
THE STRUCTURE QUESTIONS

In the TOEFL test, questions 1 through 15 of the Structure and Written Expression section test your knowledge of the correct structure of English sentences. The questions in this section are multiple-choice questions in which you must choose the letter of the answer that best completes the sentence.

Example

_____ is taking a trip to New York.

- (A) They
- (B) When
- (C) The woman
- (D) Her

In this example, you should notice immediately that the sentence has a verb (*is taking*), and that the verb needs a subject. Answers (B) and (D) are incorrect because *when* and *her* are not subjects. In answer (A), *they* is a subject, but *they* is plural and the verb *is taking* is singular. The correct answer is answer (C); *the woman* is a singular subject. You should therefore choose answer (C).

STRATEGIES FOR THE STRUCTURE QUESTIONS

1. **First study the sentence.** Your purpose is to determine what is needed to complete the sentence correctly.
2. **Then study each answer based on how well it completes the sentence.** Eliminate answers that do not complete the sentence correctly.
3. **Do not try to eliminate incorrect answers by looking only at the answers.** The incorrect answers are generally correct by themselves. The incorrect answers are generally incorrect only when used to complete the sentence.
4. **Never leave any answers blank.** Be sure to answer each question even if you are unsure of the correct response.
5. **Do not spend too much time on the Structure questions.** Be sure to leave adequate time for the Written Expression questions.

The following skills will help you to implement these strategies in the Structure section of the TOEFL test.

SENTENCES WITH ONE CLAUSE

Some sentences in English have just one subject and verb, and it is very important for you to find the subject and verb in these sentences. In some sentences it is easy to find the subject and verb. However, certain structures, such as objects of prepositions, appositives, and participles, can cause confusion in locating the subject and verb because each of these structures can look like a subject or verb. The object of the preposition can be mistaken for a subject.

Therefore, you should be able to do the following in sentences with one subject and verb: (1) be sure the sentence has a subject and a verb, (2) be careful of objects of prepositions and appositives when you are looking for the subject, and (3) be careful of present participles and past participles when you are looking for the verb.

SKILL 1: BE SURE THE SENTENCE HAS A SUBJECT AND A VERB

You know that a sentence in English should have a subject and a verb. The most common types of problems that you will encounter in the Structure section of the TOEFL test have to do with subjects and verbs: perhaps the sentence is missing either the subject or the verb or both, or perhaps the sentence has an extra subject or verb.

Example I

_____ was backed up for miles on the freeway.

- (A) Yesterday
- (B) In the morning
- (C) Traffic
- (D) Cars

In this example you should notice immediately that there is a verb (*was*), but there is no subject. Answer (C) is the best answer because it is a singular subject that agrees with the singular verb *was*. Answer (A), *yesterday*, and answer (B), *in the morning*, are not subjects, so they are not correct. Although answer (D), *cars*, could be a subject, it is not correct because *cars* is plural and it does not agree with the singular verb *was*.

Example II

Engineers _____ for work on the new space program.

- (A) necessary
- (B) are needed
- (C) hopefully
- (D) next month

In this example you should notice immediately that the sentence has a subject (*engineers*), and that there is no verb. Because answer (B), *are needed*, is a verb, it is the best answer. Answers (A), (C), and (D) are not verbs, so they are not correct.

Example III

The boy _____ going to the movies with a friend.

- (A) he is
- (B) he always was
- (C) is relaxing
- (D) will be

This sentence has a subject (*boy*) and has part of a verb (*going*); to be correct, some form of the verb *be* is needed to make the sentence complete. Answers (A) and (B) are incorrect because the sentence already has a subject (*boy*) and does not need the extra subject *he*. Answer (C) is incorrect because *relaxing* is an extra verb part that is unnecessary because of *going*. Answer (D) is the best answer; *will be* together with *going* is a complete verb.

The following chart outlines what you should remember about subjects and verbs:

SUBJECTS AND VERBS
A sentence in English must have at least one subject and one verb.

EXERCISE 1: Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice in each of the following sentences. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- I 1. Last week went fishing for trout at the nearby mountain lake.
- C 2. A schedule of the day's events can be obtained at the front desk.
- _____ 3. A job on the day shift or the night shift at the plant available.
- _____ 4. The new computer program has provides a variety of helpful applications.
- _____ 5. The box can be opened only with a special screwdriver.
- _____ 6. The assigned text for history class it contains more than twenty chapters.
- _____ 7. The papers in the wastebasket should be emptied into the trash can outside.
- _____ 8. Departure before dawn on a boat in the middle of the harbor.
- _____ 9. Yesterday found an interesting article on pollution.
- _____ 10. The new machine is processes 50 percent more than the previous machine.

SKILL 2: BE CAREFUL OF OBJECTS OF PREPOSITIONS

An object of a preposition is a noun or a pronoun that comes after a preposition, such as *in*, *at*, *of*, *to*, *by*, *behind*, *on*, and so on, to form a prepositional phrase.

(*After his exams*) Tom will take a trip (*by boat*).

This sentence contains two objects of prepositions. *Exams* is the object of the preposition *after* and *boat* is the object of the preposition *by*.

An object of a preposition can cause confusion in the Structure section of the TOEFL test because it can be mistaken for the subject of a sentence.

Example

With his friend _____ found the movie theater.

- (A) has
- (B) he
- (C) later
- (D) when

In this example you should look first for the subject and the verb. You should notice the verb *found* and should also notice that there is no subject. Do not think that *friend* is the subject; *friend* is the object of the preposition *with*, and one noun cannot be both a subject and an object at the same time. Because a subject is needed in this sentence, answer (B), *he*, is the best answer. Answers (A), (C), and (D) are not correct because they cannot be subjects.

The following chart outlines the key information that you should remember about objects of prepositions:

OBJECTS OF PREPOSITIONS
A preposition is followed by a noun or pronoun that is called an <i>object of the preposition</i> . If a word is an <i>object of a preposition</i> , it is <u>not</u> the <i>subject</i> .

NOTE: A lengthy list of prepositions and practice in recognizing prepositions can be found in Appendix D at the back of the text. You may want to complete these exercises before continuing with Exercise 2.

EXERCISE 2: Each of the following sentences contains one or more prepositional phrases. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Circle the prepositional phrases that come before the verb. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. The interviews (by radio broadcasters) were carried live by the station.
- I 2. (In the last possible moment) (before takeoff) took his seat in the airplane.
- _____ 3. At the neighborhood flower shop, flowers in quantities of a dozen or a half dozen can be delivered for free.
- _____ 4. The progressive reading methods at this school are given credit for the improved test scores.
- _____ 5. For the last three years at various hospitals in the county has been practicing medicine.
- _____ 6. In the past a career in politics was not considered acceptable in some circles.
- _____ 7. Shopping in the downtown area of the city it has improved a lot in recent years.
- _____ 8. At the building site the carpenters with the most experience were given the most intricate work.

- _____ 9. For the fever and headache took two aspirin tablets.
- _____ 10. The report with complete documentation was delivered at the conference.

SKILL 3: BE CAREFUL OF APPOSITIVES

Appositives can cause confusion in the Structure section of the TOEFL test because an appositive can be mistaken for the subject of a sentence. An appositive is a noun that comes before or after another noun and has the same meaning.

_____ Sally, the best *student* in the class, got an A on the exam.

In this example *Sally* is the subject of the sentence and *the best student in the class* can easily be recognized as an appositive phrase because of the noun *student* and because of the commas. The sentence says that *Sally* and *the best student in the class* are the same person. Note that if you leave out the appositive phrase, the sentence still makes sense (*Sally got an A on the exam*).

The following example shows how an appositive can be confused with the subject of a sentence in the Structure section of the TOEFL test.

Example I

_____, George, is attending the lecture.

- (A) Right now
- (B) Happily
- (C) Because of the time
- (D) My friend

In this example you should recognize from the commas that *George* is not the subject of the sentence. *George* is an appositive. Because this sentence still needs a subject, the best answer is (D), *my friend*. Answers (A), (B), and (C) are incorrect because they are not subjects.

The next example shows that an appositive does not always come after the subject; an appositive can also come at the beginning of the sentence.

Example II

_____ Sarah rarely misses her basketball shots.

- (A) An excellent basketball player
- (B) An excellent basketball player is
- (C) Sarah is an excellent basketball player
- (D) Her excellent basketball play

In this example you can tell that *Sarah* is the subject and *misses* is the verb because there is no comma separating them. In the space you should put an appositive for Sarah, and Sarah is *an excellent basketball player*, so answer (A) is the best answer. Answers (B) and (C) are not correct because they each contain the verb *is*, and an appositive does not need a verb. Answer (D) contains a noun, *play*, that could possibly be an appositive, but *play* is not the same as *Sarah*, so this answer is not correct.

The following chart outlines the key information that you should remember about appositives:

APPOSITIVES		
An appositive is a noun that comes before or after another noun and is generally set off from the noun with commas. If a word is an appositive , it is <u>not</u> the subject . The following appositive structures are both possible in English:		
S, Tom,	APP, a really good mechanic,	V is fixing the car.
	APP, A really good mechanic,	S V Tom is fixing the car.

EXERCISE 3: Each of the following sentences contains an appositive. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Circle the appositive phrases. Then, indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- ___ C 1. (The son of the previous owner,) the new owner is undertaking some fairly broad changes in management policy.
- ___ I 2. Last semester, (a friend,) graduated *cum laude* from the university.
- ___ 3. Valentine's Day, February 14, is a special holiday for sweethearts.
- ___ 4. At long last, the chief executive officer, has decided to step down.
- ___ 5. Tonight's supper, leftovers from last night, did not taste any better tonight than last night.
- ___ 6. The only entrance to the closet, the door was kept locked at all times.
- ___ 7. In the cold of winter, a wall heating unit, would not turn on.
- ___ 8. The new tile pattern, yellow flowers on a white background, really brightens up the room.
- ___ 9. The high-powered computer the most powerful machine of its type, was finally readied for use.
- ___ 10. A longtime friend and confident, the psychologist was often invited over for Sunday dinner.

SKILL 4: BE CAREFUL OF PRESENT PARTICIPLES

A present participle is the *-ing* form of the verb (*talking*, *playing*). In the Structure section of the TOEFL test a present participle can cause confusion because it can be either a part of the verb or an adjective. It is part of the verb when it is preceded by some form of the verb *be*.

The man is talking to his friend.
VERB

In this sentence *talking* is part of the verb because it is accompanied by *is*.

A present participle is an adjective when it is not accompanied by some form of the verb *be*.

The man talking to his friend has a beard.

ADJECTIVE

In this sentence *talking* is an adjective and not part of the verb because it is not accompanied by some form of *be*. The verb in this sentence is *has*.

The following example shows how a present participle can be confused with the verb in the Structure section of the TOEFL test.

Example

The child _____ playing in the yard is my son.

- (A) now
- (B) is
- (C) he
- (D) was

In this example, if you look at only the first words of the sentence, it appears that *child* is the subject and *playing* is part of the verb. If you think that *playing* is part of the verb, you might choose answer (B), *is*, or answer (D), *was*, to complete the verb. However, these two answers are incorrect because *playing* is not part of the verb. You should recognize that *playing* is a participial adjective rather than a verb because there is another verb in the sentence (*is*). In this sentence there is a complete subject (*child*) and a complete verb (*is*), so this sentence does not need another subject or verb. The best answer here is (A).

The following chart outlines what you should remember about present participles:

PRESENT PARTICIPLES

A present participle is the *-ing* form of the verb. The present participle can be (1) part of the verb or (2) an adjective. It is part of the verb when it is accompanied by some form of the verb *be*. It is an adjective when it is not accompanied by some form of the verb *be*.

1. The boy is standing in the corner.
2. The boy standing in the corner was naughty.

EXERCISE 4: Each of the following sentences contains one or more present participles. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Circle the present participles and label them as adjectives or verbs. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. The companies (offering) the lowest prices will have the most customers.
ADJ.
- I 2. Those travelers are completing their trip on Delta should report to Gate Three.
VERB
- _____ 3. The artisans were demonstrating various handicrafts at booths throughout the fair.
- _____ 4. The fraternities are giving the wildest parties attract the most new pledges.
- _____ 5. The first team winning four games is awarded the championship.

- _____ 6. The speaker was trying to make his point was often interrupted vociferously.
- _____ 7. The fruits were rotting because of the moisture in the crates carrying them to market.
- _____ 8. Any students desiring official transcripts should complete the appropriate form.
- _____ 9. The advertisements were announcing the half-day sale received a lot of attention.
- _____ 10. The spices flavoring the meal were quite distinctive.

SKILL 5: BE CAREFUL OF PAST PARTICIPLES

Past participles can cause confusion in the Structure section of the TOEFL test because a past participle can be either an adjective or a part of a verb. The past participle is the form of the verb that appears with *have* or *be*. It often ends in *-ed*, but there are also many irregular past participles in English. (See Appendix F for a list of irregular past participles.)

The family has purchased a television.
VERB

The poem was written by Paul.
VERB

In the first sentence the past participle *purchased* is part of the verb because it is accompanied by *has*. In the second sentence the past participle *written* is part of the verb because it is accompanied by *was*.

A past participle is an adjective when it is not accompanied by some form of *be* or *have*.

The television purchased yesterday was expensive.
ADJECTIVE

The poem written by Paul appeared in the magazine.
ADJECTIVE

In the first sentence *purchased* is an adjective rather than a verb because it is not accompanied by a form of *be* or *have* (and there is a verb, *was*, later in the sentence). In the second sentence *written* is an adjective rather than a verb because it is not accompanied by a form of *be* or *have* (and there is a verb, *appeared*, later in the sentence).

The following example shows how a past participle can be confused with the verb in the Structure section of the TOEFL test.

Example

The packages _____ mailed at the post office will arrive Monday.

- (A) have
(B) were
(C) them
(D) just

In this example, if you look only at the first few words of the sentence, it appears that *packages* is the subject and *mailed* is either a complete verb or a past participle that needs a helping verb. But if you look further in the sentence, you will see that the verb is *will arrive*. You will then recognize that *mailed* is a participial adjective and is therefore not part of the verb. Answers (A) and (B) are incorrect because *mailed* is an adjective and does not need a helping verb such as *have* or *were*. Answer (C) is incorrect because there is no need for the object *them*. Answer (D) is the best answer to this question.

The following chart outlines what you should remember about past participles:

PAST PARTICIPLES
<p>A <i>past participle</i> often ends in <i>-ed</i>, but there are also many irregular past participles. For many verbs, including <i>-ed</i> verbs, the <i>simple past</i> and the <i>past participle</i> are the same and can be easily confused. The <i>-ed</i> form of the verb can be (1) the <i>simple past</i>, (2) the <i>past participle</i> of a verb, or (3) an adjective.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. She Painted this picture. 2. She has Painted this picture. 3. The picture Painted by Karen is now in a museum.

EXERCISE 5: Each of the following sentences contains one or more past participles. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Circle the past participles and label them as adjectives or verbs. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

1. The money was (offered) by the client was not (accepted)
VERB VERB
2. The car (listed) in the advertisement had already (stalled)
ADJ. VERB
3. The chapters were taught by the professor this morning will be on next week's exam.
4. The loaves of bread were baked in a brick oven at a low temperature for many hours.
5. The ports were reached by the sailors were under the control of a foreign nation.
6. Those suspected in the string of robberies were arrested by the police.
7. The pizza is served in this restaurant is the tastiest in the county.
8. The courses are listed on the second page of the brochure have several prerequisites.
9. All the tenants were invited to the Independence Day barbecue at the apartment complex.
10. Any bills paid by the first of the month will be credited to your account by the next day.

EXERCISE (Skills 1–5): Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice in each of the following sentences. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- _____ 1. For three weeks at the beginning of the semester students with fewer than the maximum number of units can add additional courses.
- _____ 2. On her lunch hour went to a nearby department store to purchase a wedding gift.
- _____ 3. The fir trees were grown for the holiday season were harvested in November.
- _____ 4. In the grove the overripe oranges were falling on the ground.
- _____ 5. The papers being delivered at 4:00 will contain the announcement of the president's resignation.
- _____ 6. A specialty shop with various blends from around the world in the shopping mall.
- _____ 7. The portraits exhibited in the Houston Museum last month are now on display in Dallas.
- _____ 8. With a sudden jerk of his hand threw the ball across the field to one of the other players.
- _____ 9. Construction of the housing development it will be underway by the first of the month.
- _____ 10. Those applicants returning their completed forms at the earliest date have the highest priority.

TOEFL EXERCISE (Skills 1–5): Choose the letter of the word or group of words that best completes the sentence.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. The North Platte River _____ from Wyoming into Nebraska.</p> <p>(A) it flowed
(B) flows
(C) flowing
(D) with flowing water</p> <p>2. _____ Biloxi received its name from a Sioux word meaning "first people."</p> <p>(A) The city of
(B) Located in
(C) It is in
(D) The tour included</p> <p>3. A pride of lions _____ up to forty lions, including one to three males, several females, and cubs.</p> <p>(A) can contain
(B) it contains
(C) contain
(D) containing</p> | <p>4. _____ tea plant are small and white.</p> <p>(A) The
(B) On the
(C) Having flowers the
(D) The flowers of the</p> <p>5. The tetracyclines, _____ antibiotics, are used to treat infections.</p> <p>(A) are a family of
(B) being a family
(C) a family of
(D) their family is</p> <p>6. Any possible academic assistance from taking stimulants _____ marginal at best.</p> <p>(A) it is
(B) there is
(C) is
(D) as</p> |
|---|--|

7. Henry Adams, born in Boston, _____ famous as a historian and novelist.
- (A) became
(B) and became
(C) he was
(D) and he became
8. The major cause _____ the pull of the Moon on the Earth.
- (A) the ocean tides are
(B) of ocean tides is
(C) of the tides in the ocean
(D) the oceans' tides
9. Still a novelty in the late nineteenth century, _____ limited to the rich.
- (A) was
(B) was photography
(C) it was photography
(D) photography was
10. A computerized map of the freeways using information gathered by sensors embedded in the pavement _____ on a local cable channel during rush hours.
- (A) airs
(B) airing
(C) air
(D) to air

SENTENCES WITH MULTIPLE CLAUSES _____

Many sentences in English have more than one clause. (A clause is a group of words containing a subject and a verb.) Whenever you find a sentence on the TOEFL test with more than one clause, you need to make sure that every subject has a verb and every verb has a subject. Next you need to check that the various clauses in the sentence are correctly joined. There are various ways to join clauses in English. Certain patterns appear frequently in English and on the TOEFL test. You should be very familiar with these patterns.

SKILL 6: USE COORDINATE CONNECTORS CORRECTLY

When you have two clauses in an English sentence, you must connect the two clauses correctly. One way to connect two clauses is to use *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, or *yet* between the clauses.

Tom is singing, *and* Paul is dancing.

Tom is tall, *but* Paul is short.

Tom must write the letter, *or* Paul will do it.

Tom told a joke, *so* Paul laughed.

Tom is tired, *yet* he is not going to sleep.

In each of these examples, there are two clauses that are correctly joined with a coordinate conjunction *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, or *yet*, and a comma (,).