

Correcting the 15 Common Errors Paragraph Two

The following responds to the Practice activity presented on pages 362 and 364 of *Acting on Words*.

The common errors (CEs) are covered in *Acting on Words*, pages 550-565. Just look for the CE number referred to (1-15) and read the discussion that follows it. If you have difficulty with any terms or explanations in the discussion, you may need some supplementary explanation. Parts of speech (subject, clause, etc.) and certain functions (agreement, restrictive, etc.) are defined under “Forms,” pages 518-531. More help with punctuation is covered on pages 542-548. Depending on how much difficulty you may have with the common error discussions on pages 550-565, you may also want to consult “Preparing to Solve the 15 Common Errors” at the text website under Handbook.

Paragraph Two Revised

Eighties music is not so bad or culturally frightening as many people say, although it's hard to defend Duran Duran. In the early Eighties, one band, Cameo, had a great funk song entitled “Word Up.” Much of today's music has been defined by two other bands from that decade: U2 and REM. Besides these two examples of writerly talent and innovative musicianship, some of Tom Petty's, AC/DC's, Bananarama's, and, of course Guns n' Roses' best work appeared in the Eighties. However, the mysterious problem of all those one-hit or two-hit wonders is a concern to any true connoisseur of that decade's music, a concern exemplified by 'Til Tuesday's “Voices Carry,” A-Ha's “Take On Me,” Adam Ant's “Goodie Two Shoes,” The Bangles' “Walk Like an Egyptian,” Fine Young Cannibals' “Good Thing,” and Glass Tiger's “Don't Forget Me [When I'm Gone].” Did these artists' managers suddenly run out of ideas? Were they abducted by extra-terrestrials or by Lou Reed and Iggy Pop? Considering Elton John's recent work, is it better to burn out than fade away?

Paragraph Two Unrevised

With Notations Identifying the Errors

Eighties music is not as¹ bad or culturally frightening as many people say. Although its hard to defend Duran Duran.² One band, Cameo³ had a great funk song entitled “Word Up” in the early Eighties. Two other band’s styles from this decade have defined alot⁴ of modern music here and now;⁵ U2 and REM. Besides these two examples of writerly talent and innovative musicianship⁶ we need to really remember⁷ that some of Tom

¹ In negative structure using this type of comparison, some editors prefer “so”: “... not so bad or culturally frightening as...”

² CE1. The sentence as punctuated is a fragment.

Another common mistake that might be part of the problem here is the increasing erroneous idea that the word “although” means the same thing and works the same way as the word “however.” If the writer’s intent for the remainder of the paragraph were to offer a critique of Duran Duran, then the following would be possible, with the second sentence serving as topic sentence:

Eighties music is not so bad or culturally frightening as many people say. However, it is hard to defend Duran Duran.

A comma follows “however” according to CE 8 A. “However” is an adverbial conjunction most often used to mean *nevertheless* or *in spite of that*. (It may also mean *in whatever manner* or *to whatever degree*). adverbial conjunctions (or conjunctive adverbs) serve as links and transitions between two independent clauses (these days sometimes written as two sentences). The above example, by older, more conventional standards, would probably be revised as follows:

Eighties music is not so bad or culturally frightening as many people say; however, it is hard to defend Duran Duran.

Yet another conventional revision might be the following:

Eighties music is not so bad or culturally frightening as many people say. It is, however, hard to defend Duran Duran.

“Although” cannot be used this way. “Although” is a subordinating conjunction meaning *regardless of the fact that* or *even though*. Subordinating conjunctions, like “although,” introduce adverb clauses and express the connection between the adverb clause and another clause. Here is an example. “I will call you tomorrow although my day is already packed.”

Note that unlike like many adverbs (including conjunctive adverbs like “however”), subordinating conjunctions cannot move to different positions in a clause. Thus, the words “although” and “however” not only have different meanings or senses, they also play different grammatical roles. They should **not** be used interchangeably.

³ CE 8 B.

⁴ Misspelling: a lot. Many editors or instructors will encourage you to find a less informal way to express this idea.

⁵ CE 9. The revised version makes some wording changes so that U2 and REM (named after the colon) are equated not with the word “styles” but with the word “bands.” The word “bands” is moved as close to the colon as possible to clarify the relationship of what follows the colon to what precedes it.

⁶ CE 8 A

⁷ Here the writer has split an infinitive (*to remember*). Today’s guideline allows you to do this when not doing so seems unnatural. But the revised version removes the split infinitive and sounds natural, in fact, smoother than the unrevised version.

Petty's, AC/DC's, Bananarama's, and, of course⁸ Guns n' Roses' best work appeared in the Eighties. However⁹ the mysterious problem of all those one-hit or two-hit wonders are¹⁰ a concern to any true connoisseur of this decade's music, for instance:¹¹ 'Til Tuesday's "Voices Carry," A-Ha's "Take On Me," Adam Ant's "Goodie Two Shoes," The Bangles' "Walk Like an Egyptian," Fine Young Cannibals' "Good Thing," and Glass Tiger's "Don't Forget Me [When I'm Gone]." Did these artists' managers suddenly run out of ideas,¹² were they abducted by extra-terrestrials or by Lou Reed and Iggy Pop? Considering Elton John's recent work, is it better too¹³ burn out than¹⁴ fade away?

⁸ CE 8 B

⁹ CE 8A. Some editors still prefer sentences not to begin with an adverbial conjunction.

¹⁰ CE 3.... *problem... is a concern...*

¹¹ CE 9. No punctuation is required here, but what follows is a version of CE 5, since the songs are not examples of a connoisseur.

¹² CE 2

¹³ Misspelling: *to*.

¹⁴ Wrong word: *than*. "Then" is an adverb saying when something happens; "than" is a preposition connecting parts of a comparison.