11. *The director called a meeting (discuss) _____ the coordination of the marketing phase.*

Correct any infinitive/gerund problems in the sentences below.

12. *The defendant was unwilling to give up his right of having his lawyer present at all questioning.*
13. *I would not dream to try out for the team until I have learned to throw a football.*
14. *Even the reinforced concrete breakwater could not prevent the water to inundate the village.*
15. *Within the next three weeks, we plan having all of the work on the roof completed.*

Fix the parallelism errors in the following sentences.

16. *I like working with Miss Bennett because she is very supportive and has a lot of knowledge.*

17. *I can't decide whether I should give Maria the tickets or Caitlyn.*

18. *The movie was both beautifully directed and the acting was a joy to watch.*

Worksheet 3: Parallelism

In the following sentences, circle all parts that should be parallel, and correct any problems.

1. *Personal digital assistants can be not only practical, but also entertain for hours on end.*

2. *Filling out applications for summer jobs is about as much fun as when you take the SAT.*

3. *My lab partners were more concerned about getting the lab done quickly than about what grade they might get.*

4. *To say she is excitable is like saying Bill Gates is well off.*

5. *The sheer magnitude of the structure was awesome, but I thought the aesthetics were less than appealing.*

6. *The elegance of a proof lies more in its conciseness and clarity than in how clever it is.*

7. *I bought my tickets, reserved the hotel room, and I planned the itinerary myself.*

8. *We had to build our own shelters, orient ourselves without instruments, and we even had to hunt and gather our own food.*

9. *The rebels were neither disciplined nor did they have any overall strategy.*

10. *She was concerned not only with getting good grades, but also wanted to understand the material.*

11. *Patients with chronic fatigue syndrome tend to exhibit lethargy, a reduced affect, and they often feel depressed.*

12. *Taxpayers often prefer to pay high property taxes to the paying of high sales taxes.*

13. *Riding that roller coaster was like a trip over a waterfall in a barrel.*

14. *As a teacher, she loved to inspire creativity in her students, even more than she loved receiving accolades.*

Answer Key 3: Parallelism

Concept Review 3

- when comparing or listing things in a sentence
- by mail; by phone; on the web* prepositional phrases
- having; working* gerunds
- you get to know her; you will like her* clauses
- exceptionally fresh; reasonably priced* adverb-adjectives
- concert; 3-hour nightmare* nouns
- Exercising is essential, but so is eating intelligently.*
- The purpose of this trip is to show you what life was like in the 18th century.* The infinitive shows purpose more effectively than the gerund does.
- I have always loved dancing, although my condition has always prevented me from doing it myself.* Since the speaker cannot dance, the infinitive is inappropriate.
- Is it better to study a little each night, or a lot the night before?* The infinitive shows a clearer link between the action and a particular subject.
- The director called a meeting to discuss the coordination of the marketing phase.* The infinitive shows purpose more effectively than the gerund does.
- The defendant was unwilling to give up his right to have his lawyer present at all questioning.*
- I would not dream of trying out for the team until I have learned to throw a football.*
- Even the reinforced concrete breakwater could not prevent the water from inundating the village.*
- Within the next three weeks, we plan to have all of the work on the roof completed.*
- I like working with Miss Bennett because she is very supportive and knowledgeable.*
- I can't decide whether I should give the tickets to Maria or Caitlyn.*
- The movie's directing was beautiful and the acting was a joy to watch.*

Worksheet 3

- Personal digital assistants can be not only practical, but also entertaining for hours on end.*
- Filling out applications for summer jobs is about as much fun as taking the SAT.*
- My lab partners were more concerned about getting the lab done quickly than about getting a good grade.*
- Saying she is excitable is like saying Bill Gates is well off.*
- The sheer magnitude of the structure was awesome, but (omit I thought) the aesthetics were less than appealing.*
- The elegance of a proof lies more in its conciseness and clarity than in its cleverness.*
- I bought my tickets, reserved the hotel room, and (omit I) planned the itinerary myself.*
- We had to build our own shelters, orient ourselves without instruments, and even hunt and gather our own food.*
- The rebels lacked both discipline and overall strategy.*
- She was concerned not only with getting good grades, but also with understanding the material.*
- Patients with CFS tend to exhibit lethargy, a reduced affect, and often depression.*
- Taxpayers often prefer paying high property taxes to paying high sales taxes.*
- Riding that roller coaster was like taking a trip over a waterfall in a barrel.*
- As a teacher, she loved inspiring creativity in her students, even more than (omit she loved) receiving accolades.*

Lesson 4: Comparison Problems

Illogical Comparisons

Any items being compared in a sentence must be logically comparable, that is, in the same general category. Always compare *apples* to *apples*, not *apples* to *car batteries*! Also, comparisons must obey the law of parallelism.

Wrong: *Her chances of getting an A aren't much better than the lottery.*

Chances and *the lottery* aren't comparable things! We must compare *chances* to *chances*.

Right: *Her chances of getting an A aren't much better than her chances of winning the lottery.*

It is always illogical to say that something is different from itself. Watch out for sneaky contrasts like this:

Wrong: *She has played in more concerts than any cellist in her school.*

Of course, she hasn't played in more concerts than herself!

Right: *She has played in more concerts than any other cellist in her school.*

Fewer/Less, Number/Amount, and Many/Much

Use the words *fewer*, *number*, or *many* only in reference to *countable* things (like *cars*, *dollars*, and *popsicles*) and *less*, *amount*, or *much* only in reference to *uncountable* things (like *traffic*, *money*, and *food*). It is a common mistake to use *less* when you should use *fewer*.

Wrong: *There have been a lot less fans at the games ever since the owners raised ticket prices.*

Since fans can be counted, *less* doesn't work. Use *fewer* instead.

Right: *There have been a lot fewer fans at the games ever since the owners raised ticket prices.*

Wrong: *The team owners showed concern about the increasing amount of dangerously rowdy fans.*

Right: *The team owners showed concern about the increasing number of dangerously rowdy fans.*

Between/Among, More/Most, and -er/-est

Use *between*, *more*, and any *-er* adjectives only when comparing *exactly two things*. Use *among*, *most*, and *-est* adjectives when comparing *more than two things*.

Wrong: *The two superpowers seemed to be in a constant battle to see who was strongest.*

Right: *The two superpowers seemed to be in a constant battle to see who was stronger.*

Wrong: *Of the dozens of students in the club, Deborah was the more popular.*

Right: *Of the dozens of students in the club, Deborah was the most popular.*

Number Shift

Things that you compare should, if possible, agree in number. Be sure they are *both plural* or *both singular*.

Wrong: *They were both hoping to be a winner.*

Right: *They were both hoping to be winners.*

Wrong: *The sailors' main point of reference was the two lighthouse beacons.*

Right: *The sailors' main points of reference were the two lighthouse beacons.*

Concept Review 4: Comparison Problems

1. How do you know whether to use *fewer* or *less* in a comparison?
2. How do you know whether to use *more* or *most* in a comparison?

In each sentence, underline any items that are being compared or equated. Below the sentence, state whether the comparison is *logical* or *illogical*. If it is illogical or contains another error in comparison, correct the sentence.

3. *The critics' guild praised the show, saying that it was consistently more intelligent and provocative than anything on the air.*

4. *Team unity and commitment to practice were regarded by the players as the key to their success.*

5. *Mathematics lessons in Japanese classrooms, unlike American classrooms, are often focused on solving a single complex problem rather than many simplistic problems.*

6. *Increasingly, modern singers, like Gregorian chanters, are becoming adept at melisma, the singing of many notes on a single syllable.*

7. *The electric-combustion engines of the new hybrid cars burn much more cleanly and efficiently than conventional cars.*

8. *To the critics of the time, the surrealists were as inscrutable, if not more so, than the dadaists.*

9. *In modern warfare, unlike the past, combatants rarely meet face to face, and are detected as often by video as by sight.*

10. *Most people vastly prefer turning the pages of a real book to scrolling through the screens of an electronic novel.*

Worksheet 4: Comparison Problems

Correct any errors in the comparisons in the following sentences.

1. *I prefer a lot of modern poetry to Shakespeare.*

2. *Her suitcase would not close because she had packed too much of her towels into it.*

3. *The year-end bonus was equally divided between Parker, Herriot, and me.*

4. *Many students wanted to be a lifeguard at the club.*

5. *The toughest thing about her class is you have to do tons of homework every night.*

6. *Mr. Forstadt's comments, like so many coaches, didn't spare the players' feelings in the least.*

7. *After several days in the woods, we became concerned that we had packed a lot less meals than we would need.*

8. *Even in the 21st century, women throughout the globe are treated like a slave, or, worse yet, like a nonperson.*

9. *I've always preferred observational humor to those quirky prop comedians.*

10. *It was remarkable that the children had donated so much toys to others who were barely needier than they.*

11. *The formal structure of the sonnet imposes far more discipline on the mind of the poet than formless free verse.*

12. *The theories of true anarchists, unlike modern antistatists, do not promote social chaos, but rather organization without authority.*

13. *Those passengers with a disability will be permitted to board the plane first.*

14. *The reason we lost the game is because our captain had torn his ACL.*

15. *Voter apathy and cold weather were a reason that turnout was so poor at this year's election.*

16. *Having studied Faulkner and Hemingway, I've come to believe that Hemingway is the best writer, although Faulkner tells the best stories.*

Answer Key 4: Comparison Problems

Concept Review 4

1. *Fewer* is used to compare countable things, while *less* is used to compare uncountable things.
2. *More* is used only when comparing exactly two things, while *most* is used when comparing more than two.
3. *The show* is compared to *anything on the air*. Illogical: *the show* can only be better than *anything else on the air*.
4. *Team unity and commitment* are equated with *the key*. Illogical: they are *the keys to their success*.
5. *Mathematics lessons* are compared to *American classrooms*. Illogical: they should be compared to *the lessons in American classrooms*.
6. *Modern singers* are compared to *Gregorian chanters*. Logical and correct.
7. *The engines* are compared to *conventional cars*. Illogical: they should be compared to *those in conventional cars*.
8. *The surrealists* are compared to *the dadaists*. Logical, but grammatically incorrect: *the surrealists were regarded as being as inscrutable as the dadaists, if not more so*.
9. *In modern warfare* is compared to *the past*. Illogical: *In modern warfare, unlike warfare in the past . . .*
10. *Turning* is compared to *scrolling*. Logical and correct.

Worksheet 4

1. *I prefer a lot of modern poetry to the poetry of Shakespeare*.
2. *Her suitcase would not close because she had packed too many of her towels into it.*
3. *The year-end bonus was equally divided among Parker, Harriot, and me.*
4. *Many students wanted to be lifeguards at the club.*
5. *The toughest thing about her class is having to do tons of homework every night.*
6. *Mr. Forstadt's comments, like those of so many coaches, didn't spare the players' feelings in the least.*
7. *After several days in the woods, we became concerned that we had packed a lot fewer meals than we would need.*
8. *Even in the 21st century, women throughout the globe are treated like slaves, or, worse yet, like non-persons.*
9. *I've always preferred observational humor to quirky prop comedy.*
10. *It was remarkable that the children had donated so many toys to others who were barely needier than they.*
11. *The formal structure of the sonnet imposes far more discipline on the mind of the poet than does the formlessness of free verse.*
12. *The theories of the original anarchists, unlike those of modern antistatists, do not promote social chaos, but rather organization without authority.*
13. *Those passengers with disabilities will be permitted to board the plane first or Any passenger with a disability will be permitted to board the plane first.*
14. *The reason we lost the game is that our captain had torn his ACL.*
15. *Voter apathy and cold weather were the reasons that turnout was so poor at this year's election.*
16. *Having studied Faulkner and Hemingway, I've come to believe that Hemingway is the better writer, although Faulkner tells the better stories.*

Lesson 5: Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement

Pronouns

A *pronoun* is a word (such as *it*, *he*, *she*, *what*, or *that*) that substitutes for a noun. A pronoun is either *definite* (like *it*, *you*, *she*, and *I*) and refers to a specified thing (or person or place or idea) or *indefinite* (like *anyone*, *neither*, and *those*), and does *not* refer to a specific thing (or person or place or idea).

Definite Pronouns and Antecedents

Every definite pronoun refers to (or takes the place of) a noun in the sentence, called the *pronoun antecedent*. The pronoun must agree in number (singular or plural) and kind (personal or impersonal) with its antecedent.

Wrong: *Everyone should brush **their** teeth three times a day.*

Because *everyone* is singular, *their* is the wrong pronoun.

Right: *Everyone should brush **his** or **her** teeth three times a day.*

Wrong: *David was the one **that** first spotted the error.*

The pronoun *that* is impersonal, but of course, *David* is a person.

Right: *David was the one **who** first spotted the error.*

The antecedent of a definite pronoun should be clear, not ambiguous.

Wrong: *Roger told Mike that **he** was going to start the next game.*

Who was going to start? Roger or Mike?

Right: *Mike learned that **he** was going to start the next game when Roger told him so.*

Interrogative Pronouns

An *interrogative pronoun* (like *what*, *where*, *why*, and *when*) usually asks a question or refers to an

unknown, as in *Where are my keys?* But sometimes it can be used as a definite pronoun. When it is, remember two points:

Use *what* only to refer to a *thing*, *where* to refer to a *place*, *when* to refer to a *time*, *why* to refer to a *reason*, *who* to refer to a *person*, and *how* to refer to an *explanation*.

Wrong: *An anachronism is **when** something doesn't fit in with its time period.*

An anachronism isn't a time, is it? It's a thing.

Right: *An anachronism is something **that** doesn't fit in with its time period.*

When following a comma, an interrogative pronoun usually takes the *immediately preceding* noun as its antecedent.

Wrong: *The actors will design their own sets, **who** are participating in the workshop.*

This is awkward because the *sets* are not what the pronoun *who* is logically referring to.

Right: *The actors **who** are participating in the workshop will design their own sets.*

Pronoun Consistency

Be *consistent* with any pronouns you use to refer to the same thing more than once in a sentence.

Wrong: *Even when **one** is dieting, **you** should always try to get enough vitamins.*

It sounds like we can't make up our minds about whom we're talking to!

Right: *Even when **one** is dieting, **one** should always try to get enough vitamins.*

Concept Review 5: Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement

1. Name three definite pronouns: _____
2. Name three indefinite pronouns: _____
3. Every _____ pronoun requires a specific antecedent.
4. What is an antecedent?

After each interrogative pronoun, write what kind of noun it must represent.

5. *what* _____
6. *where* _____
7. *how* _____
8. *when* _____
9. *why* _____
10. *who* _____

Circle all pronouns in the following sentences, and make any corrections that may be necessary.

11. *There are too many legal situations where misrepresentation seems to be standard practice.*

12. *If a student wants to memorize the meaning of a word, you should begin by understanding the concept it represents.*

13. *Caroline passed the phone to Julia, but she couldn't bring herself to speak.*

14. *Neither of the dogs wanted to give up their territory to the other.*

15. *David volunteered to be a ticket taker, not wanting to be the one that cleaned the aisles after the show.*

16. *They lost the game, which is why they didn't celebrate afterwards.*

Worksheet 5:

Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement

Correct any pronoun errors in each of the following sentences.

1. *Although the British parliament conducts debates under very formal and decorous rules, they can often produce very animated arguments.*
2. *Brown has always been committed to assisting their students by providing him or her with any necessary financial aid.*
3. *The media ignored the reports, probably because it believed they were not what the public was ready to hear.*
4. *The agency decided that they would give control of the project exclusively to Fiona and me.*
5. *Each of the girls wanted their idea for the logo design to be considered.*
6. *No one who has been through the first week of boot camp ever believes that they will make it through the entire six weeks.*
7. *Although you shouldn't read carelessly, one doesn't need to read slowly, either.*
8. *Neither gentleman thought that their team could win the championship.*
9. *Students sometimes aren't ready to handle the extra work when his or her courses become more demanding.*
10. *Many modern novels are concerned with situations where love goes unrequited.*
11. *Everybody is expected to do their share.*
12. *The entire team turned out to be robots who had been programmed to play lacrosse.*
13. *The radio station's board of directors drafted a proposal modifying their advertising policies.*
14. *The museum received so many donations that they actually had to return over a million dollars to the benefactors.*
15. *They usually give the most points to the skater that makes the fewest mistakes.*
16. *I like movies where the guy gets the girl.*
17. *Each swimmer will have a lane to themselves.*
18. *Who was the one that made the error in the third inning?*

Answer Key 5: Pronoun-Antecedent Disagreement

Concept Review 5

1. *I, you, she, he, it, they, we, us, them, etc.*
2. *anyone, everybody, each, either, one*
3. definite
4. An antecedent is the noun that a definite pronoun refers to.
5. a thing
6. a place
7. an explanation
8. a time
9. a reason
10. a person
11. pronouns: *there, where*. *There are too many legal situations in which misrepresentation seems to be standard practice. (Situations aren't places, they're things.)*
12. pronouns: *you, it*. *If a student wants to memorize the meaning of a word, he or she should begin by understanding the concept it represents. (Agreement)*
13. pronouns: *she, herself*. *Caroline passed the phone to Julia, but Julia couldn't bring herself to speak. (Ambiguous antecedent)*
14. pronouns: *neither, their*. *Neither of the dogs wanted to give up its territory to the other. (Neither is singular.)*
15. pronouns: *one, that*. *David volunteered to be a ticket taker, not wanting to be the one who cleaned the aisles after the show. (David's a who.)*
16. pronouns: *they, which, why, they*. *(The sentence is correct because which refers to the clause they lost the game.)*

Worksheet 5

1. *Although the British parliament conducts debate under very formal and decorous rules, it can often produce very animated arguments.*
2. *Brown has always been committed to assisting its students by providing them with any necessary financial aid.*
3. *The media ignored the reports, probably because they believed that those reports were not what the public was ready to hear.*
4. *The agency decided that it would give control of the project exclusively to Fiona and me.*
5. *Each of the girls wanted her idea for the logo design to be considered.*
6. *No one who has been through the first week of boot camp ever believes that he or she will make it through the entire six weeks.*
7. *Although you shouldn't read carelessly, you don't need to read slowly, either.*
8. *Neither gentleman thought that his team could win the championship.*
9. *Students sometimes aren't ready to handle the extra work when their courses become more demanding.*
10. *Many modern novels are concerned with situations in which love goes unrequited.*
11. *Everybody is expected to do his or her share.*
12. *The entire team turned out to be robots that had been programmed to play lacrosse.*
13. *The radio station's board of directors drafted a proposal modifying its advertising policies.*
14. *The museum received so many donations that it actually had to return over a million dollars to the benefactors.*
15. *They usually give the most points to the skater who makes the fewest mistakes.*
16. *I like movies in which the guy gets the girl.*
17. *Each swimmer will have a lane to herself (or himself).*
18. *Who was the one who made the error in the third inning?*

Lesson 6: Pronoun Case

Pronoun Cases

Every pronoun has a *case*, which indicates its relationship to a verb or noun. There are four common cases.

Subjective (or *nominative*) pronouns (*I, you, he, she, we, they, who*, etc.) are used primarily as subjects of verbs.

Objective pronouns (*me, you, him, her, them, whom*, etc.) are used primarily as *objects of verbs*.

Possessive pronouns (*my/mine, her/hers, their/theirs, whose*, etc.) show *attribution* or *ownership*.

Reflexive pronouns (*myself, yourself, himself, herself, themselves*, etc.) show an *object equated with the subject* or show *emphasis*.

Subjective Pronouns

Subjective pronouns are used only as *subjects* of verbs or as *predicate nominatives*.

Subject of real verb: *Jenna and I were the only two at the meeting.*

Subject of implied verb: *My brother is taller than I (am).*

Although the verb isn't written, its meaning is implied.

Predicate nominative: *The winner of the prize was she.*

A *predicate nominative* is a pronoun or noun "linked" to the subject by a linking verb. It takes the *subjective case*.

Example:

Matthew is the new captain of the team.
subject verb predicate nominative

The mountain became a violent volcano.
subject verb predicate nominative

Objective Pronouns

Objective pronouns are used as *objects of verbs* or as *objects of prepositions*.

Object of verb: *My father struggled to raise my brother and me.*

Object of preposition: *This should be a great opportunity for you and her.*

When you have a compound phrase like *Tom and me* and *the coach and them*, deciding the case of the pronoun is easier if you leave out the other part of the phrase.

Sheila and (her or she?) took the cab uptown.
——— *She took the cab uptown* not *Her took the cab uptown.*

It was made for you and (me or I?) —— *It was made for me* not *It was made for I.*

Possessive Pronouns

Don't use the objective case when you should use the *possessive case* before a gerund.

Wrong: *I resent you taking the car without asking.*

Right: *I resent your taking the car without asking.*

The object of the verb *resent* is *taking*: the *taking* is what *I resent*, so using the objective pronoun *you* only confuses things. Since it's not *you whom I resent*, the possessive case *your* makes sense.

Reflexive Pronouns

Reflexive pronouns are used in only two ways: to show that a subject and object are the same, as in "I pinched *myself* to make sure I wasn't dreaming," or to emphasize a noun or pronoun, as in "I *myself* would never say such a thing." Never use a reflexive pronoun where an objective pronoun is required. Wrong: The crowd applauded Carl and *myself*. Right: The crowd applauded Carl and *me*.

Concept Review 6: Pronoun Case

1. Name four subjective pronouns: _____
2. Subjective pronouns are used as _____
or _____
3. Name four objective pronouns: _____
4. Objective pronouns are used as _____
or _____
5. Name four possessive pronouns: _____
6. Name four reflexive pronouns: _____
7. Reflexive pronouns are used to _____
or _____

Choose the correct pronoun in each sentence below.

8. *The climb was much easier for them than it was for Jeff and (I/me/myself).*
9. *The other contestants did not seem as confident as (he/him).*
10. *Within a week, George and (me/I) will have completed the project.*
11. *(Us/We) detectives are always careful to follow every lead.*
12. *Every student should make (his or her/their) own study plan.*
13. *They never seem to listen to the opinions of (us/we) students as they should.*

Worksheet 6: Pronoun Case

Choose the correct pronoun in each sentence below.

1. *The university presented the honor to David and (he/him).*
2. *After the game, we all agreed that no one had played harder than (he/him).*
3. *Justine and (me/I) have always been closest friends.*
4. *There is no point in (our/us) delaying the tests any longer.*
5. *I shall grant immortality to (he/him) who can pull the sword from the stone.*
6. *It seems quite clear that you and (I/me) will have to work together to solve this problem.*
7. *It might be hard for (him and me/he and I) to agree.*
8. *The other cheerleaders and (her/she) needed to practice on the weekend.*
9. *The tabloid media were thrilled about (him/his) making such a fool of himself in public.*
10. *(We/Us) and the other members debated the issue for over 2 hours.*
11. *The owners of the club offered my wife and (me/I) a free bottle of wine with dinner.*
12. *No other runner on the team could outrun (myself/me).*
13. *The teachers were getting tired of (him/his) constantly falling asleep in class.*
14. *The ballpark always held a special attraction for Dave and (I/me).*
15. *Our friends gave a party for Ingrid and (I/me/myself).*
16. *In anticipation of the trip, I bought (me/myself) a nice new suitcase.*

Answer Key 6: Pronoun Case

Concept Review 6

1. *I, he, she, you, we, they, who*
2. *subjects of verbs or predicate nominatives*
3. *me, him, her, you, us, them, whom*
4. *objects of verbs or objects of prepositions*
5. *my, mine, her, hers, his, your, yours, their, theirs, our, ours*
6. *myself, yourself, himself, herself, ourselves, themselves*
7. *show that the object of the verb is the same as the subject or emphasize an adjacent noun or pronoun*
8. *The climb was much easier for them than it was for Jeff and me. (object of a preposition)*
9. *The other contestants did not seem as confident as he (did). (subject of an implied verb)*
10. *Within a week, George and I will have completed the project. (subject of a verb)*
11. *We detectives are always careful to follow every lead. (subject of a verb)*
12. *Every student should make his or her own study plan. (possessive modifier of noun; must agree with singular antecedent)*
13. *They never seem to listen to the opinions of us students as they should. (object of a preposition)*

Worksheet 6

1. *The university presented the honor to David and him. (object of a preposition)*
2. *After the game, we all agreed that no one had played harder than he. (than he did: subject of an implied verb)*
3. *Justine and I have always been closest friends. (subject)*
4. *There is no point in our delaying the tests any longer. (Delaying is the object of the preposition, so the pronoun should not be objective.)*
5. *I shall grant immortality to him who can pull the sword from the stone. (object of a preposition)*
6. *It seems quite clear that you and I will have to work together to solve this problem. (subject)*
7. *It might be hard for him and me to agree. (object of a preposition)*
8. *The other cheerleaders and she needed to practice on the weekend. (subject)*
9. *The tabloid media were thrilled about his making such a fool of himself in public. (Making is the object of the preposition.)*
10. *We and the other members debated the issue for over 2 hours. (subject)*
11. *The owners of the club offered my wife and me a free bottle of wine with dinner. (object of a verb)*
12. *No other runner on the team could outrun me. (object of a verb)*
13. *The teachers were getting tired of his constantly falling asleep in class. (Falling is the object, so the pronoun should not be in the objective case.)*
14. *The ballpark always held a special attraction for Dave and me. (object of a preposition)*
15. *Our friends gave a party for Ingrid and me. (object of a preposition)*
16. *In anticipation of the trip, I bought myself a nice new suitcase. (The object and subject represent the same person, so the object should be in the reflexive case.)*

Lesson 7: Dangling and Misplaced Participles

What Is a Participle?

There are two kinds of *participles*:

Present participles always end in *-ing* (e.g., *colliding*, *writing*, *swimming*, *eating*, *fighting*).

Past participles often end in *-ed* or *-en*, but not always (e.g., *collided*, *written*, *swum*, *eaten*, *fought*).

A participle is a verb form used when the verb is a *phrase with a helping verb*, as in the following sentences:

*I was **walking** through the lobby.*
*We **had been talking** for over an hour.*

*I **have not yet begun** to fight.*
*The chairs **were pushed** against the wall.*

Participles as Verbs or Adjectives

A participle can be used as a *verb part* (with a helping verb), as in *He is **writing** his term paper* or *They **have taken** the car*. It can also be used as an *adjective*, as in *Don't trust a **smiling** salesman* or *I like **frozen** treats*.

Don't confuse *present participles* with *gerunds*. They look the same, but they play very different roles. Present participles act as *verb parts* or *adjectives* (as above), but gerunds act as *nouns*, as in ***Writing** is harder than it looks*. (*Writing* is the subject of the verb *is*, so it is a noun and a gerund.)

Dangling and Misplaced Participial Phrases

A *participial phrase* is a modifying phrase that includes a participle. Such a phrase always describes something, so it acts like an adjective or adverb. It is usually separated from the main part of the sentence by one or more commas.

***Eating ravenously**, the vultures remained on the carcass until it was picked clean.*

*The runners, **exhausted from the final sprint**, stumbled over the finish line.*

If a participial phrase starts a sentence, the word it modifies must follow immediately after the comma.

Wrong: *After **having studied** all night, the professor postponed the test until Friday.*

The participial phrase modifies a noun. Who had studied all night? Certainly not *the professor*, so the modifying phrase *dangles*.

One way to correct a dangling participle is simply to place the correct noun next to the participial phrase:

Better: *After **having studied** all night, I was frustrated to learn that the professor had postponed the test until Friday.* (*I* answers the question: *who had studied?*)

Another way is to incorporate a subject into the participial phrase, turning it into a dependent clause:

Better: *After **I had studied** all night, the professor postponed the test until Friday.*

Every participial phrase *should be as close as possible to the word it modifies*. If a modifier sounds as if it modifies the wrong thing, it is "misplaced" and must be moved.

Wrong: *Bob found his watch **walking to the bathroom**.*

Was the watch *walking*? Of course not, so the participial phrase is misplaced.

Better: ***Walking to the bathroom**, Bob found his watch.*

Also good: *Bob found his watch as he was **walking to the bathroom**.*

Wrong: *It was difficult for William to hear the announcements **waiting for the train**.*

Were the *announcements* waiting for the train? Of course not.

Better: ***While waiting for the train**, William found it difficult to hear the announcements.*

Concept Review 7:

Dangling and Misplaced Participles

1. If a participial phrase followed by a comma begins a sentence, it must be followed by _____

Give the past and present participle forms of each of the following verbs.

2. *push* past participle _____ present participle _____
3. *run* past participle _____ present participle _____
4. *take* past participle _____ present participle _____

Identify the underlined word as a *gerund* or a *present participle*.

5. *I've loved singing ever since I was a little girl.* 5. _____
6. *I doubt that they would be working this late at night.* 6. _____
7. *Calling me a bum was a very mean thing to do.* 7. _____

Circle the participle in each sentence, then write whether it is an *adjective* or a *verb participle*.

8. *We saw the meteorite as it was falling from the sky.* 8. _____
9. *We saw the falling meteorite.* 9. _____
10. *The urn was tarnished and chipped.* 10. _____
11. *The urn was chipped at the auction.* 11. _____
12. *The evidence was damaging to the defense.* 12. _____
13. *I could never have run so fast without those shoes.* 13. _____

Circle the participle in each sentence, then rewrite the sentence so that the participle does not "dangle."

14. *Looking at your essay, it seems to me that you need to be more specific.*

15. *Turning the corner, the stadium came into our view.*

16. *Although exhausted after the night's work, Martha's creative instincts compelled her to keep writing.*

17. *Without waiting for an answer, David's eagerness got the better of him, and he left in a flash.*

18. *Thinking her friends were right behind her, it was frightening for Alison to discover that they were gone.*

Worksheet 7: Dangling and Misplaced Participles

Circle the participles in the following sentences, then rewrite the sentences, if necessary, to correct any "dangling" participles.

1. *Although angered by the irrationality of his opponent, Senator Sanchez's plan was to address each point calmly.*

2. *Watching from the bridge, the fireworks bloomed spectacularly over the water.*

3. *Without admitting her transgression, the club found it hard to forgive Megan.*

4. *Although mildly discolored by the harsh sunlight, the sofa has retained much of its original beauty.*

5. *Exhausted from the day's climbing, the looming storm forced the hikers to pitch an early camp.*

6. *Having studied for hours, it was very disappointing that I did so poorly on the exam.*

7. *Without being aware of it, termites can infest your home if you don't take the proper precautions.*

8. *Before working at the bank, no one thought I could hold such a responsible position.*

9. *Lacking any real sailing skills, David's concern was mainly with keeping the ship afloat.*

10. *Not wanting to be fooled again, she had her husband followed by a private investigator.*

Answer Key 7: Dangling and Misplaced Participles

Concept Review 7

1. the noun phrase that it modifies
2. past participle *pushed*, present participle *pushing*
3. past participle *run* (not *ran*), present participle *running*
4. past participle *taken* (not *took*), present participle *taking*
5. gerund (It's the object of the verb *loved*.)
6. present participle (The verb is *would be working*.)
7. gerund (It's the subject of the verb *was*.)
8. participle: *falling*, verb participle
9. participle: *falling*, adjective
10. participles: *tarnished* and *chipped*, adjectives
11. participle: *chipped*, verb participle
12. participle: *damaging*, adjective
13. participle: *run*, verb participle

Each revised sentence below represents only one possible revision to correct the dangling participle. We have chosen what seems to be the clearest and most concise of the possibilities.

14. participle: *looking*. *It seems to me, as I look at your essay, that you need to be more specific.*
15. participle: *turning*. *As we turned the corner, the stadium came into view.*
16. participle: *exhausted*. *Although Martha was exhausted after the night's work, her creative instincts compelled her to keep writing.*
17. *David's eagerness got the better of him, and without waiting for an answer, he left in a flash.*
18. *Thinking her friends were right behind her, Alison was frightened to discover that they were gone.*

Worksheet 7

Each revised sentence below represents only one possible revision to correct the dangling participle. We have chosen what seems to be the clearest and most concise of the possibilities.

1. participle: *angered*. *Although angered by the irrationality of his opponent, Senator Sanchez planned to address each point calmly.*
2. participle: *watching*. *As we watched from the bridge, the fireworks bloomed spectacularly over the water.*
3. participle: *admitting*. *Because Megan would not admit her transgression, the club found it hard to forgive her.*
4. participle: *discolored*. *Although mildly discolored by the harsh sunlight, the sofa has retained much of its original beauty. (Correct)*
5. participle: *exhausted*. *The looming storm forced the hikers, exhausted from the day's climbing, to pitch an early camp.*
6. participle: *having*. *Having studied for hours, I was very disappointed to do so poorly on the exam.*
7. participle: *being*. *Without you being aware of it, termites can infest your home if you don't take the proper precautions.*
8. participle: *working*. *Before I started working at the bank, no one thought I could hold such a responsible position.*
9. participle: *lacking*. *Lacking any real sailing skills, David was mainly concerned with keeping the ship afloat.*
10. participle: *wanting*. *Not wanting to be fooled again, she had her husband followed by a private investigator. (Correct)*

Lesson 8: Other Misplaced Modifiers

The Law of Proximity

Any modifier *should be as close as possible to the word it modifies*.

Of course, there are many other kinds of modifying phrases besides participial phrases, and you should familiarize yourself with them.

Misplaced Prepositional Phrases

Prepositional phrases are modifying phrases. They are sometimes *adjectives*, which means they modify nouns:

Example:

The dog **in the car** was barking. (The prepositional phrase answers the question *which dog?*)

They may also be *adverbs*, which means they modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs:

Example:

David walked **into the pole**. (The prepositional phrase answers the question *where did David walk?*)

Like any modifying phrase, a prepositional phrase can be misplaced.

Wrong: **As a physician**, it was difficult for me to see such suffering.

The prepositional phrase *as a physician* answers the question *what is my role?* So it modifies *I*, not *it*:

Right: **As a physician**, I found it difficult to see such suffering.

Misplaced Appositives

An appositive is a noun phrase that accompanies and expands another noun, as in

Franklin, **the only one of us who owned a car**, agreed to drive us all to the game.

An appositive must always be adjacent to the noun it modifies.

Wrong: **A splendid example of late synthetic cubism**, Picasso painted Three Musicians in the summer of 1924.

Of course, Picasso is not an example of synthetic cubism, so the appositive is dangling.

Better: **A splendid example of late synthetic cubism**, Three Musicians was painted by Picasso in the summer of 1924.

Better: Picasso painted Three Musicians, **a splendid example of late synthetic cubism**, in the summer of 1924.

Misplaced Infinitives

Recall, from Lesson 3, that an *infinitive* is the basic to _____ form of a verb that usually serves as a noun, as in *I love to shop*. Infinitives can also serve as adjectives:

Example:

We have a lot more math problems **to do**. (It answers the question *what kind of problems are they?*)

They can also serve as *adverbs*:

Example:

We are working **to earn** money for the trip. (It answers the question *why are we working?*)

Because infinitives are often modifiers, they can be misplaced.

Wrong: **To get our attention**, we saw Mr. Genovese take out a giant boa constrictor.

To get answers the question *why did he take it out?* So *take* should be the closest verb to the phrase. We can rearrange the sentence in a couple of ways to fix this.

Right: **To get our attention**, Mr. Genovese took out a giant boa constrictor.

Right: We saw Mr. Genovese take out a giant boa constrictor **to get our attention**.

Concept Review 8: Other Misplaced Modifiers

Label each underlined phrase as a participial phrase (PART), a prepositional phrase (PREP), an appositive (APP), or an infinitive phrase (INF). Although the SAT will NOT ask you to use these terms to label phrases, this exercise will help you to spot modifier errors more easily.

1. My friend the lawyer told me that I should never sign any contract without first reading it carefully.
2. We should go to the meeting to see whether they need our help with the planning.
3. Despite spraining her ankle, our first mate was able to navigate our schooner into port.
4. Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.
5. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.
6. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live.
7. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.
8. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.
9. We the people, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Worksheet 8: Other Misplaced Modifiers

In each of the following sentences, underline and label all participial phrases (PART), prepositional phrases (PREP), appositives (APP), and infinitive phrases (INF), and rewrite any sentence to fix any misplaced modifiers.

1. *Without so much as a blink, the gleaming sword was unsheathed by the warrior.*

2. *To maintain good health, physicians suggest that both vigorous exercise and good eating habits are required.*

3. *We found my lost earring walking through the parking lot.*

4. *Having run for over 4 hours, the finish line was still 10 miles ahead of her.*

5. *Even with a sprained ankle, the coach forced Adam back into the game.*

6. *To find a good restaurant, there are many good online guides to help you.*

7. *In search of a good calculator, not a single store in the mall could help me.*

8. *A dutiful wife and mother, we were surprised to hear Carol complaining about domestic life.*

9. *To get a good jump out of the starting blocks, most sprinters say that good body positioning is essential.*

10. *Among the most sought-after collectibles on the market, we found the antique toys at a garage sale.*

Answer Key 8: Other Misplaced Modifiers

Concept Review 8

- the lawyer* (APP)
without first reading it carefully (PREP)
- to the meeting* (PREP)
to see whether they need our help (INF)
with the planning (PREP)
- Despite spraining her ankle* (PREP containing a PART)
into port (PREP)
- on this continent* (PREP)
conceived in liberty (PART containing a PREP)
dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal (PART containing a PREP)
- in a great civil war* (PREP)
testing whether that nation . . . (PART)
- to dedicate a portion* (INF)
of that field (PREP)
for those who here gave their lives (PREP)
- the living* (APP)
to be dedicated here (INF containing a PART)
to the unfinished work (PREP)
- for us* (PREP)
to be here (INF)
dedicated to the great task (PART containing a PREP)
remaining before us (PART containing a PREP)
from these honored dead (PREP)
to that cause (PREP)
for which (PREP)
under God (PREP)
of the people (PREP)
by the people (PREP)
for the people (PREP)
- the people* (APP)
to form a more perfect union (INF)
for the common defense (PREP)
of the United States of America (PREP)

Worksheet 8

Each of these answers provides only one possible correction. On some sentences, other corrections are possible.

- Without so much as a blink (PREP), the gleaming sword was unsheathed by the warrior (PREP).
Correction: *Without so much as a blink, the warrior unsheathed the gleaming sword.*
- To maintain good health (INF), physicians suggest that both vigorous exercise and good eating habits are required.
Correction: *Physicians suggest that both vigorous exercise and good eating habits are required to maintain good health.*
- We found my lost earring walking through the parking lot (PART containing a PREP).
Correction: *Walking through the parking lot, we found my lost earring.*
- Having run for over 4 hours (PART containing a PREP), the finish line was still 10 miles ahead of her (PREP).
Correction: *Although she had run for over 4 hours, the finish line was still 10 miles ahead of her.*
- Even with a sprained ankle (PREP), the coach forced Adam back into the game (PREP).
Correction: *Even though Adam had a sprained ankle, the coach forced him back into the game.*
- To find a good restaurant (INF), there are many good online guides to help you (INF).
Correction: *There are many good online guides to help you find a good restaurant.*
- In search of a good calculator (PREP), not a single store in the mall (PREP) could help me.
Correction: *Not a single store in the mall could help me find a good calculator.*
- A dutiful wife and mother (APP), we were surprised to hear Carol complaining about domestic life (PREP).
Correction: *We were surprised to hear Carol, a dutiful wife and mother, complaining about domestic life.*
- To get a good jump (INF) out of the starting blocks (PREP), most sprinters say that good body positioning is essential.
Correction: *Most sprinters say that good body positioning is essential for getting a good jump out of the starting blocks.*
- Among the most sought-after collectibles (PREP) on the market (PREP), we found the antique toys at a garage sale (PREP).
Correction: *We found the antique toys, which are among the most sought-after collectibles on the market, at a garage sale.*

Lesson 9: Tricky Tenses

Verb Tenses

The *tense* of a verb is what indicates its place and extent in time. There are two common situations in which tenses can be tricky: those with “perfect” verbs and those with “timeless” verbs.

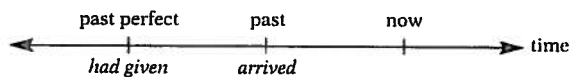
“Perfect” Verbs

You use the *perfect tenses* whenever you need to indicate that some event is *completed* before some other point in time. (Here, the word *perfect* means *complete*, not *flawless*.) They are usually *relative tenses*, that is, they show a particular relationship to another verb or reference to time within the sentence. All perfect tenses use the helping verb *to have*, as in *we had walked*, *we have walked*, and *we will have walked*.

The *past perfect tense* shows that an event had been completed before another point in the past. You can think of it as the “past past” tense.

Example:

By the time we arrived at the reception, Glen had already given the toast.



When a sentence contains two past-tense verbs, check whether one event was completed before the other. If so, the earlier event should be given the past perfect tense.

The *present perfect tense*, unlike the other perfect tenses, usually does not show completion, but that an event either *extends from the past to the present* or *occurs at an extended or unspecified time in the past*. You can think of it as the “past plus present” tense or the “unspecific past.”

Example:

She has been so nice to me.
(This means *she was nice to me* and also *she still is nice to me*. It combines past and present.)

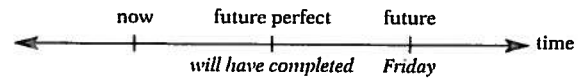
Example:

We have taken only two tests this semester.
(The taking of the tests did not happen at one specific time, but over an extended time in the past.)

The *future perfect tense* shows that something will have been completed before some time in the future.

Example:

By Friday, we will have completed the entire project.



Participles must be “perfect,” too, when they indicate an action completed before another action.

Example:

Having walked all night, we were desperate to find rest at dawn.
(The walking was *completed* by dawn, so the participle is “past perfect.”)

“Timeless” Verbs

When you need to discuss a theory, an artistic work, or a general nonhistorical fact, the verb that describes it is “timeless” and should take the *present tense* by default.

Wrong: *The ancient Greek philosopher Zeno believed that all motion was an illusion.*

Right: *The ancient Greek philosopher Zeno believed that all motion is an illusion.*
The *believing* is in the past, since Zeno’s long gone, but the theory is timeless.

Concept Review 9: Tricky Tenses

1. When are the perfect tenses used?
2. What kinds of ideas are conveyed by “timeless” present-tense verbs?

Circle the correct verb in each of the following sentences.

3. Glen (*came/has come*) to work exhausted this morning because he (*stayed/had stayed*) up all last night.
4. Already, and without (*spending/having spent*) so much as an hour on research, Dale (*wrote/has written*) the first draft of her essay.
5. (*Developing/Having developed*) the first compressed-air automobile, he (*hoped/had hoped*) to reveal it to the world at the exposition.
6. Shakespeare's tragedies (*were/are*) concerned with the deepest aspects of the human condition.

The meaning of the following sentence is ambiguous.

His legs ached because he ran farther than he ever had [run] before.

Rewrite it using the correct tenses to indicate that

7. The aching started *before* he finished running: _____
8. The aching started *after* he finished running: _____

Fix any tense problems in the following sentences.

9. *Right after school, we had gone to Mario's for a pizza and a few Cokes.*

10. *Finding no evidence against the accused, the detective had to release him.*

11. *Being captured by the rebels, David soon began to fear he would never escape.*

12. *When I got home, I wrote an essay on the baseball game that I saw that afternoon.*

Worksheet 9: Tricky Tenses

Correct any tense errors in the following sentences.

1. *By the time the committee had adjourned, it voted on all four key proposals.*

2. *In the evening, we had a nice meal with the same group of people we skied with that afternoon.*

3. *By the time I am done with finals, I will write four major papers.*

4. *Being nominated for office, Ellen felt that she had to run an honest campaign.*

5. *It surprised us to learn that Venus was almost the same size as Earth.*

6. *Reading The Sun Also Rises, I feel as if I've learned a great deal about bullfighting.*

7. *Most Oscar nominees claimed that they were happy simply to be nominated.*

8. *When the epidemic struck Rwanda, the entire population had suffered.*

9. *I have never felt so free as when I am running.*

10. *Centuries ago, physicians had believed that illnesses were caused by imbalances in bodily fluids.*

11. *David has been the president of the club ever since it was founded.*

12. *Over the last several years, real estate values increased by over 20%.*

13. *Students often worry excessively about grades and will forget about actually understanding the concepts.*

14. *We need not bother to patch the hull now that the entire boat had been inundated.*

15. *By the time we arrived at the tent where the reception would be held, the caterers set up all the chairs.*

16. *We will have been in this house for three years in February.*

Answer Key 9: Tricky Tenses

Concept Review 9

- when showing that an event was completed before another event, or, in the case of the present perfect tense, when showing that an event occurs over an extended time in the past or extends from the past to the present
- theories, general nonhistorical facts, and works of art
- Glen came to work exhausted this morning because he had stayed up all last night. (The staying up was completed before he came to work.)
- Already, and without having spent so much as an hour on research, Dale has written the first draft of her essay. (The word *already* establishes the current time as a reference point. Since the verbs indicate actions completed prior to now, they take the present perfect tense.)
- Having developed the first compressed-air automobile, he hoped to reveal it to the world at the exposition. (He must have *developed* it before he could *hope* to reveal it.)
- Shakespeare's tragedies are concerned with the deepest aspects of the human condition. (His works are still available to us, so they get the present tense.)
- His legs ached because he was running farther than he ever had before.
- His legs ached because he had run farther than he ever had before.
- Right after school, we went to Mario's for a pizza and a few Cokes. (No need for past perfect.)
- Having found no evidence against the accused, the detective had to release him. (The search for evidence was completed before the release.)
- Having been captured by the rebels, David soon began to fear he would never escape. (The capture occurred before his fear set in.)
- When I got home, I wrote an essay on the baseball game that I had seen that afternoon. (The writing happened after the seeing.)

Worksheet 9

- By the time the committee adjourned, it had voted on all four key proposals. (The voting was completed before the adjournment, so it should take the perfect tense.)
- In the evening, we had a nice meal with the same group of people we had skied with that afternoon. (The skiing was completed before the meal, so it should take the perfect tense.)
- By the time I am done with finals, I will have written four major papers. (The writing will be completed before the finals.)
- Having been nominated for office, Ellen felt that she had to run an honest campaign. (The nomination must be completed before the running can start.)
- It surprised us to learn that Venus is almost the same size as Earth. (Facts take the present tense.)
- Having read *The Sun Also Rises*, I feel as if I've learned a great deal about bullfighting. (Since the learning occurred over an extended time in the past, the present perfect tense is appropriate; since the *reading* was prior to or simultaneous with the *learning*, it must also be in the perfect form.)
- Most Oscar nominees claimed that they were happy simply to have been nominated. (The nominating must have been completed if they are happy about the outcome.)
- When the epidemic struck Rwanda, the entire population suffered. (Since the *suffering* occurred when the epidemic *struck*, the two verbs should have the same tense.)
- I never feel so free as when I am running. (This expresses a general fact, so it is "timeless.")
- Centuries ago, physicians believed that illnesses were caused by imbalances in bodily fluids. (Since this expresses a theory that has been disproven, it is not "timeless," but relegated to the past.)
- David has been the president of the club ever since it was founded. (Correct)
- Over the last several years, real estate values have increased by over 20%. (The increase occurred over an extended time in the past.)
- Students often worry excessively about grades and forget about actually understanding the concepts. (Tense consistency requires the present tense.)
- We need not bother to patch the hull now that the entire boat has been inundated. (The present perfect is needed to show the connection to the present, which is implied by the present-tense verb *bother*.)
- By the time we arrived at the tent where the reception would be held, the caterers had set up all the chairs. (The *setting up* was completed before we *arrived*.)
- We will have been in this house for three years in February. (Correct)

Lesson 10: Idiom Errors

What Is an Idiom?

Idioms are common phrases with quirky, nonliteral meanings. Most idioms, like *carry through*, *across the board*, *come on strong*, *get your feet wet*, *bang for the buck*, *all ears*, *pull your leg*, *eat crow*, etc., are so ingrained in our language that we hardly notice that their meanings are so nonliteral. We appreciate our idioms when we hear someone speak who has just learned English, since the idioms take the longest to learn.

Watch Your Prepositions

The SAT won't expect you to memorize the thousands of idioms in the English language, but it does expect you to recognize *preposition errors*. Remember from Lesson 2 that prepositions are words like *to*, *from*, *of*, *for*, *by*, *in*, *before*, *with*, *beyond*, and *up* that show relative position or direction. Certain idiomatic phrases, like *arguing with*, require a particular preposition. (That is, saying something like *She was arguing against her brother* is not a proper idiom.) The choice of preposition is not usually a matter of logic, as in the sentence

The house was on fire, so the firefighters put it out.

This sentence contains two prepositions, *on* and *out*, but neither is used literally or logically: the house wasn't really "on" a fire, and the firemen didn't put the fire "out." But if you tried to make the sentence literal and logical, it would sound ridiculous or overly stilted:

The house was aflame, so the firefighters extinguished the blaze.

So idioms are an important part of clear and effective language.

When you notice a preposition in a sentence, always ask: "Is that preposition necessary, and if so, is it the correct preposition for that particular phrase?"

Wrong: *We were no longer satisfied at the level of service we were receiving.*

The prepositions are *at* and *of*. The idiom *level of service* is correct, but the idiom *satisfied at* is not. The correct idiom is *satisfied with*.

Right: *We were no longer satisfied with the level of service we were receiving.*

ESP: Eliminate Superfluous Prepositions

Casual speech often uses extra prepositions. When you write, however, try to eliminate unnecessary prepositions. Notice that in phrases like the following, the preposition is unnecessary and thus "nonstandard."

Examples:

The pole did not extend ~~out~~ far enough.

Since my injury, it hurts to climb ~~up~~ the stairs.

Although clearly angry, the students were not yet ready to fight ~~against~~ the ruling.

We were unsuccessful in our attempt to extract ~~out~~ the chemical from the venom.

The illness can make one dizzy and prone to falling ~~down~~.

If you don't hurry, you'll miss ~~out-on~~ all the fun!

There were plenty of volunteers to help ~~out~~ with the race.

Before we prepare the steaks, we should fry ~~up~~ some peppers.

Her speed and strength helped her to dominate ~~over~~ her opponents.

Concept Review 10: Idiom Errors

Choose the correct preposition or phrase (if any) to complete each of the following sentences. If no word or phrase is required, circle the dash (—).

1. *I prefer spaghetti (to/over/more than/—) linguine.*
2. *The students were protesting (against/over/—) the decision to cut financial aid.*
3. *We are all concerned (about/with/—) your decision to drop out of school.*
4. *It took nearly an hour to open (up/—) the trunk.*
5. *Eleanor has always been concerned (with/about/—) feminist issues.*
6. *We all agreed (on/with/about/—) the decision to go skiing rather than hiking.*
7. *She would not agree (to/on/with/about) the plea bargain.*
8. *We found dozens of old photographs hidden (in/—) between the pages.*
9. *Good study habits are necessary (to/for/in) academic success.*
10. *The new house color is not very different (from/than/to/—) the old one.*
11. *His girlfriend was angry (with/at/—) him for not calling sooner.*
12. *It will be many years before we fill (up/—) all the pages in this photo album.*
13. *They were both angry (about/at/with) the boys' behavior.*
14. *You should plan (to come/on coming) before 6:00 pm.*
15. *Matt was kicked off (of/—) the team for drinking at a party.*
16. *We will make sure that your contract complies (with/to/—) the laws of your state.*
17. *After the operation, Denise was no longer capable (of playing/to play) the violin.*

Worksheet 10: Idiom Errors

Consider the idiom in each sentence and fill in the correct preposition, if one is required.

1. *The interview provided insight _____ what great directors think about.*
2. *We were very angry _____ him for ignoring our phone calls.*
3. *Her tests include questions that seem very different _____ those that we see in the homework.*
4. *My mother preferred my singing _____ my practicing guitar.*
5. *Detective Simone ran in pursuit _____ the perpetrators.*
6. *We had to shoo the cat off _____ the car.*
7. *When she arrived on campus, she felt truly independent _____ her parents for the first time.*
8. *They scoured the bedroom in search _____ the missing bracelet.*
9. *We were very angry _____ the exorbitant price of gasoline at the corner gas station.*
10. *Although they were friends, they always seemed to be arguing _____ each other.*
11. *I am concerned _____ your failure to pass the last few quizzes.*
12. *We all agreed _____ the color scheme for the wedding.*
13. *Tony had to climb _____ the ladder to get to the top bunk.*
14. *As a public defender, he was very concerned _____ the legal issue of search and seizure.*
15. *It was hard not to agree _____ her offer of a free movie ticket.*
16. *The vaccine was intended to protect everyone working on the project _____ disease.*
17. *I could hardly pay attention in class because I was daydreaming _____ the prom.*
18. *Allison and her sister both excel _____ dance and music.*
19. *I could never dream _____ confronting the coach with such a trivial concern.*
20. *I arrived at the meeting too late to raise my objection _____ the proposal.*
21. *The third edition of this book really doesn't differ very much at all _____ the first two.*
22. *I beg to differ _____ you, but your story does not fit my recollection at all.*
23. *If we don't act soon, we may miss _____ the opportunity to lock in the lowest rates.*

Answer Key 10: Idiom Errors

Concept Review 10

1. *I prefer spaghetti to linguine.*
2. *The students were protesting (none needed) the decision to cut financial aid.*
3. *We are all concerned about your decision to drop out of school. (Concerned about means worried about.)*
4. *It took nearly an hour to open (none needed) the trunk.*
5. *Eleanor has always been concerned with feminist issues. (Concerned with means occupied with or involved in.)*
6. *We all agreed on the decision to go skiing rather than hiking. (You agree on mutual decisions or plans.)*
7. *She would not agree to the plea bargain. (You agree to offers.)*
8. *We found dozens of old photographs hidden (none needed) between the pages.*
9. *Good study habits are necessary to (or sometimes for) academic success.*
10. *The new house color is not very different from the old one. (Use than only with **comparatives** like bigger; different is not a comparative.)*
11. *His girlfriend was angry with him for not calling sooner. (You get angry with people.)*
12. *It will be many years before we fill (none needed) all the pages in this photo album.*
13. *They were both angry about the boys' behavior. (You get angry about situations.)*
14. *You should plan to come before 6:00 pm. (Plan to means make a plan to, but plan on means rely on.)*
15. *Matt was kicked off (none needed) the team for drinking at a party.*
16. *We will make sure that your contract complies with the laws of your state.*
17. *After the operation, Denise was no longer capable of playing the violin.*

Worksheet 10

1. *The interview provided insight into what great directors think about.*
2. *We were very angry with him for ignoring our phone calls.*
3. *Her tests include questions that seem very different from those that we see in the homework.*
4. *My mother preferred my singing to my practicing guitar.*
5. *Detective Simone ran in pursuit of the perpetrators.*
6. *We had to shoo the cat off (none needed) the car.*
7. *When she arrived on campus, she felt truly independent of her parents for the first time.*
8. *They scoured the bedroom in search of the missing bracelet.*
9. *We were very angry about the exorbitant price of gasoline at the corner gas station.*
10. *Although they were friends, they always seemed to be arguing with each other.*
11. *I am concerned about your failure to pass the last few quizzes.*
12. *We all agreed on the color scheme for the wedding.*
13. *Tony had to climb (none needed) the ladder to get to the top bunk.*
14. *As a public defender, he was very concerned with the legal issue of search and seizure.*
15. *It was hard not to agree to her offer of a free movie ticket.*
16. *The vaccine was intended to protect everyone working on the project from disease.*
17. *I could hardly pay attention in class because I was daydreaming about the prom.*
18. *Allison and her sister both excel in dance and music.*
19. *I could never dream of confronting the coach with such a trivial concern.*
20. *I arrived at the meeting too late to raise my objection to the proposal.*
21. *The third edition of this book really doesn't differ very much at all from the first two.*
22. *I beg to differ with you, but your story does not fit my recollection at all.*
23. *If we don't act soon, we may miss (none needed) the opportunity to lock in the lowest rates.*

Lesson 11: Diction Errors

What Are Diction Errors?

Diction errors are “wrong word” errors. If an SAT sentence contains a word that sounds *almost* right but not quite, it may well be a diction error. Study this list of words so that you can spot common diction errors.

Commonly Confused Words

- accept/except:** To *accept* something means to *agree to take it*. <*accept an offer*> To *except* something is to *exclude it*.
- adapt/adapt/adept:** To *adapt* something means to *make it suitable for a particular purpose* (from *apt*, which means *appropriate* or *suitable*). To *adopt* means to *choose as one's own*. Someone *adept* is *highly skilled*. <*an adept player*>
- affect/effect:** To *affect* means to *influence*. <*It affected me deeply*.> An *effect* is a *result or consequence*. <*It had a good effect*.> They are easily confused because to *affect* means to *have an effect* on something.
- allude/elude/allusion/illusion:** To *allude to* something means to *make a subtle or indirect reference to it*. To *elude* something means to *escape from it*. An *allusion* is a *subtle reference*, but an *illusion* is a *deception or misconception*.
- ambivalent/ambiguous:** When you're *ambivalent* you have *conflicting feelings* about something. <*I feel ambivalent about the party*.> Something *ambiguous* is *unclear or having more than one interpretation*. <*an ambiguous signal*>
- cite/site/sight:** To *cite* means to *mention as a source of information* or to *commend for meritorious action*. <*cite an article in her essay*> A *site* is a *place where a planned activity occurs*. To *sight* means to *see at a specific location*.
- compliment/complement:** A *compliment* is a *praising personal comment*. A *complement* is something that *completes or makes a whole*. (Notice the **ple** in *complement* and *complete*.)
- council/counsel:** A *council* is a *committee*. <*the executive council*> To *counsel* is to *give advice*. <*He counseled me*.>
- discrete/discreet:** *Discrete* means *distinct*. <A watch contains dozens of *discrete* parts.> Someone *discreet* is *prudently modest*. <Act *discreetly*.>
- elicit/illicit:** To *elicit* means to *bring out or to call forth*. <*The joke elicited laughter*.> *Illicit* means *unlawful*.
- eminent/imminent:** Someone *eminent* is *prominently distinguished*. <*an eminent historian*> Something *imminent* is *about to occur*. <*imminent doom*>
- flaunt/flout:** To *flaunt* something means to *show it off*. <*flaunt your talents*> To *flout* something means to *show contempt for it*. <*flout the rules*>
- gambit/gamut:** A *gambit* is a *careful strategy or an opening move*. The *gamut* is the *complete range*. <*run the gamut*>
- imply/infer:** To *imply* means to *suggest or hint at*, but to *infer* means to *draw a conclusion from evidence*.
- its/it's, their/they're, whose/who's, your/you're:** Apostrophes can show *possession* (as in *David's bike*) or indicate *missing letters in a contraction* (as in *can't* as a contraction of *cannot*). In each of the confusing word pairs above, apostrophes indicate **contraction**, not **possession**: *it's* = *it is* or *it has*, *they're* = *they are*, *you're* = *you are*, and *who's* = *who is* or *who has*. The possessives are the ones without apostrophes.
- morale/moral:** *Morale* (n: mor-AL) is *shared enthusiasm for and dedication to a goal*. <*The team's morale was very high after the win*.> A *moral* (n: MOR-al) is a *lesson or principle about good behavior*. <*The story had a nice moral*.>
- phase/faze:** A *phase* is a *stage in a process*. <*third phase of the project*> The idiom to *phase out* means to *eliminate in stages*. To *faze* someone means to *disturb his or her composure*. <*I was a bit fazed by the interruption*.>
- precede/proceed/proceeds:** To *precede* something means to *come before it* (*pre-* before). To *proceed* means to *go on, usually after a pause* (*pro-* forward). *Proceeds* are *funds received from a venture*. <*proceeds from the raffle*>
- principal/principle:** A *principal* is your *pal—the head of a school*. It's also the *initial investment in an interest-bearing account*. (Money in the bank can be a pretty good *pal*, too, eh?) A *principle* is a *guiding rule*.
- reticent/reluctant:** Someone *reticent* is *reserved or reluctant to talk freely*. Don't use it to mean *reluctant*.

Concept Review 11: Diction Errors

Circle any diction errors in each of the following sentences, and write the correct word(s) in the blank.

1. *Although most of the manuscripts were signed by their authors, some were written unanimously.* _____
2. *It was hard for the comic to illicit even the slightest laugh from the crowd.* _____
3. *She seems to have a hard time excepting compliments.* _____
4. *We needed to adopt the old engine to fit the new go-cart.* _____
5. *I like all flavors of ice cream accept mocha.* _____
6. *The imminent congresswoman was re-elected easily.* _____
7. *While his activities were clearly immoral, they were not elicit.* _____
8. *The committee decided to adapt the new rules regarding membership.* _____
9. *She thought it wise to be discrete about her previous relationship with the defendant.* _____
10. *The counsel will decide how to finance the new city park.* _____
11. *Rather than cooperating with the rest of the team, Richard is always trying to flaunt the rules.* _____
12. *His knowledge of sports runs the gambit from table tennis to arena football.* _____
13. *The jury should not imply guilt from the defendant's refusal to answer these questions.* _____
14. *We were amazed at how adapt a juggler Carl was.* _____
15. *Rather than eliminate the department all at once, they decided to faze it out gradually.* _____
16. *Dogs barking can often signal eminent danger.* _____
17. *Training a dog is easy, once you've got it's attention.* _____
18. *She was sending mixed signals, so it was ambivalent whether she really wanted to go.* _____
19. *After our vacation, we decided to precede with the plan.* _____
20. *They don't seem to tolerate anyone who does not abide by their principals.* _____
21. *I was trying to infer that I should be considered for the new position.* _____
22. *I always felt reticent to talk in class.* _____
23. *Deanne was not even phased by the fire alarm.* _____
24. *The vitamins didn't have as great an affect as I thought they would.* _____
25. *She was the principle benefactor of the new hospital ward.* _____
26. *The police officer was sighted for her efforts in the hostage rescue.* _____
27. *She made an illusion to the fact that she was once a beauty queen.* _____
28. *Even the most trivial news seems to effect the stock price immediately.* _____
29. *David felt ambiguous about testifying against his partner.* _____
30. *The moral of the troops was at an all-time low during the Christmas season.* _____
31. *That scarf really compliments your outfit.* _____
32. *The meaning of that poem alludes me.* _____
33. *Her study of gorillas has been sited in several major books.* _____

Worksheet 11: Diction Errors

Circle any diction errors in each of the following sentences, and write the correct word(s) in the blank.

1. *The reason we canceled the trip is because Wynona couldn't come on that weekend.* _____
2. *Most of the meeting was spent honing in on the final plans for building the float.* _____
3. *Matt was finally kicked off the starting squad for flaunting the team rules.* _____
4. *I tried to stay awake for the lecture, but I was so disinterested that I dozed off before the professor was half finished.* _____
5. *Ms. Davis said that we should always try and speak as if we were trying to hold a conversation with a person in the very back of the auditorium.* _____
6. *Jennifer was very reticent to speak about the incident, even many years after it occurred.* _____
7. *The article mentioned the low voter turnout in order to infer that the senator may not have been elected by a true majority.* _____
8. *Even the ten-run deficit didn't seem to phase the manager; he refused to waver in his optimism.* _____
9. *We decided that it was prudent to wait until the debris was cleared before we preceded.* _____
10. *Although the police initially had many solid leads, the suspect alluded them for several months.* _____
11. *It may be years before we understand how pollution from the new power plant might effect the regional environment.* _____
12. *The new online store's musical offerings run the gambit from arias to zydeco.* _____
13. *Heather was the principle author of the study that was recently published in a prominent scientific magazine.* _____
14. *We were thrilled to get such an imminent expert on world affairs to speak at our colloquium on such short notice.* _____
15. *All of the invited guests accept Anthony arrived promptly.* _____
16. *Mrs. Sullivan went on all period about the illusions to Victorian society in Alice in Wonderland.* _____
17. *For nearly the entire semester, I felt so inhabited that I never so much as razed my hand in class.* _____
18. *Since they did not have a plan for the project, they decided to refer their approval until later.* _____
19. *Try as they might, the hikers could not find the anecdote to the snake venom.* _____
20. *The acid solution was so potent that we had to delude it with water before we could use it safely.* _____
21. *The symbols on the cave walls are ambivalent; scientists have been debating their meaning for decades.* _____
22. *Despite the setbacks with the caterers, the Breedens managed to give a splendidly eloquent party.* _____
23. *As someone committed to fairness in education, she could not accept the iniquity of the admissions policy.* _____

Answer Key II: Diction Errors

Concept Review II

1. Although most of the manuscripts were signed by their authors, some were written anonymously.
2. It was hard for the comic to elicit even the slightest laugh from the crowd.
3. She seems to have a hard time accepting compliments.
4. We needed to adapt the old engine to fit the new go-cart.
5. I like all flavors of ice cream except mocha.
6. The eminent congresswoman was re-elected easily.
7. While his activities were clearly immoral, they were not illicit.
8. The committee decided to adopt the new rules regarding membership.
9. She thought it wise to be discreet about her previous relationship with the defendant.
10. The council will decide how to finance the new city park.
11. Rather than cooperating with the rest of the team, Richard is always trying to flout the rules.
12. His knowledge of sports runs the gamut from table tennis to arena football.
13. The jury should not infer guilt from the defendant's refusal to answer these questions.
14. We were amazed at how adept a juggler Carl was.
15. Rather than eliminate the department all at once, they decided to phase it out gradually.
16. Dogs barking can often signal imminent danger.
17. Training a dog is easy, once you've got its attention.
18. She was sending mixed signals, so it was ambiguous whether she really wanted to go.
19. After our vacation, we decided to proceed with the plan.
20. They don't seem to tolerate anyone who does not abide by their principles.
21. I was trying to imply that I should be considered for the new position.
22. I always felt reluctant to talk in class.
23. Deanne was not even fazed by the fire alarm.
24. The vitamins didn't have as great an effect as I thought they would.
25. She was the principal benefactor of the new hospital ward.
26. The police officer was cited for her efforts in the hostage rescue.
27. She made an allusion to the fact that she was once a beauty queen.
28. Even the most trivial news seems to affect the stock price immediately.
29. David felt ambivalent about testifying against his partner.
30. The morale of the troops was at an all-time low during the Christmas season.
31. That scarf really complements your outfit.
32. The meaning of that poem eludes me.
33. Her study of gorillas has been cited in several major books.

Worksheet II

1. The reason we canceled the trip is that. . . (The reason is a thing.)
2. Most of the meeting was spent homing in on. . .
3. Matt was finally kicked off the starting squad for flouting. . .
4. I tried to stay awake for the lecture, but I was so uninterested. . . (Disinterested means impartial.)
5. Ms. Davis said that we should always try to. . .
6. Jennifer was very reluctant to speak. . .
7. The article mentioned the low voter turnout in order to imply. . .
8. Even the ten-run deficit didn't seem to faze the manager. . .
9. We decided that it was prudent to wait until the debris was cleared before we proceeded.
10. Although the police initially had many solid leads, the suspect eluded them for several months.
11. It may be years before we understand how pollution from the new power plant might affect the regional environment.
12. The new online store's musical offerings run the gamut from arias to zydeco.
13. Heather was the principal author of the study. . .
14. We were thrilled to get such an eminent expert. . .
15. All of the invited guests except Anthony arrived promptly.
16. Mrs. Sullivan went on all period about the allusions. . .
17. For nearly the entire semester, I felt so inhibited that I never so much as raised my hand in class.
18. Since they did not have a plan for the project, they decided to defer their approval until later.
19. Try as they might, the hikers could not find the antidote. . .
20. The acid solution was so potent that we had to dilute it with water before we could use it safely.
21. The symbols on the cave walls are ambiguous; scientists have been debating their meaning for decades.
22. Despite the setbacks with the caterers, the Breedens managed to give a splendidly elegant party. (Eloquent means well-spoken.)
23. As someone committed to fairness in education, she could not accept the inequity. . . (Iniquity is sin.)

Lesson 12: Other Modifier Problems

Adjectives vs. Adverbs

Don't use an *adjective* to do the job of an *adverb*. *Adjectives* (like *green*, *generous*, and *gargantuan*) are words that modify *nouns*. *Adverbs* (like *gently*, *globally*, and *grossly*) are words that modify *verbs*, *adjectives*, or *other adverbs*.

Wrong: *I was impressed by how **cogent** his argument was presented.*

Although the *argument* was *cogent*, the modifier in this sentence is intended to answer the question *how was it presented?* Since it modifies a verb, it is an *adverb* and should take the *-ly* form.

Right: *I was impressed by how **cogently** his argument was presented.*

An *adverb* may also be used to modify the statement that a *whole sentence* makes.

Okay: *Clearly, the dust storm obscured the rider's vision.*

Some people claim that the adverb *clearly* must modify the verb *obscured*, and say that it's illogical for something to be *obscured clearly*, because *obscured* is the opposite of *clear*. However, *adverbs can be used to modify the statement as a whole* rather than the verb it contains. In this case, *Clearly* means *What follows is a clear and obvious statement*, but it's much more concise, wouldn't you agree?

Two common modifiers, *fast* and *well*, can be used as either adjectives or adverbs. *Fast* is an adjective in *The car is fast*, but it is an adverb in *He talks too fast*, describing how he *talks*. *Well* is an adjective meaning *healthy* in *I haven't been well lately*, but it is an adverb in *She sings very well*, describing how she *sings*.

Comparative Adjectives and Adverbs

Use the proper form when using comparative modifiers. *Comparative adjectives* take one of two forms: *fast* becomes comparative by adding *-er* to make *faster*, but *adorable* becomes

comparative by adding *more* to make *more adorable*. (*Adorabler* just doesn't sound right, does it?) *Comparative adverbs* almost always start with *more* as in *more rapidly*, but some irregular (that is, non *-ly*) adverbs can take *-er*, as in *She runs faster than anyone else in the class*.

Wrong: *The briefcase feels **more light** than it did this morning.* (This is not the proper idiom.)

Right: *The briefcase feels **lighter** than it did this morning.*

Wrong: *Please try to hold the baby **gentler** next time.* (*Gentler* is a comparative adjective, not an adverb.)

Right: *Please try to hold the baby **more gently** next time.*

Some modifiers should not take the comparative form because they are *absolutes*. For instance, it is illogical for one thing to be *more unique* than another thing, because *unique* means *one of a kind*, and this shows an absolute quality.

Wrong: *The loss was made **more inevitable** by the injury to our starting pitcher.* (It's either *inevitable* or it's not!)

Right: *The loss was made **inevitable** by the injury to our starting pitcher.*

Eliminate Redundancy

A *redundancy* is an unnecessary repetition of an idea. *Eliminate all redundancies from your writing*. To check whether a word or phrase is redundant, reread the sentence without that word or phrase. If the meaning of the sentence remains unchanged, then the word or phrase is redundant.

Wrong: *With only seconds **remaining to go** in the game, Michael **sped quickly** down the court.*

Since *remaining* means roughly the same as *to go*, we don't need both. Also, *to speed* means *to move quickly*, so *sped quickly* is redundant.

Right: *With only seconds **remaining** in the game, Michael **sped** down the court.*

Concept Review 12: Other Modifier Problems

Give the comparative form of each adjective or adverb.

1. *gentle* _____

2. *precious* _____

3. *gently* _____

4. *lovely* _____

5. *quiet* _____

6. *sporty* _____

7. Circle the absolute modifiers in the list below.

<i>wild</i>	<i>impossible</i>	<i>sufficient</i>	<i>final</i>	<i>fatal</i>
<i>complete</i>	<i>inevitable</i>	<i>responsive</i>	<i>tolerable</i>	<i>willing</i>
<i>entire</i>	<i>effective</i>	<i>ideal</i>	<i>universal</i>	<i>unique</i>

8. What is the correct comparative form of an absolute modifier?

In each of the following sentences, circle the modifying words or phrases and label them *adjectives* (ADJ), *adverbs* (ADV), or *sentence modifiers* (SMOD).

9. *The music was overwhelmingly beautiful.*
10. *The other store is far less convenient than the one on the corner.*
11. *David unknowingly picked up the wrong bag.*
12. *Unfortunately, we could hardly see the band from our awful seats.*
13. *The best thing to do is to wait patiently.*
14. *Personally, I vastly prefer bison meat to beef.*
15. *Most likely, the lacrosse team left on the first bus.*
16. *I almost never watch television anymore.*
17. Cross out any redundant words or phrases in the paragraph below. (Hint: there are at least ten redundancies.)

When we refer back to past history, we can see that whenever a new innovation is introduced for the first time, people rarely accept the whole entire concept, at least not right away. If and when something threatens the ways of the past, people don't part easily with their old ways. Although not everyone necessarily needs to maintain the status quo, consistency and predictability make people feel comfortable. Even when technology comes up with a way to do things better, people often continue on with their older, less efficient ways. For instance, it's not uncommon for people to use e-mail while at the same time continuing to correspond via "snail mail." If they would quickly pause for a moment, they would see that they can communicate more effectively through the Internet—and save some trees!

Worksheet 12: Other Modifier Problems

Correct any modifier problems in the sentences below.

1. *The latest political commercials make their points stronger than previous ones.*
2. *My shirt smelled quite foully after rugby practice.*
3. *Recent technological advances have made it easier to extract minuscule chemical traces from geological samples.*
4. *We never usually get to go to such elegant restaurants.*
5. *Although both of my parents have pretty level heads, my father is the most patient.*
6. *The third graders weren't hardly interested in going to the museum after school.*
7. *I could always sing in front of a crowd easier than I could give a speech.*
8. *In many areas of the country, wind energy can be converted to electricity even more efficient than fossil energy.*
9. *I felt surprisingly well after Saturday's ten-mile run.*
10. *The microscopic size of the fracture made it more impossible to detect, even with special instruments.*
11. *The committee had never been so unanimous as they were on the most recent vote.*
12. *These measures won't barely address the state's deficit.*
13. *The teacher never told us about the test until the day before.*
14. *We weren't real sure that the plan would work.*
15. *Students never usually bother to examine the veracity of the "facts" they are supposed to memorize in history class.*
16. *Gena's guess was the most correct of anyone's in the class.*

Answer Key 12: Other Modifier Problems

Concept Review 12

1. *gentler*
2. *more precious*
3. *more gently*
4. *more lovely*
5. *quieter*
6. *sportier*
7. absolutes: *impossible, inevitable, ideal, complete, final, universal, entire, sufficient, fatal, unique*
8. Trick question! Of course, absolute modifiers are absolute *because* they have no comparative forms.
9. *overwhelmingly* (ADV modifying the ADJ *beautiful*); *beautiful* (ADJ)
10. *other* (ADJ); *far* (ADV modifying the ADJ *less convenient*); *less* (ADV modifying the ADJ *convenient*); *convenient* (ADJ); *on the corner* (ADJ prep phrase)
11. *unknowingly* (ADV); *wrong* (ADJ)
12. *unfortunately* (SMOD); *hardly* (ADV modifying the V *see*); *from our awful seats* (ADV prep phrase modifying V *see*); *awful* (ADJ)
13. *best* (ADJ); *to do* (ADJ infinitive); *patiently* (ADV)
14. *personally* (SMOD); *vastly* (ADV modifying V *prefer*); *to beef* (ADV prep phrase modifying V *prefer*)
15. *most* (ADV modifying ADJ *likely*); *likely* (ADJ); *lacrosse* (ADJ); *on the first bus* (ADV prep phrase modifying V *left*); *first* (ADJ)
16. *almost* (ADV modifying ADV *never*); *never* (ADV modifying V *watch*); *anymore* (ADV modifying V *watch*)
17. *When we refer to history, we can see that whenever an innovation is introduced, people rarely accept the entire concept, at least not right away. When something threatens the ways of the past, people don't part easily with their old ways. Although not everyone needs to maintain the status quo, consistency and predictability make people feel comfortable. Even when technology comes up with a way to do things better, people often continue with their older, less efficient ways. For instance, it's not uncommon for people to use e-mail while continuing to correspond via "snail mail." If they would pause for a moment, they would see that they can communicate more effectively through the Internet—and save some trees!*

Worksheet 12

1. *The latest political commercials make their points more strongly than previous ones.* (Use adverb, not adjective.)
2. *My shirt smelled quite foul after rugby practice.* (Here, the modifier is an adjective describing the shirt. The verb *smelled* is acting as a linking verb.)
3. *Recent technological advances have made it easier to extract minuscule chemical traces from geological samples.* (Correct)
4. *We rarely get to go to such elegant restaurants.* (The use of *never* is illogical.)
5. *Although both of my parents have pretty level heads, my father is the more patient.* (Use *more* when comparing two things.)
6. *The third graders were hardly interested in going to the museum after school.* (Double negative)
7. *I could always sing in front of a crowd more easily than I could give a speech.* (Use adverb, not adjective.)
8. *In many areas of the country, wind energy can be converted to electricity even more efficiently than fossil energy.*
9. *I felt surprisingly well after Saturday's ten-mile run.* (This is okay, but only if you mean that you are in a state of generally good health. If, however, you mean to say that you don't feel fatigued or achy, it is better to use *good* rather than *well*.)
10. *The microscopic size of the fracture made it impossible to detect, even with special instruments.* (*Impossible* is an absolute adjective.)
11. *The committee had never been so unified as they were on the most recent vote.* (*Unanimous* is an absolute, but *unified* is not.)
12. *These measures won't address the state's deficit.* (Double negative)
13. *The teacher didn't tell us about the test until the day before.* (The use of *never* is illogical.)
14. *We weren't really sure that the plan would work.* (The modifier is an adverb modifying the adjective *sure*.)
15. *Students rarely bother to examine the veracity of the "facts" they are supposed to memorize in history class.* (*Never usually* is illogical.)
16. *Gena's guess was the most nearly correct of anyone's in the class.* (*Correct* is an absolute modifier, but guesses can *approach* correctness in varying degrees.)

Lesson 13: Irregular Verbs

Know Your Irregulars

When using the perfect tenses or using participial phrases, you must use the *past participle* of the verb rather than the *past tense* form of the verb. Don't mix them up!

For many verbs, the two forms are the same, as in *we walked* (past) and *we had walked* (past perfect), but for many "irregular" verbs, they are different, as in *we ate* (past) and *we had eaten* (past perfect). You should know the irregular forms of common verbs.

Infinitive	Past tense	Past participle
<i>to arise</i>	<i>arose</i>	<i>arisen</i>
<i>to awake</i>	<i>awoke</i>	<i>awoken</i>
<i>to beat</i>	<i>beat</i>	<i>beaten</i>
<i>to begin</i>	<i>began</i>	<i>begun</i>
<i>to blow</i>	<i>blew</i>	<i>blown</i>
<i>to break</i>	<i>broke</i>	<i>broken</i>
<i>to burst</i>	<i>burst</i>	<i>burst</i>
<i>to cast</i>	<i>cast</i>	<i>cast</i>
<i>to come</i>	<i>came</i>	<i>come</i>
<i>to creep</i>	<i>crept</i>	<i>crept</i>
<i>to do</i>	<i>did</i>	<i>done</i>
<i>to draw</i>	<i>drew</i>	<i>drawn</i>
<i>to drink</i>	<i>drank</i>	<i>drunk</i>
<i>to drive</i>	<i>drove</i>	<i>driven</i>
<i>to forsake</i>	<i>forsook</i>	<i>forsaken</i>
<i>to get</i>	<i>got</i>	<i>got, gotten</i>
<i>to go</i>	<i>went</i>	<i>gone</i>
<i>to hurt</i>	<i>hurt</i>	<i>hurt</i>
<i>to kneel</i>	<i>kneeled, knelt</i>	<i>knelt</i>
<i>to know</i>	<i>knew</i>	<i>known</i>
<i>to lay (to put or place)</i>	<i>laid</i>	<i>laid</i>
<i>to lie (to recline)</i>	<i>lay</i>	<i>lain</i>
<i>to ride</i>	<i>rode</i>	<i>ridden</i>
<i>to run</i>	<i>ran</i>	<i>run</i>
<i>to shrink</i>	<i>shrank</i>	<i>shrunk, shrunken</i>
<i>to sink</i>	<i>sank</i>	<i>sunk</i>
<i>to speak</i>	<i>spoke</i>	<i>spoken</i>
<i>to spring</i>	<i>sprang</i>	<i>sprung</i>
<i>to take</i>	<i>took</i>	<i>taken</i>
<i>to tear</i>	<i>tore</i>	<i>torn</i>
<i>to write</i>	<i>wrote</i>	<i>written</i>

Concept Review 13: Irregular Verbs

Complete the following sentences with the correct form of the verb:

1. We would have _____ (to ride) even further if we had had the time.
2. Until now, that issue hasn't _____ (to arise).
3. Before we won last week's game, we hadn't _____ (to beat) the Cougars in ten years.
4. I would not have _____ (to drink) the punch if I had known that it had liquor in it.
5. We searched everywhere, but our friends had _____ (to go) out for the evening.
6. Had I never _____ (to know) about video games, I would have _____ (to get) perfect grades last semester.
7. At last night's concert, the band _____ (to sing) all of its greatest hits.
8. The Donnellys have _____ (to run) their corner store for over 20 years.
9. They had hardly _____ (to speak) about the incident until that night.
10. I can't believe you put my wool sweater in the dryer and _____ (to shrink) it.
11. His batting average has really _____ (to sink) ever since his injury.
12. She had _____ (to speak) for so long that the other speakers didn't have time to finish their presentations.
13. It seems as if the tulips _____ (to spring) out of the ground overnight.
14. We should have _____ (to take) that shortcut to work.
15. If we had jumped over that fence, the polar bear would have _____ (to tear) us to shreds.
16. I promise you that by next month I will have _____ (to write) the first four chapters of the book.

Worksheet 13: Irregular Verbs

Circle the past participle(s) or past tense verbs in each sentence, and make any necessary corrections.

1. *Elisha could never have went to the state finals if I had not convinced her to join the team in the first place.*
2. *In retrospect, it seems I might have took too much time on the essay portion of the test.*
3. *While we played video games, Danny lay on the couch all afternoon.*
4. *Most people find it amazing that, millions of years ago, life sprung from a primordial swamp.*
5. *After we had placed our bets, we lay our cards on the table.*
6. *Carl would have tore his uniform if he had not stopped his slide at the last second.*
7. *The generals forsook their own troops to surrender and save their own lives.*
8. *When the temperature sunk below zero, the pipes bursted like water balloons.*
9. *The assets of the company were froze as soon as it declared bankruptcy.*
10. *Promptly at 6 o'clock, the assistant cook rung the bell for dinner, and the whole camp raced up the hill.*
11. *I was concerned about buying a cotton warm-up suit, and sure enough, it shrunk two sizes after the first wash.*
12. *By the time they pitched camp for the night, they had ridden over 30 miles.*
13. *George needed his friends more than ever, but they had forsook him.*
14. *We sung just about every song we knew, then we went to bed.*
15. *The senator could have spoke a lot longer, but she yielded the floor to her colleague.*

Answer Key 13: Irregular Verbs

Concept Review 13

1. We would have ridden even further if we had had the time.
2. Until now, that issue hasn't arisen.
3. Before we won last week's game, we hadn't beaten the Cougars in ten years.
4. I would not have drunk the punch if I had known that it had liquor in it.
5. We searched everywhere, but our friends had gone out for the evening.
6. Had I never known about video games, I would have gotten perfect grades last semester.
7. At last night's concert, the band sang all of its greatest hits.
8. The Donnellys have run their corner store for over 20 years.
9. They had hardly spoken about the incident until that night.
10. I can't believe you put my wool sweater in the dryer and shrank it.
11. His batting average has really sunk ever since his injury.
12. She had spoken for so long that the other speakers didn't have time to finish their presentations.
13. It seems as if the tulips sprang out of the ground overnight.
14. We should have taken that shortcut to work.
15. If we had jumped over that fence, the polar bear would have torn us to shreds.
16. I promise you that by next month I will have written the first four chapters of the book.

Worksheet 13

1. Elisha could never have gone to the state finals if I had not convinced her to join the team in the first place.
2. In retrospect, it seems I might have taken too much time on the essay portion of the test.
3. While we played video games, Danny lay on the couch all afternoon. (Correct)
4. Most people find it amazing that, millions of years ago, life sprang from a primordial swamp.
5. After we had placed our bets, we laid our cards on the table.
6. Carl would have torn his uniform if he had not stopped his slide at the last second.
7. The generals forsook their own troops to surrender and save their own lives. (Correct)
8. When the temperature sank below zero, the pipes burst like water balloons.
9. The assets of the company were frozen as soon as it declared bankruptcy.
10. Promptly at 6 o'clock, the assistant cook rang the bell for dinner, and the whole camp raced up the hill.
11. I was concerned about buying a cotton warm-up suit, and sure enough, it shrank two sizes after the first wash.
12. By the time they pitched camp for the night, they had ridden over 30 miles. (Correct)
13. George needed his friends more than ever, but they had forsaken him.
14. We sang just about every song we knew, then we went to bed.
15. The senator could have spoken a lot longer, but she yielded the floor to her colleague.

Lesson 14: The Subjunctive Mood

What is the “Mood” of a Verb?

The *mood* of a verb is its *factuality* or *urgency*. There are three moods of verbs in English.

Indicative mood: Most verbs are in the *indicative mood*, meaning they indicate something *real* or *factual*, as in *I am going to the park*.

Subjunctive mood: Verbs in the *subjunctive mood* indicate something *hypothetical*, *conditional*, *wishful*, *suggestive*, or *counter to fact*, as in *I wish I were going to the park*.

Imperative mood: Verbs in the *imperative mood* indicate a *direct command*, as in **Go to the park!**

The only “tricky” mood in English is the *subjunctive mood*. Questions about the subjunctive mood are possible on the SAT, but they are not very common. You should recognize the common situations in which the subjunctive mood must be used, and know how to change the form of the verb accordingly.

The subjunctive mood is usually indicated by *auxiliaries* like *would*, *should*, *might*, and *may*, or if the verb is *to be*, by the forms *were* and *be*.

<i>He would feel better if only he would eat.</i>	(Hypothetical)
<i>If I were faster, I could play wide receiver.</i>	(Hypothetical)
<i>We thought that she might win the election, but she lost by a lot.</i>	(Counter to fact)
<i>He plays as though he were not even injured.</i>	(Counter to fact)
<i>I wish that he would not act so superior.</i>	(Wishful)
<i>I wish I were two inches taller.</i>	(Wishful)
<i>I truly doubt that she would ever say such a thing.</i>	(Doubtful)
<i>I think she might be in over her head.</i>	(Doubtful)
<i>She said that we should practice harder.</i>	(Suggestion)
<i>He asks that we be there at 6 o'clock sharp.</i>	(Indirect command)

Don't Overdo It

The subjunctive mood is slowly disappearing from the English language. Many subjunctive forms from the past now sound old-fashioned and are no longer “standard” English.

Archaic: We must all respect the office of the presidency, no matter who be the current officeholder.

Better: We must all respect the office of the presidency, no matter who is the current officeholder.

Archaic: If that be so, we may see dramatic changes in the market.

Better: If that is so, we may see dramatic changes in the market.

Watch Your Ifs

One very common mistake is using the construction *if . . . would have . . .* as a past subjunctive form. The correct form is *if . . . had . . .*

Wrong: *If he would have arrived a minute sooner, he would not have missed her.*

Right: *If he had arrived a minute sooner, he would not have missed her.*

Concept Review 14: The Subjunctive Mood

1. Name five auxiliaries that indicate the subjunctive mood.

2. What does the subjunctive mood indicate?

Circle the correct subjunctive verb form in each of the following sentences.

3. *If I (was/were) a little faster, I'd be able to anchor the relay team.*
4. *In fact, I (was/were) only 5 years old at the time.*
5. *He would feel better if only he (ate/would eat).*
6. *He asks that we (are/be) there at 6 o'clock sharp.*
7. *I wish that he (were/was) not so presumptuous about my motives.*
8. *If he (would have/had) caught the ball, the inning would be over now.*
9. *If I (was/were) a rock star, I'd tour all over Europe.*
10. *He plays as though he (was/were) not even injured.*
11. *I wish I (was/were) six inches taller.*
12. *I think she (might be/is) in over her head.*
13. *If she (would have/had) campaigned harder, she might have won the election.*
14. *I cannot tell whether he (is/be) friend or foe.*

Worksheet 14: The Subjunctive Mood

Circle the verb(s) in each sentence. If the verb mood is incorrect, cross it out and write in the correction.

1. *We doubted that she will get enough votes to force a runoff, let alone win outright.* _____
2. *If I was going to take the SAT tomorrow, I'd be sure to get plenty of sleep tonight.* _____
3. *If I would have known that it would take this long, I'd have gone out for a snack.* _____
4. *I would have liked to have been there just to see the panicked look on his face.* _____
5. *The camp counselors asked that we were in our beds with lights out promptly at 10 o'clock.* _____
6. *David ran as if he was carrying a refrigerator on his back.* _____
7. *I wish that we would have paid the extra \$50 a night to get a better room.* _____
8. *Miss Hannigan demanded that we be silent unless spoken to and should always do what we're told.* _____
9. *He spoke as if he was an expert in the field of international relations.* _____
10. *I would have remembered to have left a generous tip, but I left my wallet at home.* _____
11. *Had I known beforehand, I would not have mentioned her ex-boyfriend.* _____
12. *If the rest of the class would have voted the way I did, we wouldn't be taking the test today.* _____

Answer Key 14: The Subjunctive Mood

Concept Review 14

1. *might, may, would, could, should*
2. that the verb indicates something hypothetical, conditional, suggestive, wishful, or counter to fact
3. *If I were a little faster, I'd be able to anchor the relay team.*
4. *In fact, I was only 5 years old at the time.*
5. *He would feel better if only he would eat.*
6. *He asks that we be there at 6 o'clock sharp.*
7. *I wish that he were not so presumptuous about my motives.*
8. *If he had caught the ball, the inning would be over now.*
9. *If I were a rock star, I'd tour all over Europe.*
10. *He plays as though he were not even injured.*
11. *I wish I were six inches taller.*
12. *I think she might be in over her head.*
13. *If she had campaigned harder, she might have won the election. (Don't say If she would have. . . .)*
14. *I cannot tell whether he is friend or foe. (The form be is formally correct also, but such usage is now considered archaic.)*

Worksheet 14

1. *We doubted that she would get enough votes to force a runoff, let alone win outright.*
2. *If I were going to take the SAT tomorrow, I'd be sure to get plenty of sleep tonight.*
3. *If I had known that it would take this long, I'd have gone out for a snack.*
4. *I would have liked to be there just to see the panicked look on his face.*
5. *The camp counselors asked that we be in our beds with lights out promptly at 10 o'clock.*
6. *David ran as if he were carrying a refrigerator on his back.*
7. *I wish that we had paid the extra \$50 a night to get a better room.*
8. *Miss Hannigan demanded that we be silent unless spoken to and (omit should) always do what we're told.*
9. *He spoke as if he were an expert in the field of international relations.*
10. *I would have remembered to leave a generous tip, but I left my wallet at home.*
11. *Had I known beforehand, I would not have mentioned her ex-boyfriend. (Correct)*
12. *If the rest of the class had voted the way I did, we wouldn't be taking the test today.*

Lesson 15: Coordinating Ideas

Complex and Compound Sentences

Many sentences contain more than one complete idea, or *clause*. These are called *compound sentences* (if the individual clauses can stand alone as sentences) or *complex sentences* (if one or more of the individual clauses *cannot* stand alone as sentences). *The ideas in sentences must coordinate logically with each other.*

Example:

As we walked in the door, Bernie jumped all over us.

This is a *complex sentence* because the first clause, *As we walked in the door*, cannot stand alone as a sentence. This is called a *dependent clause*. The second clause, however, *Bernie jumped all over us*, is an *independent clause*, and can stand alone as a sentence.

He was very excited to see us: we had been away for nearly a full hour!

This is a *compound sentence* because the two clauses are *independent*.

Run-On Sentences

If two *independent clauses* are joined only by a comma, this is an error called a *run-on sentence* or a *comma splice*. (A run-on sentence isn't just a sentence that's too long!) To join two independent clauses in one sentence, you must use a *colon* (:), a *semicolon* (;), or a *conjunction* like *but*, *or*, *yet*, *for*, *and*, *nor*, or *so*. (Mnemonic: BOYFANS)

Wrong: *I have taken several science courses this year, my favorite was neuroscience.*

Two independent clauses are joined only by a comma, so the sentence is a run-on.

Right: *I have taken several science courses this year; my favorite was neuroscience.*

Because the two clauses are closely related, they can be joined with a semicolon.

Right: *I have taken several science courses this year, but my favorite was neuroscience.*

Here the two clauses are joined with the conjunction *but*. This changes the meaning slightly from the previous version; it emphasizes the contrast between the *group* of courses in the first clause and the *single* course in the second clause.

Wrong: *The ride was more harrowing than they expected, several times the car nearly skidded off the mountain.*

Right: *The ride was more harrowing than they expected: several times the car nearly skidded off the mountain.*

The colon is more appropriate than a semicolon here, because the second clause *explains* the first.

The Colon and Semicolon

The *semicolon* (;) is used primarily to join two closely related independent clauses in a single sentence. When using a semicolon to join clauses, make sure they are *independent*; that is, they can stand alone as sentences.

Wrong: *The test was unbelievably difficult; and hardly anyone finished it on time.*
A semicolon or a conjunction should be used to join the clauses, but not both.

Right: *The test was unbelievably difficult; hardly anyone finished it on time.*

The *colon* (:) is used in much the same way as a semicolon is used, but it also implies that an *explanation* will follow.

Unclear: *The meeting went well and everyone was impressed by my presentation.*

This sentence is a bit ambiguous: did the meeting go well *because* of the successful presentation, or for another reason?

Better: *The meeting went well: everyone was impressed by my presentation.*

This makes the relationship between the clauses clearer: the second explains the first.

Concept Review 15: Coordinating Ideas

1. When should a semicolon be used to join clauses?
2. When should a colon be used to join clauses?
3. What is a run-on sentence?
4. Name the seven conjunctions that can join independent clauses.

Write a sentence that logically and concisely incorporates the given clauses, with the first clause as the main clause.

5. *Confederates in the Attic has received widespread critical acclaim. It was written by Tony Horwitz. It portrays the legacy of the Civil War in the modern South. It is poignant and funny.*

6. *Many of the rights given by the Constitution were bitterly contested by the Founding Fathers. Many people believe that the Founding Fathers agreed unanimously to safeguard those rights for us. The Constitution is much more a political compromise than a steadfast commitment to a set of ideals.*

7. *The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has been largely disproven. It claims that our thoughts are guided and limited by constraints on our language. Scientists now understand that having thoughts and expressing them are very different things.*

8. *Corporations can effectively control the opinions of the people through the media. They can do this to a large degree because the people don't believe they are being manipulated. This happens in free and democratic societies. Unlike totalitarian societies, free and democratic societies do not use force to ensure popular compliance.*

Worksheet 15: Coordinating Ideas

Make any necessary corrections to the following sentences to coordinate the clauses logically and concisely.

1. *Standardized test results can help measure the progress of individual students, and they are far less able to measure the effectiveness of entire school systems.*

2. *A consistent program of vigorous aerobic exercise maintains cardiovascular health, it also helps your brain to work more effectively.*

3. *If the Mets could just get some consistent relief pitching; they might be able to put a winning streak together.*

4. *We never should have bought the plane tickets, and it would have been much easier to drive.*

5. *The convention was not the success they had hoped it would be, their lead presenter came down with the flu; the salesman who had to fill in had never given a presentation in front of an audience.*

6. *Since 1998, the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been the deadliest since World War II, it has claimed over 3.3 million lives.*

7. *Mrs. Donovan seems to inspire every one of her students to achieve; she inspires them despite having to manage classes that sometimes number over 35 students.*

8. *The lab took us twice as long to complete as any of our other labs; but it was also the most worthwhile.*

Answer Key 15: Coordinating Ideas

Concept Review 15

- when the two clauses are independent and are very closely related
- when the two clauses are independent and the second clause explains the first
- a sentence that joins two independent clauses without a colon, a semicolon, or a conjunction
- BOYFANS: *but, or, yet, for, and, nor, so*
- Tony Horwitz's book Confederates in the Attic, a poignant and funny portrayal of the legacy of the Civil War in the modern South, has received widespread critical acclaim.*
- Although many people believe that the Founding Fathers agreed unanimously to safeguard our rights*
- in the Constitution, many of those rights were bitterly contested by the Founding Fathers; in fact, the Constitution is much more a political compromise than a steadfast commitment to a set of ideals.*
- The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which claims that our thoughts are guided and limited by constraints on our language, has been largely disproven, and scientists now understand that having thoughts and expressing them are very different things.*
- Even in free and democratic societies, corporations can effectively control the opinions of the people not through force, as totalitarian societies do, but through the media, largely because the people don't believe they are being manipulated.*

Worksheet 15

- Standardized test results can help measure the progress of individual students, but they are far less able to measure the effectiveness of entire school systems.*
- A consistent program of vigorous aerobic exercise maintains cardiovascular health and helps your brain to work more effectively.*
- If the Mets could just get some consistent relief pitching, they might be able to put a winning streak together.*
- We never should have bought the plane tickets; it would have been much easier to drive.*
- The convention was not the success they had hoped it would be; their lead presenter came down with the flu, and the salesman who had to fill in had never given a presentation in front of an audience.*
- Since 1998, the civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo has been the deadliest since World War II, claiming over 3.3 million lives.*
- Despite having to manage classes that sometimes number over 35 students, Mrs. Donovan seems to inspire every one of her students to achieve.*
- The lab took us twice as long to complete as any of our other labs, but it was also the most worthwhile.*