

Logic in grammar (Ambiguity and collocation)



Grammar in Context

Theme: Great people and amazing deeds¹

Words by Theme



Read the following text and answer the questions.

Extraordinary Cave Rescue

In the summer of 2018, a remarkable² rescue³ took place around a cave complex in northern Thailand.

① In this poor rural area, while a youth football team named Wild Boars was exploring⁴ the cave, an unexpected flood trapped them at the same time F . The 12 teenage boys and their coach were unable to leave the cave.

With limited fresh air and without food, the team survived⁵ on cave water. ② The coach told the boys

to lay down and meditate⁶ . ③ To use as little air as possible . ④ Outside the cave, the parents of the missing boys were excessively worried . ⑤ It kept raining heavily made the rescue even more difficult. ⑥ Their classmates had group prayers and sang songs into the cave to encourage⁷ them .

⑦ Soon, the incident drew the attention of international rescuers, including professional cave divers from other countries and Laos .

With everyone's exceptional⁸ effort⁹ and determination¹⁰, all victims were able to leave the cave safely after two weeks.

Read the underlined words. What is wrong with them? Write the letters (A–G) in the correct boxes.

- A. Sentence fragments (missing necessary sentence components)
- B. Run-on sentences (two or more independent clauses connected improperly)
- C. Word order
- D. Referencing (pronouns)
- E. Word choice (collocation and confusing words)
- F. Redundancy (use of words with the same meaning)
- G. Logic



More to take away

meditate (v.) = to focus your mind for a period in silence for relaxation or other spiritual purposes

Logic in grammar

Good writing is more than grammatically correct sentences. Every sentence has to be logical to present ideas accurately and clearly. There are a number of common logical errors to be avoided.

PART 1A Sentence fragments

Sentence fragments are incomplete sentences in which necessary components may be missing.

	Examples	
Missing the main verb	<i>The train ten minutes late.</i>	<i>The train was ten minutes late.</i>
Missing the subject	<i>Tomorrow is on sale.</i>	<i>Tomorrow everything is on sale.</i>
Missing the predicate	<i>The puppy you adopted from the animal shelter.</i> <i>The puppy you adopted from the animal shelter is adorable.</i>	

PART 1B Run-on sentences

Run-on sentences are compound or complex sentences. They contain two or more independent clauses that are connected improperly. The subject may be missing in one of the clauses.

*I visited an exhibition yesterday **was** special.*
*I visited an exhibition yesterday. **It** was special.*
The exhibition (which / that) I visited yesterday was special.

Subject	Verb	
<i>I</i>	<i>visited</i>	<i>an exhibition.</i>
<i>?</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>special.</i>

What was special?

*We live in a beautiful city **is** fortunate.*
***We** are fortunate to live in a beautiful city.*
*It is fortunate **that we live in a beautiful city**.*
***That we live in a beautiful city** is fortunate.*

Subject	Verb	
<i>We</i>	<i>live</i>	<i>in a beautiful city.</i>
<i>?</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>fortunate.</i>

What / Who is fortunate?

PART 1C Word order

The word order of a sentence is important in expressing an idea clearly.

I like other citrus fruits and grapefruit. It sounds like grapefruit is not a citrus fruit.
I like grapefruit and other citrus fruits.

Which of the foods come as one dish?
I'd like Buffalo wings, grilled drumsticks and fried chicken and waffles.
I'd like fried chicken and waffles, Buffalo wings and grilled drumsticks.



PART 1D Referencing

When the pronoun in a sentence can refer to either subject, the referencing becomes ambiguous.

*Jack and the boss could finally meet but **he** was nervous.* Who was nervous? Jack or the boss?
*Jack could finally meet the boss but **Jack** was nervous.*
*Jack and the boss could finally meet but **the former** was nervous.*



Exercise 1.1

What is wrong with the following sentences? Write SF, RS, WO or R in the boxes and correct the sentences.

Sentence fragments (SF)	Run-on sentences (RS)	Word order (WO)	Referencing (R)
1. I and my best friend are taking the bus.		WO	
<u>My best friend and I are taking the bus.</u>			
2. Sam is in Admiralty having dinner.			

3. The vase and the lamp are nice but it is expensive.			

4. People buy cars must pay a first registration tax in Hong Kong.			

5. My phone on silent mode the entire day.			

6. The technician is repairing the computer has been out of order.			

7. Although a full refund has been given, the customer dissatisfied.			

8. When they were finally all together, the students hung the bunting on the trees.			



Exercise 1.2

Andy is writing an app description. Complete the description by correcting the underlined sentences.

Description

Exercise does not have to take place in the gym. **(1)** We can do daily activities burn calories. We only need a bit of motivation. The three brothers in the Wong family have created the Move More app. **(2)** At first, he was not sure about the idea. The big brother seldom exercised but soon he saw the benefits of using the app. **(3)** Analyses your movements and records them. It also shows you which everyday activities burn more calories. You will be encouraged to do more of them. **(4)** In fact, other relatively inactive activities and standing burn more calories than you imagine! ... more

Move More



- We can do daily activities to burn calories.
- _____
- _____
- _____

PART 2A Collocation

Collocation is a pair or group of words that are often used together. The following are some of the common collocation errors:

Verb + Noun			
<i>improve a problem</i>	<i>solve a problem</i>	<i>do a crime</i>	<i>commit a crime</i>
<i>tell opinion</i>	<i>express / voice opinion</i>	<i>gain a fortune</i>	<i>make / lose a fortune</i>

Do not mix up the use of *do* and *make* in collocations.

<i>make + Noun</i>	<i>make + appointment, change, effort, improvement, mistake, trouble, wish</i>
<i>do + Noun</i>	<i>do + business, harm, job, research, shopping, work</i>

Other collocations with adjectives or adverbs:

Adjective + Noun	<i>key / crucial / vital + role</i>	<i>great / drastic + change</i>	<i>growing / upward + trend</i>
Adverb + Adjective	<i>actively involved</i>	<i>fully aware</i>	<i>readily available</i>

PART 2B Confusing words

The accurate use of words is crucial in expressing intended meaning. The following are some examples of easily confused word choice:

<i>The meeting <u>occurs</u> every Friday.</i>	<i>occur</i> = to happen unexpectedly
<i>The meeting <u>takes place</u> every Friday.</i>	<i>take place</i> = to happen after being planned
<i>Stuffed toys may give children <u>safety</u>.</i>	<i>safety</i> = protection from danger
<i>Stuffed toys may give children <u>security</u>.</i>	<i>security</i> = a feeling of protection from danger
<i>Follow the steps to <u>insure</u> your safety.</i>	<i>insure</i> = to pay an insurance company
<i>Follow the steps to <u>ensure</u> your safety.</i>	<i>ensure</i> = to make sure



DRILL

Exercise 2.1

Circle the correct words for the following sentences.

- The problem has not been (improved / solved / committed) by scientists.
- What business can I (commit / make / do) from home?
- Parents play a (significant / trivial / different) role in children's growth.
- Daisy Tam became actively (participated / involved / joined) in fighting food waste in 2019.
- Before going home, I (did / made / went) some shopping in the mall.
- Generally speaking, women (commit / do / make) fewer crimes than men.
- The system error (takes place / occurs / creates) when the user misses this step.
- The new CEO has (gained / booked / made) an appointment with all the department heads.
- How much harm does oil leakage (make / do / create) to the ocean?
- Please make (ensure / insure / sure) that you follow the procedure.
- There is a (less / downward / reducing) trend of sales of luxury watches.
- We have to be (fully aware / fully beware / aware fully) of the terms and conditions before signing any contracts.
- He (lost / made / earned) a fortune in the financial crisis.
- Parenting is about giving children love and (safety / security / safe).





Exercise 2.2

Dennis is drafting a list of tips to be successful. Correct the underlined words.

Eight Habits to Become Successful

- ✎ Do not be afraid to (1) commit mistakes. Every mistake is a valuable lesson. (2) Correct from your mistakes and then improve.
- ✎ (3) Already available information is not always reliable. It is wiser to (4) investigate your own research.
- ✎ Encourage others to (5) tell their opinions. See things from different points of view.
- ✎ Appreciate the effort other people have (6) given.
- ✎ Take small steps before making (7) full changes.
- ✎ Always try something new to (8) release your potential.
- ✎ Be a problem-solver, not a (9) troubledoer.
- ✎ Be (10) commit to your goal.



1. make
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

PART 3A Redundancy

In writing, redundancy occurs when two or more words or phrases with the same meaning are used.

- Marine animals in the sea are facing threats. — { *Marine animals are facing threats.*
Animals in the sea are facing threats.
- The space in the landfills is not adequate enough. — { *The space in the landfills is not adequate.*
The space in the landfills is not enough.

PART 3B Illogical expressions

We need to pay attention to the reasoning to write our sentences clearly.

<i>Dan is talking to a stranger he has met a few times.</i>	<i>stranger = people you do not know</i>
<i>Dan is talking to an acquaintance he has met a few times.</i>	<i>acquaintance = people you do not know well</i>
<i>The show was very excellent / perfect.</i>	<i>very = used with gradable adjectives</i>
<i>The show was (really / absolutely) excellent / perfect.</i>	<i>really / absolutely = used with non-gradable adjectives</i>
<i>Is there any medicine to help lung cancer?</i>	<i>help / soothe = make people feel calm</i>
<i>Is there any medicine to cure / treat lung cancer?</i>	<i>cure / treat = make illnesses go away</i>
<i>Reading Marie Curie's story has inspired many people.</i>	<i>the action reading → not inspiring</i>
<i>Marie Curie's story has inspired many people.</i>	<i>the story → inspiring</i>



Exercise 3.1

The following sentences are wordy. Cross out the unnecessary word(s) of each sentence.

- The house is small in-size.
- The task has been completely finished.
- The true fact that cats domesticated themselves is interesting.
- Throughout past history, the achievements of female leaders have been largely ignored.
- The secretary leaned over and whispered something softly in the ear of her boss.
- Education needs to evolve rapidly over time in the AI era.
- Two Hong Kong railway companies merged together more than 15 years ago.
- In my opinion, I would say that *Spirited Away* is the best animation film of all time.
- According to Principal Chan, she said that a new wing of the school would be built.
- I am interested in John Nash (an esteemed mathematician), so I read his biography of his life.
- Would you mind repeating what you just said again?
- The start-up is presenting its new innovations in sustainable food packaging.



Exercise 3.2

A teacher is marking her student's journal. Circle the error in each line.

One Good Deed A Day	
1.	I believe a good deed a day can keep the <u>sad misery</u> away. That is why I try to show
2.	kindness to friends that I don't know daily. The deed can be as remarkable and
3.	noteworthy as preventing an unexpected accident. It can be small and random like smiling to
4.	people too. You may consider this a way of giving, or after doing this for a year,
5.	I have realised that I have been receiving and getting a lot of blessings from others. I feel
6.	extremely wonderful every time I have done something good. I have also started to be
7.	thankful for every positive thing that happens in my life. To a greater extent,
8.	I feel more connected to people. Let me summarise in short: No matter how
9.	big your good deed is, it will benefit people and yourself.



More to take away

Marie Curie = the first woman to win a Nobel Prize by developing X-ray technology



Grammar Wrap-up

Nathan is drafting a short biography of Steve Jobs. Which sentence is correct? Put a tick () or a cross () in the correct box.

How did Steve Jobs transform Apple?

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| ① | Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple Inc., was the key person behind Apple products. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple Inc., was the key person in front of Apple products. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ② | His simple minimalistic designs are still making a significant impact on the world. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | His minimalistic designs are still making a significant impact on the world. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ③ | However, Steve Jobs wasn't always smooth career path. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | However, Steve Jobs' career path wasn't always smooth. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ④ | The Apple founders, Jobs and Wozniak, built their first computer in Jobs' garage. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | The Apple founders, Jobs and Wozniak, built their first computer in his garage. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ⑤ | Apple went public in 1980. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Apple made public in 1980. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ⑥ | The Macintosh computer was introduced by Apple in 1984 didn't sell well. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | When the Macintosh computer was introduced by Apple in 1984, it didn't sell well. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ⑦ | Jobs was fired from Apple and went on to newer projects. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Jobs was fired from Apple and went on to new projects. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ⑧ | In 1985, Jobs bought Pixar, which later became a huge success in computer animation. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | In 1985, Jobs bought Pixar. A huge success in computer animation. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ⑨ | Apple didn't perform well and invited Jobs to join the company again in 1997. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Apple didn't perform well and invited Jobs to return to the company again in 1997. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ⑩ | Apple including iMac computers was saved by Jobs' popular products. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Apple was saved by Jobs' popular products including iMac computers. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ⑪ | Jobs was diagnosed with cancer so he kept working in the company for eight more years. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Jobs was diagnosed with cancer but he kept working in the company for eight more years. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| ⑫ | Thanks to Steve Jobs' effort, a range of smart-looking devices we can enjoy today. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Thanks to Steve Jobs' effort, we can enjoy a range of smart-looking devices today. | <input type="checkbox"/> |



More to take away

go public (v. phr.) = to become a public company to raise capital

Grammar in Pre-DSE Text Type

Theme: Great people and amazing deeds

Rick is writing a feature article for a newspaper. Complete the article by underlining the best answers.

Words by Theme



CLASSROOM NEWSPAPER 15 MAY 20XX

A Gesture¹ of Honesty

At a cross-country race in Spain in 2012, an extraordinary² incident (1) held / occurred / appeared near the finishing point. Kenyan runner Abel Mutai was confused by a sign and pulled up as he thought the race (2) closed / ended / stopped there. At that time, Mutai was (3) taking / making / doing the lead and was the certain winner of the race. Spanish runner Ivan Fernandez, who was running (4) first / second / last, realised the Kenyan runner didn't understand the Spanish sign. Fernandez tried to (5) draw / concentrate / focus Mutai's attention, but (6) the former / the latter / the runner didn't (7) drop / give / take the hint.

Fernandez could have (8) helped / supported / ignored³ Mutai and continued the race. He could have won the race, but he didn't (9) gain / get / take advantage of⁴ Mutai. (10) Perhaps / Instead / However, Fernandez guided Mutai to the correct finishing point. As a result, Mutai (11) won / beat / competed the race.

When Fernandez was asked by a reporter (12) what / how / why he did that, he replied, 'I didn't (13) deserve⁵ / worth⁶ / wish to win the gold medal. Mutai was the (14) correct / right / rightful⁷ champion⁸.'

The story has changed many people's perspective⁹ on (15) failure / sport / success. Fernandez lost a running race but won the race of (16) integrity¹⁰ / stamina¹¹ / discipline¹².



Brain Breaks

Most mammals can sprint faster than humans, but humans can outrun almost all animals over long distances. Why?



Answer: Since we cool by sweating instead of panting, we do not overheat like other large mammals when running long distances.

To write well, we must avoid problems like sentence fragments, run-on sentences and redundancy.



If people are determined to change. (sentence fragment)

Nancy read a piece of news was shocking. (run-on sentence)

Do you like the ultimate ending of this TV drama? (redundancy)

Version 1

Frank is writing a biography of Stephen King. Read the biography and pay attention to the errors in the underlined parts.

Stephen King—The Master of Horror

(1) Stephen King is a well-known author of writing horror fiction. (2) He has written over than 50 books and short stories. (3) Most of them have been adapted into films include *The Shining*, *The Green Mile* and *It*. (4) Today, he has sold as many as 350 million copies of his novels.

(5) King raised up in a single-parent family. He graduated from university in 1970 and got married in 1971. (6) Before a full-time job, he had worked as a labourer at an industrial laundry for months. Also, he sold short stories to magazines to earn extra money.

By the end of 1971, he became an English teacher in a public high school. He kept writing after work and at weekends. (7) King's first novel was refused 30 times. He nearly gave up. Luckily, the book was finally published in 1973.

In 1999, a serious car accident almost ended his life (8) but he recovered his injuries and continued to work. In 2022, he published his latest work *Gwendy's Final Task*.

Stephen King is now one of the world's most successful writers. He has won multiple literary awards.

(9) He worked hard as a teacher and struggled to do a living. (10) He has shown perseverance and determination through the accident and the difficult times in his early life.

King is known to give back by making large amounts of donations. For example, he donated money to a school in his home state, Maine, in 2021 (11) so that it could publish its own books.

Version 2

Rewrite the underlined parts in Version 1 based on the instructions.

Stephen King—The Master of Horror

(1) Stephen King is a well-known author of horror fiction (redundancy: delete one word).

(2) _____ (redundancy: delete one word). (3) _____

_____ (run-on sentence).

(4) _____

(confusing words: change *today* into two words meaning *up to now*).

(5) _____ (confusing words: replace *raised* with another verb).

He graduated from university in 1970 and got married in 1971. (6) _____

_____ (sentence fragment: insert a subject and a verb), he had worked as a labourer at an industrial laundry for months. Also, he sold short stories to magazines to earn extra money.

By the end of 1971, he became an English teacher in a public high school. He kept writing after work and at weekends. (7) _____ (collocation: replace

refuse with another verb). He nearly gave up. Luckily, the book was finally published in 1973.

In 1999, a serious car accident almost ended his life (8) _____

_____ (illogical expression: insert a preposition).

In 2022, he published his latest work *Gwendy's Final Task*.

Stephen King is now one of the world's most successful writers. He has won multiple literary awards.

(9) _____

_____ (collocation: replace *do* with another verb). (10) _____

(word order: swap two phrases).

King is known to give back by making large amounts of donations. For example, he donated money to a school in his home state, Maine, in 2021

(11) _____

_____ (referencing: replace *it* with a noun phrase).

