

15 Common Errors Quiz 4 Answers

Each item properly corrected counts for 1 mark.

1. Running to the store, she spotted a green sedan heading west.

See AOW 554, dangling participle.

2. After the initiation ceremony was over, the games began in earnest.

See AOW 557, comma after introductory phrase or clause.

3. Even though his mother is exhausted with trying to look after the old lady, the boy thinks of himself.

See AOW 559, tense problem. (Use literary present when referring to events in fiction.)

4. It's never easy when buying a car to decide if its transmission should be automatic or standard.

See AOW 562, apostrophe problems.

5. My dog is big and heavy, but he is graceful.

or

My dog is big and heavy, but graceful.

or

My dog is big, heavy, and graceful.

or

My dog is big, heavy, but [yet] graceful.

See AOW 561, parallel structure required. In this case the first revision balances two independent clauses against each other rather than three adjectives. This expresses the importance of the final thought after the “but”: the quality of being graceful may be unexpected given the first two mentioned qualities, but it prevails in spite of them. In this revision, an “and” appears between the first two adjectives in compliance with standard practice of a conjunction between two terms that follow a linking verb and complement the subject. This “and” matches “big” and “heavy” as one unit in opposition or contrast to “graceful.” In the second revision the words “he is” may be understood; in other words, they are elliptical. The second revision also suggests the grammatical principle

described under CE 8 D, comma before a qualifying phrase. The final revision balances three adjectives against each other, changing the conjunction to “and” for a more expected sequence. This change subordinates the idea of an unexpected or oppositional concluding quality and asserts that these three qualities, despite what some might think, naturally co-exist. The final revision applies parallelism with the least editorial meddling [often a good guideline for editors]. “Yet” conveys the meaning of “but” while sounding, to some readers, a little more conventional for this particular pattern.

6. My father told Henry that the latter’s statement was overdue.

or perhaps

My father told Henry that my father’s statement was overdue.

See AOW 553. pronoun reference problem.

7. Studying hard is a sure way to succeed.

See AOW 560, mixed construction.

8. My sister is the smallest student in her class; however, she came first in the one hundred metre sprint.

See AOW 551, comma splice.

9. Another player worth watching this year is the rookie from Edmonton.

or

John is another player worth watching this year.

See AOW 550, sentence fragment.

10. She and Paul decided to watch the second film.

See AOW 555, pronoun case problem.

Note: When pronouns in the subjective case are compounded with proper nouns [names], the pronoun usually comes first, and always does so for first person ; e.g. Mary and I reviewed the report.

11. The course that you decide to take at the start of your program will influence your attitude toward the rest of your courses. So choose that course with care.

See AOW 564, confusion over restrictive and non-restrictive qualifiers.

12. There are just three members in my discussion group.

See AOW 555, misplaced modifier.

13. This is the way to get good marks: use the SQ3R method when studying, never miss a test, and be on time for classes.

See AOW 558, misused colon and semicolon.

14. The root of these problems is lack of concentration and lack of review.

See AOW 552, subject-verb agreement problem.

15. We will cross that bridge when we get to it.

Note: The subject could be I, he, she, you, or they, since no subject has been identified in the passive voice construction.

See AOW 563, overuse of the passive voice.

My mark out of 15: _____