

1. After selecting a new dress, the store took Alice's money and wrapped up the dress.

- (A) After selecting a new dress, the store took Alice's money.
- (B) The store took Alice's money after selecting a new dress.
- (C) After the store took Alice's money, the dress was selected.
- (D) Alice's money paid for the dress she had decided to purchase and she gave it to the store.
- (E) After selecting a new dress, Alice paid the store for it.

2. The trip was long and arduous and was over unfamiliar roads and Henry and Felix soon grew tired of driving and wished they had gone somewhere else.

- (A) The trip was long and arduous and was over unfamiliar roads and Henry and Felix soon grew tired of driving
- (B) Becoming long and arduous, Henry and Felix soon grew tired of driving on unfamiliar roads.
- (C) The unfamiliar and arduous roads made Henry and Felix grow tired of driving, especially since the trip was long.
- (D) Henry and Felix were tired of driving and the roads were long and the roads were arduous and they were also unfamiliar.
- (E) The long, arduous trip over unfamiliar roads soon made Henry and Felix tired of driving.

3. David went to four exotic islands where they treated him royally at hotels and he swam in the warm sea.

- (A) David went to four exotic islands where they treated him royally at hotels and he swam in the warm sea.
- (B) After swimming in the warm sea, the hotels at four exotic islands treated David royally.
- (C) When David went to four exotic islands, he swam in the warm sea and the hotel staff treated him royally.
- (D) David, royally treated at hotels, went to four islands and he swam in the warm sea.
- (E) Royally treated at four hotels that were on exotic islands, the warm sea was where David swam.

4. Wilbur, not his brothers and sisters, were the executor of their father's estate which was fortunate since the whole estate was left to him.

- (A) Wilbur, not his brothers and sisters, were the executor of their father's estate
- (B) Wilbur, not his brothers and sisters, was the executor of their father's estate.
- (C) Wilbur was the executor of their father's estate and his brothers were fortunate.
- (D) Their father's estate caused Wilbur's brothers and sisters to ask who was the executor.
- (E) Their father, who left Wilbur's brothers and sisters, not the executors of his estate.

5. The company was undercapitalized with insufficient funds, so they were about to declare bankruptcy.

- (A) insufficient funds, so they were about to declare bankruptcy.
- (B) Being about to declare bankruptcy because of insufficient funds.

- (C) insufficient funds resulted in the fact that they were about to declare bankruptcy.
- (D) with insufficient funds, so it was about to declare bankruptcy.
- (E) insufficient funds causing them to declare bankruptcy.

6. Dancing from midnight until two a.m., Ashley and Morgan began to feel they were falling in love as they held each other close and moved around the dance floor.

- (A) began to feel they were falling in love as they held each other close and moved around the dance floor.
- (B) feeling like they were about to fall in love, the dance floor was where Ashley and Morgan held each other close.
- (C) begin to feel they are falling in love as they held each other close and moved around the dance floor.
- (D) falling in love, and they held each other close and they moved around the dance floor.
- (E) aren't really falling in love just because they held each other close and moved around the dance floor.

7. His sloppy cleanup of the kitchen and failure to clean the living room was the cause why Norman was grounded.

- (A) and failure to clean the living room was the cause why Norman was grounded.
- (B) and failure to clean the living room made Norman become grounded.
- (C) and failure to clean the living room caused Norman to be grounded.
- (D) caused Norman to be grounded because he also did a bad job of cleaning the living room.
- (E) and failure to clean the living room was the cause of Norman being grounded.

8. The airplane was late taking off for the eastern states, and they weren't able to make up the time.

- (A) for the eastern states and they weren't able to make up the time.
- (B) for the far east and they couldn't make up the time.
- (C) for the eastern states and the pilot wasn't able to make up the time.
- (D) for the eastern states, and they did not manage to make up the time.
- (E) for the eastern states, and they were sorry because they couldn't make up the time

9. Running down the block as fast as she could, the bus pulled away before Jennifer could catch it.

- (A) Running down the block as fast as she could, the bus pulled away
- (B) Running down the block as fast as she could, Jennifer could not catch the bus before it pulled away.
- (C) Jennifer, running down the block very fast, but the bus pulled away.
- (D) The bus pulling away before Jennifer, running down the block as fast as she could.
- (E) Running down the block as fast as she can but the bus pulled away.

10. At the wedding reception, after the beautiful music ended, the bride and groom are still dancing together.

- (A) music ended, the bride and groom are still dancing together.
 - (B) music faded away but the bride and groom are still dancing together.
 - (C) music ending, the bride and groom are still dancing together.
 - (D) music ended, but the bride and groom are still dancing together.
 - (E) music ended, the bride and groom were still dancing together.
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CLEP English Composition Practice Question Answer Key

1. The correct answer is E. Ask yourself who is selecting this dress? Alice is, not the store, so the sentence needs to show that.
2. The correct answer is E. The problem with this sentence is that it has too many "ands," which make it sound awkward. Eliminating the phrases with "and" makes a clearer sentence.
3. The correct answer is C. The phrase "they treated him royally at hotels" is unclear because the sentence never says who "they" are. Sentence C clarifies who treated David royally and preserves the rest of the meaning of the sentence.
4. The correct answer is B. The problem with this sentence is that the verb needs to be singular, namely, "was," not "were." The subject of this sentence is Wilbur. If the parenthetical phrase "not his brothers and sisters" is removed, we can clearly see that the sentence should say, "Wilbur was the executor."
5. The correct answer is D. The company is the subject of this sentence, so the proper pronoun is "it," not "they."
6. The correct answer is A. The sentence is correct as written.
7. The correct answer is C. Since Norman failed to clean not only the kitchen but also the living room, the phrase "was the cause of" is incorrect. The verb "was" refers to just one failure, but two failures are mentioned in the sentence. Also, the phrase "was the cause of" is awkward. Sentence C states the situation in a more direct, as well as correct, manner.
8. The correct answer is "C." As written, the sentence has a pronoun with no noun preceding it. We don't know who "they" are. Sentence C clarifies that.
9. The correct answer is B. The sentence as written raises a question as to who is running down the block. The bus is not. Jennifer is.
10. The correct answer is E. Since the sentence is in the past tense, "the beautiful music ended," the phrase about the bride and groom must also be in the past tense, "were still dancing together."