

Identifying Sentence Errors

Directions: The following sentences test your knowledge of grammar, usage, diction, (choice of words) and idioms. Note that some sentences are correct and no sentence contains more than one error.

You will find the error, if there is one, underlined and lettered. Assume that the elements of the sentence that are not underlined are correct and cannot be changed.

If there is an error, circle the letter of the one underlined part that must be changed to make the sentence correct.

1. We went on a trip out in the country to visit our friends, a girl I had known for many years.
 - a. We went
 - b. out in the country
 - c. our friends
 - d. I had known
 - e. No error

1. Directions for the medication are written for the patient and state that you should not take more than four pills in twenty-four hours.
 - a. the medication
 - b. written
 - c. you should not take
 - d. more than four pills
 - e. No error

2. Cats, dogs and guinea pigs, interesting animals, which make wonderful pets and add enjoyment to the lives of most families.
 - a. dogs and guinea pigs
 - b. which make
 - c. and add
 - d. No error

3. Sneezing because of the dust on the road, the old car labored up the hill as Julie kept her foot on the accelerator.
 - a. because of the dust
 - b. the old car labored
 - c. kept her foot
 - d. on the accelerator
 - e. No error

4. The presence of so many people in the church were a sign of how much the deceased man had been loved.
 - a. presence
 - b. many people

- c. were a sign
 - d. the deceased man
 - e. No error
5. Champion swimmer Maria Nogales came from Bolivia, where there was not many pools available to her for practice.
- a. Champion swimmer
 - b. from Bolivia
 - c. there was not many pools
 - d. available
 - e. No error
6. Laughing hilariously at Gordon's outrageous behavior, Kevin nearly lost control of the sailboat.
- a. Laughing hilariously
 - b. Gordon's
 - c. Kevin nearly lost
 - d. No error

Improving Sentences

In each of the following sentences, all or part of the sentence is underlined. Below each sentence you will find five ways of phrasing the underlined part. Select the answer that produces the most effective sentence, one that is clear and exact, without awkwardness or ambiguity. In choosing answers, follow the rules of standard written English. Choose the answer that best expresses the meaning of the original sentence. Answer (A) is always the same as the underlined part. Choose answer (A) if you think the original sentence needs no revision.

8. Coming home from the supermarket, Ellie's car hit a pothole and she bounces around inside the car because she forgets to fasten her seat belt.
- a. and she bounces around inside the car because she forgets to fasten her seat belt.
 - b. and because she forgot to fasten her seat belt she bounces around inside the car.
 - c. and the car bounced around because she keeps forgetting to fasten her seatbelt.
 - d. she bounced around inside the car because she forgot to fasten her seat belt.
 - e. and inside the car she bounces around, not wearing her seat belt.
9. To complete her perfect day, Rosemary insisted on driving to the beach and has dinner at her favorite restaurant.
- a. Rosemary insisted on driving to the beach and has dinner at her favorite restaurant.
 - b. Rosemary insisted on visiting to the beach and had dinner at her favorite restaurant.
 - c. Rosemary insisted on driving to the beach and having dinner at her favorite restaurant.
 - d. Rosemary insists on driving to the beach and has dinner at her favorite restaurant.
 - e. Rosemary insistently demanded a drive to the beach and she had dinner at her favorite restaurant.

10. A manipulative person will subtly maneuver conversations that lead to his interests and discussing what he wants.
- will subtly maneuver conversations so that lead to his interests and discussing what he wants to talk about.
 - will subtly maneuver conversations in order to talk about his interests and discuss subjects that he wants to discuss.
 - subtly maneuvering conversations toward his interest and topics he wants to discuss.
 - will subtly try to maneuver conversations toward his interests and subjects he liked to talk about.
 - subtly maneuvered the conversation to force it to lead to discussing his interests and other topics he wanted to discuss.

Answers

- The correct answer is C. We are only visiting one girl, so “friends” should be “friend.” The sentence should read: “We went on a trip out in the country to visit our friend, a girl I had known for many years.”
- The correct answer is C. The patient is not necessarily “you.” “You” should be changed to “he or she.” The sentence should read: “Directions for the medication are written for the patient and state that he or she should not take more than four pills in twenty-four hours.”
- The correct answer is B. As written, this statement is not a sentence. The word “which” indicates that a verb should complete the sentence at the end. Remove “which,” and the sentence will read: “Cats, dogs and guinea pigs, interesting animals, make wonderful pets and add enjoyment to the lives of most families.”
- The correct answer is B. Ask yourself if the old car was sneezing. Probably it was not. The sentence should reflect the fact that Julie, not the car, was sneezing. Trade the phrase beginning “the old car” with the phrase beginning “Julie kept her foot.” The sentence should read, “Sneezing because of the dust on the road, Julie kept her foot on the accelerator; the old car labored up the hill.”
- The correct answer is C. The subject of the sentence is “presence,” not “people,” so the sentence should read “The presence of so many people in the chapel was a sign...”
- The correct answer is C. The subject of this phrase is plural, “pools.” The verb phrase must also be plural, “there were” instead of “there was.” The sentence should read: “Champion swimmer, Maria Nogales, came from Bolivia, where there were not many pools available to her for practice.
- The correct answer is D. There are no errors in this sentence.

Sentence Correction

- The correct answer is D. The error is in the word “bounces,” which should be in the past tense, “bounced.” Answers A, B, C, and E all contain this error.

9. The correct answer is C. This is a question of parallel structure. Since Rosemary is driving, she should also be having.
10. The correct answer is B. Parallel structure is also the problem in this sentence. “The manipulative person will maneuver” calls for the other verb to be “discuss” rather than “discussing.”