

Sentence Transformation

Introduction

Sentence transformation is done either by changing the form of narration (reported or direct speech) or by changing the voice of the given sentence. In such questions, either a dialogue, a public message or a newspaper headline is given as a clue, followed by a sentence or more with blank/s.

The clues help in filling up the blanks. Such questions test a student's understanding and ability to use language correctly. One should remember to retain the original (intended) meaning or context given by the clues.

GRAMMAR CONCEPTS REQUIRED

Before answering such questions, a student should be thorough with certain rules and concepts in grammar. Some of the important ones are indicated below:

1. Rules for narration (direct/ indirect speech)
2. Rules to change time, place, verb forms and pronouns, while transforming narration
3. Rules for changing voices
4. Subject-verb agreement rules
5. Correct use of prepositions and conjunctions
6. Rules for using articles and determiners

STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED

To answer questions based on transformation, a student may follow the steps given below:

1. Read the newspaper headline, public message or the dialogue given, ignoring the blank/s.
2. Get working with the individual sentences having blank/s. Analyse each blank in the context of what follows and/or what precedes it, to get clues. Find the tense and voice being used.

3. Consider possible word(s)/phrase that would fill the blank suitably. Think of your answer in consistence with not only the context but also rules for subject-verb concord, pronoun-antecedent consistency, voice, narration, tenses etc.

4. Repeat the steps 2 and 3, till all the blanks have been filled.

Dialogue Based Sentence Transformation Examples

Q1. Read the conversation given below. Complete the report that follows on the basis of the conversation.

Father: Are you going somewhere?

Son: I am going to buy a gift for my friend. It is his birthday tomorrow.

Father: Okay. What have you decided to buy for him?

Son: I saw him upset over his broken cricket bat. So, I think a cricket bat would be the best gift for him.

Father asked his son (a)_____. The son answered that (b)_____ as it (c)_____. On being asked what he had decided to buy for his friend, he replied that (d)_____ and so he thought a cricket bat would be the best gift for him.

HOW TO SOLVE:

This question primarily tests the knowledge of the rules of conversion from direct to indirect (or reported) speech.

In reported speech, a verb in present continuous tense changes to its past continuous form. So, blanks (a) and (b) will have to be filled with past continuous tense. Since, the pronouns also change according to the subject of the sentence, the pronouns 'you' and 'I' will change to 'he'.

Thus, 'if he was going somewhere' fits blank (a) while 'he was going to buy a gift for his friend' fits blank (b).

In reported speech, present tense changes to past tense. So, for blank (c) 'is' will change to 'was'. As the expressions of time also undergo a change in reported speech, 'tomorrow' will change to 'the next day'. Thus, 'was his birthday the next day' fits the third blank.

A verb in its past simple form changes to its past perfect form in reported speech. So, 'saw' will change to 'had seen'. Since the pronouns also change according to the subject of the sentence, the pronouns 'I' will change to 'he'. Thus, 'he had seen him upset over his broken cricket bat' fills the last blank appropriately.

Answer:

- (a) if he was going somewhere
- (b) he was going to buy a gift for his friend
- (c) was his birthday the next day
- (d) he had seen him upset over his broken cricket bat

Headline/Public Message Based Sentence Transformation Examples

Q1. On the basis of the public messages and newspaper headlines given below, complete the sentences that follow.

(a) NO SMOKING

Smoking inside the airport premises _____.

(b) PLEASE FILL UP THE FORM

You _____ fill up the form to register for the course.

(c) RAINFALL PREDICTED

India Meteorological Department (IMD) _____ a 14mm rainfall over the weekend in Delhi.

(d) HUNDREDS KILLED IN PLANE CRASH

More than three hundred people _____ when a passenger plane _____ on the runway in Mangalore airport.

HOW TO SOLVE:

(a) The sentence has to be in present tense as it is a public notice. Hence, the verb form of 'to be' has to be added. As the subject 'smoking' is in singular form, the verb also has to be singular. Thus, the verb 'is' will be used. Now, we need to think of an appropriate verb. Thus, we can use either 'is prohibited' or 'is not allowed' to fill the blank.

(b) The sentence has to be in the present tense as it is an instruction where time is not indicated. Hence, the verb form of 'to be' will be used. The pronoun 'you' takes the plural form of the verb 'to be'. Thus, 'are' will be used here. Since, the message is in the form of a request (as indicated by the word 'please'), the word 'requested' along with the preposition 'to' will be added. Thus, a phrase that replaces the blank appropriately can be 'are requested to'.

(c) The newspaper headline suggests that a prediction has been made about rainfall in Delhi. In this blank, the verb will take its present perfect form. Thus, the answer will be 'has predicted'.

(d) Since the headline reports an incident of the past, the blanks will take the past forms of the verbs used. Thus, the first blank will either be filled with 'were killed' or 'died' and the subsequent blank will be filled with the verb 'crashed'.

Answer:

(a) is not permissible

(b) are requested to

(c) has predicted

(d) were killed/died, crashed