

# 4

## Prepositional Phrases

Most prepositions are direction/position words. Here's a list of common prepositions:

aboard	about	above	across	after	against	along	amid	among	around
as to	at	before	behind	below	beneath	beside	between	beyond	by
circa	despite	down	due to	during	except	for	from	in	into
like	near	of	off	on	onto	out	over	past	since
through	to	toward	under	until	up	upon	with	within	without

Now do you have to memorize these? Certainly not. Just familiarize yourself, especially with the bolded ones. Some words are prepositions in some cases and something else in others. Just remember that a preposition almost always has a noun following it. Take a look at these two sentences:

1. Throughout the living room was the scent of fatty crabs that had expired weeks ago.
2. I put my sister on the diet after it worked so well for me.

The preposition + noun combinations are underlined. These preposition and noun combinations are called **prepositional phrases**.

Prepositional Phrase	=	Preposition	+	Noun	+	Any Attached Describing Phrase
	=	<i>of</i>	+	<i>fatty crabs</i>	+	<i>that had expired weeks ago</i>

If you think a word is a preposition and there's a noun following it, chances are it's a preposition. Even if it's not, don't worry about being 100% on which words are prepositions; the SAT doesn't test you on them directly. For example, *after it* is not a prepositional phrase in the second sentence because it's part of a larger phrase—*after it worked so well*. If the sentence were *After school, I put my sister on a diet*, then *After* would act as a preposition. But again, as long as you get the general idea, you'll be fine. This just helps you later when you learn about subject verb agreement.

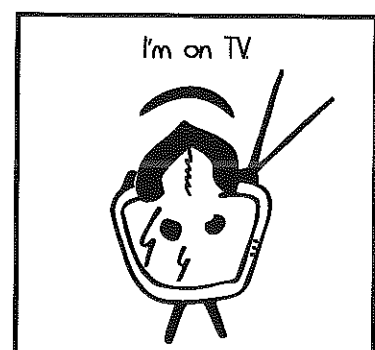
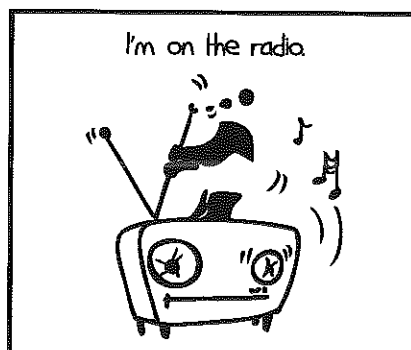
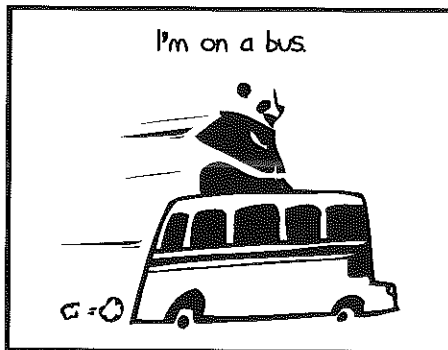
Here's the most important takeaway: prepositional phrases are **not essential** to the sentence they're in. While they may supply important details, sentences can stand alone grammatically without them (there will still be a subject and a verb).

**Exercise:** Cross out all prepositional phrases in the following sentences. Answers for this chapter start on page 211.

1. Hillary got ~~into the boat for the short trip to Haiti~~.
2. If you do business ~~with me~~, you'll never get the better end ~~of the deal~~.
3. We'll need to see the receipts ~~for the underwear~~ you bought ~~on Monday~~.
4. I drove ~~by my house to~~ check if the package ~~from Amazon~~ had arrived.
5. The eleven robbers broke ~~into the casino vault with their perfectly executed plan~~.
6. Since the hypothesis ~~of string theory~~, scientists have been back ~~at the drawing board~~.
7. Everything that man creates carries ~~within it the seeds of its own destruction~~.
8. Kelvin snuck ~~out the door during the school assembly~~.
9. ~~Within seconds of hearing about the trip to Antarctica~~, Charlotte packed shorts and sunglasses.
10. We found Teddy in ~~a broken elevator at a rundown hotel in Thailand~~.

# 5

## Idioms



Idioms are phrases that are correct just because that's the way we say them. On the SAT, idiom errors come in the form of an incorrect preposition.

### Example 1

Wrong: He is regarded **to be** an awesome speaker.

Correct: He is regarded **as** an awesome speaker.

### Example 2

Wrong: That painting is similar **with** the red one.

Correct: That painting is similar **to** the red one.

### Example 3

Wrong: She is suspicious **towards** me.

Correct: She is suspicious **of** me.

### Example 4

Wrong: I have an interest **to** fishing.

Correct: I have an interest **in** fishing.

## Example 5

Wrong: The winner was awarded **of** a gold medal.

Correct: The winner was awarded **of** a gold medal.

## Example 6

Wrong: The company was accused **to donate** millions of dollars to the President's campaign.

Correct: The company was accused **of donating** millions of dollars to the President's campaign.

There's no rhyme or reason behind these phrases and the right preposition can depend on the meaning of the sentence. Some are downright obvious because they sound so unnatural but some can be tough to spot, especially if you haven't encountered the idiom before. Practice will expose you to the most common ones, but sometimes, you'll have no choice but to rely on your instincts. Fortunately, the new SAT won't go out of its way to test you on obscure idioms.

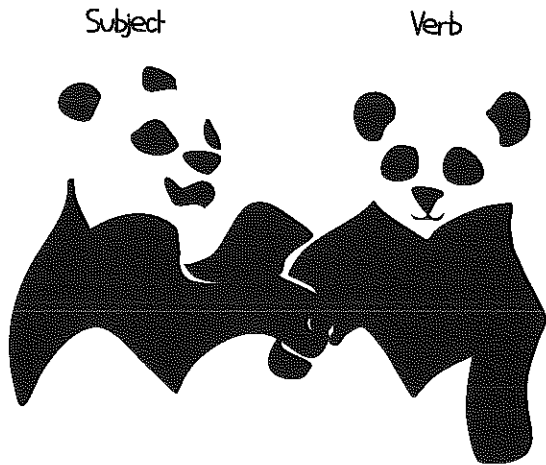
**Exercise 1:** Correct the idiom errors below. Answers for this chapter start on page 211.

1. I don't care about your opinion ~~towards me~~. **of**
2. Your ability in getting the perfect cards has caught the ~~attention of~~ casino surveillance. **to**
3. The Olympic athlete was ~~capable in~~ climbing Mt. Everest. **capable of**
4. The public was ~~opposed against~~ the war. **opposed to**
5. The children were ~~prohibited against~~ playing outside at dark. **prohibited from**
6. Unless you ~~comply to~~ those food safety standards, we will shut you down. **with**
7. Those who don't ~~abide with~~ the rules are often the ones who successfully innovate. **by**
8. China is becoming an economic hegemony ~~against~~ foreign rivals who dare to compete. **over**
9. By taking good care of pandas, zoos have succeeded ~~to save~~ pandas from extinction. **in saving**
10. I hope you are ~~aware about~~ the raccoons that are mating in your basement. **aware of**
11. She has lived ~~in~~ Broome street for over fifty years. **on**
12. She managed to get a position ~~in the~~ director of the engineering department. **as**
13. He was inclined ~~in~~ accepting the new job offer, but wanted to wait. **to accept**
14. The young graduate yearned ~~towards~~ the days when he didn't have to worry about the bills. **for**
15. Because she had many toxic relationships, Jane became accustomed ~~with~~ yelling her way through arguments. **accustomed to**

**Exercise 2:** Answers for this chapter start on page 211.

1. When I first started running as a child, I never thought that I'd ever get the chance to be representative of my local club at the Sydney regional finals.
  - A) NO CHANGE
  - B) in representing
  - C) in representation of
  - ☒ D) to represent
2. Unfortunately, injury has kept me bed-ridden for the rest of the season.
  - ☒ A) NO CHANGE
  - B) in
  - C) at
  - D) with
3. So I kept towards working at it, and ran the best times I had in years.
  - A) NO CHANGE
  - B) with
  - ☒ C) on
  - D) about
4. The weather took a turn for the worse, but as we made the first part of the ascent, hope in success was still strong.
  - A) NO CHANGE
  - B) of success
  - ☒ C) to succeed
  - D) to succeeding
5. Wearable technologies will make a huge impact towards the global smartphone marketplace in the coming years.
  - A) NO CHANGE
  - B) at
  - ☒ C) on
  - D) against
6. Dubai is home to one of the world's tallest buildings, which attracts its fair share for adrenaline junkie base-jumpers.
  - A) NO CHANGE
  - B) in
  - ☒ C) with
  - D) of
7. Spot welding relies on the heat caused by electrical resistance to fuse metal pieces together.
  - ☒ A) NO CHANGE
  - B) against
  - C) by
  - D) in

8. Spot welding is preferred against friction welding when fixing broken pipes.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - ☒ B) over
  - C) to
  - D) more than
9. We more often observe loose allegiances between smaller gangs, consisting in various nationalities and ethnicities.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - ☒ B) made up of
  - C) made up in
  - D) making up of
10. The President praised the initiative in raising funds from sources other than government grants.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - ☒ B) for raising
  - C) to raise
  - D) on the raise of
11. To the avant-garde, innovation is a necessary component about greatness.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - B) with
  - ☒ C) of
  - D) to
12. After speaking with our lawyers, we successfully petitioned with the patent office.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - B) to
  - C) towards
  - ☒ D) OMIT the underlined portion.
13. Magnetic inductors are more efficient than wind power by a watt-by-watt basis.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - ☒ B) on
  - C) regarding
  - D) as
14. The Mongols and the Chinese both tried to conquer Vietnam at various points on the second millennium.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - B) upon
  - ☒ C) in
  - D) from
15. Irish dancing can trace its origins back to the time of the Druids, when it was believed that ritual processions should take place in honoring the sun spirit.
- ☒ A) NO CHANGE
  - B) to honor
  - C) of honoring
  - D) for the honoring of



# 6

## Subject Verb Agreement

You know how you have to conjugate the verb to match the subject in foreign languages? We have the same thing in English, and it can get tricky even though the simple cases seem so natural and obvious to us:

### Example 1

Wrong: You **is** smart.

Correct: You **are** smart.

### Example 2

Wrong: Everyday the alarm clock goes off and we **wakes** up to confront our lives.

Correct: Everyday the alarm clock goes off and we **wake** up to confront our lives.

The subject is a noun (person, place, or thing) that is the “doer” or “main feature” in the sentence. A verb is an action word. Think about the simple sentences above and how awkward it would be to have verbs that don’t agree with the subject. You don’t even have to know what the subject and verb of each sentence is to know that it’s awkward. Now the SAT won’t make it that easy on you; they’ll intentionally try to trick your ear. Let’s do an example:

Investigations into the scandal (*shows/show*) a lot more than we want to know.

To pick the right verb, we must first find the subject. Let’s start by applying what we learned in a previous chapter and cross out the prepositional phrases:

Investigations ~~into the scandal~~ (*shows/show*) a lot more than we want to know.

What’s left is the subject—investigations! Now the second step is to ask yourself whether *investigations* is singular or plural. Well, it’s plural because of the *s*, meaning there’s more than one. Therefore, we need the plural verb *show*. And that’s the whole process! Cross out the prepositional phrases and you’ll be able to pick



the subject from the nouns that are left. It's usually the remaining noun closest to the verb.

If you're ever unsure of whether a verb such as *show* is singular or plural, test it by putting *he* and *they* in front and then asking yourself which sounds more correct:

*He show...* OR *They show...*

Hopefully, *They show...* sounds more correct to you, which means *show* is the plural form (since *they* is obviously plural).

Let's try some more difficult ones. Note that in the following example, we can cross out both a prepositional phrase and a comma phrase.

### Example 3

Question:	Films <u>by Miyazaki and Itami, including Miyazaki's Spirited Away,</u> ( <del>excites</del> / <del>excite</del> ) the imagination.
Step 1:	Cross out the prepositional phrases/comma phrases/relative clauses: Films <del>by Miyazaki and Itami, including Miyazaki's Spirited Away,</del> ( <del>excites</del> / <del>excite</del> ) the imagination.
Step 2:	What is the subject? <i>Films</i>
Step 3:	Is <i>Films</i> singular or plural? Plural.
Answer:	Films by Miyazaki and Itami, including Miyazaki's <i>Spirited Away</i> , <b>excite</b> the imagination.

### Example 4

Question:	Her jewelry, <u>in addition to her pokemon cards,</u> ( <del>was</del> / <del>were</del> ) stolen by the robber.
Step 1:	Cross out the prepositional phrases/comma phrases/relative clauses: Her jewelry, <del>in addition to her pokemon cards,</del> ( <del>was</del> / <del>were</del> ) stolen by the robber.
Step 2:	What is the subject? <i>Her jewelry</i>
Step 3:	Is <i>Her jewelry</i> singular or plural? Singular.
Answer:	Her jewelry, in addition to her pokemon cards, <b>was</b> stolen by the robber.

You might think that the verb should be plural because the sentence mentions both jewelry and cards, but because of the comma phrase, the subject is just the jewelry.



## Example 5

Question: ~~Beside the bins, where one could smell the stench of rotten eggs, (was/were) a pack of philosophy majors gathering cans for recycling.~~

Step 1: Cross out the prepositional phrases/comma phrases/relative clauses:  
~~Beside the bins, where one could smell the stench of rotten eggs, (was/were) a pack of philosophy majors gathering cans for recycling.~~

Step 2: What is the subject? *a pack*

Step 3: Is *a pack* singular or plural? Singular.

Answer: ~~Beside the bins, where one could smell the stench of rotten eggs, was~~ a pack of philosophy majors gathering cans for recycling.

Again, make sure you can identify that *was* is singular whereas *were* is plural. Everyone uses the correct form in simple conversation, but some students have trouble identifying the correct form in a grammar test setting.

## Example 6

Question: ~~Inside heaven's kingdom (rests/rest) Charlie and his angels.~~

Step 1: Cross out the prepositional phrases/comma phrases/relative clauses:  
~~Inside heaven's kingdom (rests/rest) Charlie and his angels.~~

Step 2: What is the subject? *Charlie and his angels*

Step 3: Is *Charlie and his angels* singular or plural? Plural.

Answer: Inside heaven's kingdom ~~rest~~ Charlie and his angels.

## Example 7

Question: There ~~(is/are) many other examples to support my point.~~

Step 1: Cross out the prepositional phrases/comma phrases/relative clauses:  
 There aren't any to cross out. Note that *to support* is not a prepositional phrase because it doesn't end in a noun. It's an infinitive.

Step 2: What is the subject? *many other examples*

Step 3: Is *many other examples* singular or plural? Plural.

Answer: There ~~are~~ many other examples to support my point.

These last three examples show that the subject can appear after the verb, something the SAT loves to do to trip students up.

Another question variation you'll come across deals with helping verbs, which are necessary to form certain tenses. Examples of helping verbs are bolded below:

**has** seen  
**was** forgotten  
**is** watching  
**have** been

When you see these verb forms, it is the helping verb that must agree with the subject.

### Example 8

Question:	The few ideas <del>that I've come up with last night</del> ( <i>has/have</i> ) given my team enough to work with.
Step 1:	Cross out the prepositional phrases/comma phrases/relative clauses: The few ideas <del>that I've come up with last night</del> ( <i>has/have</i> ) given my team enough to work with.
Step 2:	What is the subject? <i>The few ideas</i>
Step 3:	Is <i>The few ideas</i> singular or plural? Plural.
Correct:	The few ideas that I've come up with last night <b>have</b> given my team enough to work with.

### Example 9

Question:	<del>The forks and knives are in the kitchen, and the jar with the thai</del> peanut sauce ( <i>has/have</i> ) been sitting in the refrigerator.
Step 1:	Cross out the prepositional phrases/comma phrases/relative clauses: The forks and knives are in the kitchen, and the jar <del>with the thai</del> peanut sauce ( <i>has/have</i> ) been sitting in the refrigerator.
Step 2:	What is the subject? <i>the jar</i>
Step 3:	Is <i>the jar</i> singular or plural? Singular.
Answer:	The forks and knives are in the kitchen, and the jar with the thai peanut sauce <b>has</b> been sitting in the refrigerator.

### Example 10

Question:	The players <del>on our all-star tennis team</del> ( <i>is/are</i> ) <del>taken on luxury cruises every year.</del>
Step 1:	Cross out the prepositional phrases/comma phrases/relative clauses: The players <del>on our all-star tennis team</del> ( <i>is/are</i> ) taken on luxury cruises every year.
Step 2:	What is the subject? <i>The players</i>
Step 3:	Is <i>The players</i> singular or plural? Plural.
Answer:	The players on our all-star tennis team <b>are</b> taken on luxury cruises every year.

Another question variation you might see is one in which the verb is in a phrase or clause you would normally cross out. For example,

I visited my aunt, who (*is/are*) a panda caretaker, earlier today.

Note that the underlined portion is a comma phrase. To find the subject if the verb is located in a phrase or clause like the one above, just ask yourself what it's describing. In this case, the phrase is obviously describing *my aunt*, which is singular. Therefore, we need the singular verb *is*.

I visited my **aunt**, who **is** a panda caretaker, earlier today.



### Example 11

Question: Where are the cookies that ~~(was/were)~~ in the cookie jar?

Answer: Where are the cookies that **were** in the cookie jar?

In Example 11, we have a relative clause that describes *cookies*, which is plural.

### Example 12

Question: I have no interest in luxury products, which ~~(caters/cater)~~ only to the wealthy.

Answer: I have no interest in luxury products, which **cater** only to the wealthy.

Now let's walk through a really tricky example that combines everything we've learned so far in this chapter:

Mastery of magic tricks that truly ~~(surprises/surprise)~~ the audience ~~(requires/require)~~ lots of time.

Here, we have to figure out the subjects for two verbs. Cross out the prepositional phrases and relative clause:

Mastery of magic tricks that truly ~~(surprises/surprise)~~ the audience ~~(requires/require)~~ lots of time.

Now it's easy to see that *mastery* is the main subject of the sentence. *Mastery* is singular so we need the singular verb *requires*. After all, it's the *mastery* that *requires* a lot of time. But let's get back to the first verb, which is crossed out within the relative clause, and ask ourselves what that relative clause is describing. What is truly surprising the audience? Magic tricks! *Magic tricks* is plural so we need the plural verb *surprise*.

Mastery of magic tricks that truly **surprise** the audience **requires** lots of time.

Now, a few more rules you should know:

### Example 13

Question: *The Simpsons* ~~(is/are)~~ the longest running American sitcom.

Answer: *The Simpsons* **is** the longest running American sitcom.

Rule: Names of books, TV shows, bands, and movies are all singular.

### Example 14

Question: Charles and Kate ~~(was/were)~~ at the ball last night.

Answer: Charles and Kate **were** at the ball last night.

Rule: Subjects joined by *and* are always plural.

### Example 15

Question: Everybody ~~(loves/love)~~ Raymond.

Answer: Everybody **loves** Raymond.

Rule: *Everybody*, *everything*, *every*, *anybody*, *anyone*, *no one* are all singular subjects.

## Example 16

Questions: Each of the candidates (*has/have*) two minutes to respond.  
 Neither of the candidates (*wants/want*) to respond.

Answers: Each of the candidates **has** two minutes to respond.  
 Neither of the candidates **wants** to respond.

Rule: *Each, neither, and either* are all singular subjects.

Before we go to the exercises, you probably have quite a few grammar rules swirling around in your head. Let's go over a few common errors that students make when they start thinking about subjects and verbs. Take a look at the following sentence:

He likes to sway to R&B music instead of rocking to AC/DC.

On the SAT, you must be able to identify which words are verbs before you can check for their subjects. Some students mistakenly think that *to sway* and *rocking* are verbs in that sentence. However, *to sway* is called an **infinitive** (*to be, to hate, to run,...*) and *rocking* is called a **gerund** (*running, cooking, exploding,...*). You've probably heard of infinitives in French or Spanish class, where it's the root form of a verb before you conjugate it. It's the same in English. Infinitives and gerunds are **not verbs so there's no need to check for subject-verb agreement**. The only actual verb in this example is *likes*. Again, gerunds and infinitives are **never verbs**. Don't waste time checking for their subjects.

Lastly, the SAT loves to throw in more than one verb in the same sentence. That way, one of the verbs can be buried deeper into the sentence to fool your ear. In these questions, split the sentence into two and make sure both verbs agree.

## Example 17

Wrong: John and Harry studied computer science and was recruited by Google to develop new services.

Sentence 1: John and Harry studied computer science. *Correct.*

Sentence 2: John and Harry was recruited by Google to develop new services. *Wrong.*

Correct: John and Harry studied computer science and **were** recruited by Google to develop new services.

## Example 18

Wrong: Poisonous traps that attracts and then kills off rats are spread throughout this office.

Sentence 1: Poisonous traps that attracts rats are spread throughout this office. *Wrong.*

Sentence 2: Poisonous traps that then kills off rats are spread throughout this office. *Wrong.*

Correct: Poisonous traps that **attract** and then **kill** off rats are spread throughout this office.

## Example 19

Wrong: I was walking down the street and were chatting with my friend about his day.

Sentence 1: I was walking down the street. *Correct.*

Sentence 2: I were chatting with my friend about his day. *Wrong.*

Correct: I was walking down the street and (was) chatting with my friend about his day.

In Example 19, the second *was* is unnecessary because the first *was* serves as a helping verb for both *walking* and *chatting*. If we stripped out all the details of the sentence, it would read, *I was walking and chatting...*, which is a grammatically fine sentence.

**Exercise 1:** As a basic warm-up, fill in the right singular and plural verb forms for each of the following verbs. Answers for this chapter start on page 212.

		To Be	To Go	To Have	To Win	To Kiss
Present Tense	He	is	goes	has	wins	kisses
	They	are	go	have	win	kiss
Past Tense	He	was	went	had	won	kissed
	They	were	went	had	won	kissed

**Exercise 2:** Choose the correct verb. Answers for this chapter start on page 212.

- Participants in the charity organization (~~was/were~~) are angry when no one donated.
- The habit of hugging your pillow while sleeping (~~indicates/indicate~~) that you miss someone.
- Elderly criminals in Florida sometimes (~~leads/lead~~) the police on chases at speeds of 10 to 15 mph.
- Bonnie and her boyfriend Clyde (~~likes/like~~) to jump into ponds to avoid the cops, often forgetting that they can't swim.
- Every Bentley, Lamborghini, and Porsche (~~s/are~~) owned by Volkswagen.
- Propaganda that's played off as the truth (~~has/have~~) been used throughout history to persuade the masses.
- Forcing yourself to forget the pain someone else has caused you only (~~hurts/hurt~~) you more.
- One of the skills I would like to learn (~~is/are~~) the ability to talk while inhaling through the nose.
- Some of the superpowers I dream of having (~~includes/include~~) summoning jack o' lanterns on people's lawns during Halloween and making people burst into the Gangnam style dance.
- Each iPhone 5 (~~costs/cost~~) Apple \$168 and (~~costs/cost~~) us \$699.



11. Each of the three little pigs (*was/were*) afraid of the big bad wolf.
12. According to the phonebook, the number of Americans named Herp Derp (*is/are*) four.
13. A good cook rinses the dishes and (*repeats/repeat*) the same recipes to perfection.
14. Please let me know if the group (*stumbles/stumble*) upon or (*manages/manage*) to find the train station.
15. A number of people (*has/have*) hyperthymesia, a condition that (*allows/allow*) them to remember every detail of their lives.
16. There (*was/were*) an awkward silence when Mike's date told him she was actually a man.
17. A flock of birds and a bear (*has/have*) been captured in the field.
18. There (*is/are*) three types of people in this world: those who can count and those who can't.
19. There (*is/are*) stashed below the frigid depths of the arctic a magnificent treasure that no one has ever been able to recover.
20. There (*is/are*) in the works of Emerson an underlying tone of quiet appreciation.
21. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (*was/were*) purportedly based on cocaine; the seven dwarves were each side effects of the drug.
22. Harry, along with Ron and Hermione, (*attends/attend*) Hogwarts School of Wizardry.
23. Frodo, as well as Merry and Pippin, (*fights/fight*) to protect the one ring of power.
24. This picture book on the art of nudity in the modern age (*is/are*) a thought-provoking read.
25. The extent of our universe and those beyond constantly (*amazes/amaze*) me.
26. We found out that his mother, as well as his friends, (*was/were*) covering for Mike's crime.
27. Aliens from another planet (*has/have*) come here to kill us all.
28. The pigs you will be dissecting in this class (*is/are*) available as take-home dinners afterwards.
29. Human brain cells, the universe, and the internet all (*has/have*) similar structures.
30. Each team made up of one girl and one boy (*has/have*) to reenact a scene from Romeo and Juliet.
31. Speaking more than one language (*makes/make*) the brain more flexible and agile.
32. Getting to stuff my face silly with delicious food (*is/are*) the best part of being an obese food critic.
33. When (*was/were*) the cowboy and the Indians last here?
34. The class bully laughs at and then (*interferes/interfere*) with those trying to get work done.
35. Brendan and Brianna are out of money and (*has/have*) used up all possible guesses.

36. Paris and Nicole grew up rich and (*was/were*) sheltered all throughout life.
37. What (*does/do*) that fact have to do with anything we just talked about?
38. He sets his alarm but, when the morning comes, (*fails/fail*) to wake up.
39. Marcie and Michael exercise everyday and, in doing so, (*improves/improve*) their stamina.
40. Alice, in addition to a scarecrow, a tin man, and a lion, (*tries/try*) to find the Wizard of Oz.
41. A jar of hearts (*is/are*) on the counter.
42. Several trucks and an oil tanker near the highway exit (*was/were*) flipped on their sides.
43. Dreams within a dream that (*is/are*) spliced and diced up inside another dream (*confuses/confuse*) me.
44. A herd of cows and a slow moving tortoise (*is/are*) relaxing at the beach.
45. The lines for the elevator that normally (*carries/carry*) just five passengers (*was/were*) reinstated because the crowd of fat commuters (*was/were*) too heavy for it.
46. The diner near the dorms which (*houses/house*) the students (*serves/serve*) breakfast all day.
47. The widely recognized red coloring of stop signs everywhere (*alerts/alert*) people to stop.



Exercise 3: Answers for this chapter start on page 212.

### The Writer's Life

On every author's bookshelf **1** (*is/are*) dusty and worn out reference books. In every desk drawer **2** (*sits/sit*) a stack of papers waiting to be edited. A wide variety of pens, most of which are blue, red, or black, **3** (*is/are*) scattered across the desk. The life of a writer is a lonely yet hectic existence.

The act of putting words on paper and editing them **4** (*is/are*) mentally draining. The notion that because words come naturally to us when we're speaking, they should also come easily when we're writing, **5** (*misrepresents/misrepresent*) the struggles that every author faces. Putting words together in a logical and coherent way is different from having a conversation, which has the benefit of context. If the reader does not understand something, the author does not have the luxury of explaining it another way.

In addition, writers do more than just write. Research and investigation into their subject matter **6** (*plays/play*) a crucial role in good writing. After all, perfect grammar and well-crafted sentences about a vague topic written off the top of one's head **7** (*does/do*) not make for a good read. Relevant books must be read and interviews must be conducted before an author feels informed enough to write something substantial.

Most writers learn their craft in school. A strong liberal arts education that **8** (*encompasses/encompass*) grammar, style, structure, and prose **9** (*fosters/foster*) great writing. Upon graduation, writers must develop and apply all those skills to the research, writing, and editing

phases of any given project. Draft after draft, they have to rework and tweak what they've already done. This dedication to the craft and attention to detail that **10** (*rivals/rival*) that of a surgeon **11** (*requires/require*) discipline and work ethic. Authors such as James Joyce **12** (*has/have*) equated writing to torture. Only when all the pages in the book are written **13** (*does/do*) writers feel the true joy of writing.

Nevertheless, because many people think that writing is subjective and that there **14** (*is/are*) no right or wrong answers, the belief that writers have it easy, as well as all its underlying misconceptions, **15** (*persists/persist*).



# 8

## Run-ons

Most students think they know what a run-on is based on their 6th grade English class. So when I ask students whether the following is a run-on sentence, almost all students say yes:

*I took the SATs, and I scored a 36, and I applied to MIT, and I got in!*

Now this sentence may be long, wordy, and awkward, but the sentence is actually NOT a run-on sentence—it's grammatically correct. The reason it's correct is the use of the word *and*, which connects all the parts together.

*I took the SATs, I scored a 36, I applied to MIT, I got in!*

Now this IS a run-on sentence because several **complete sentences are being mashed together with just commas**.

The basic form of a run-on is this:

complete sentence , complete sentence

A run-on also occurs when there is nothing between the two complete sentences:

complete sentence complete sentence

There are four main ways to fix a run-on. Let's go over them one by one with a simple run-on example:

He was hungry, he bought a Chipotle burrito.

Two complete sentences connected only by a comma—definitely a run-on that needs to be fixed.

### 1. Use periods:

complete sentence. complete sentence.

He was hungry. He bought a burrito.

## 2. Use a conjunction

complete sentence, *conjunction* complete sentence.

He was hungry, **so** he bought a burrito.

Note that a comma, if necessary, comes **before** the conjunction (we'll learn more about commas in a future chapter). Most students have learned the acronym FANBOYS to memorize the list of conjunctions:

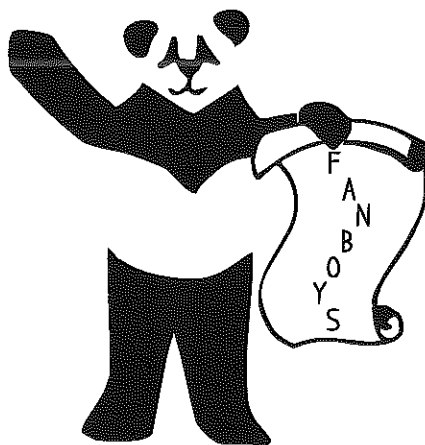
**For And Nor But Or Yet So**

Memorize this list because it's super important.

Now here's a really important point: if two sentences are connected by a word that's not from the FANBOYS list, IT'S STILL A RUN-ON. This is how the SAT tricks you:

He was hungry, **therefore**, he bought a Chipotle burrito.

This sentence is wrong because *therefore* is not a conjunction—it's not a member of FANBOYS. Instead, it's a transition word pretending to be a conjunction. Other words the SAT might use include *however*, *moreover*, *in addition to*, *nevertheless*, and *furthermore*. These words cannot be used as conjunctions.



## 3. Use the semicolon ;

complete sentence; complete sentence.

He was hungry; he bought a burrito.

Semicolons are the simplest way to edit run-ons, but in everyday speaking and writing, conjunctions are more common because they better express how two connected sentences are related. The SAT will test you on both ways. Note that this is also correct:

He was hungry; **therefore**, he bought a Chipotle burrito.

But this one is **INCORRECT**:

He was hungry; **and** he bought a Chipotle burrito.

Do not use both a conjunction and a semicolon. **Semicolons require complete sentences on either side.** By putting in a conjunction, the second part is no longer a complete sentence.

#### 4. Change the wording so that you no longer have two complete sentences

This last method encompasses a number of run-on fixes. The best way will usually depend on the sentence we're working with. We'll go over the most common ways of revising the wording.

##### A. Dependent clause

incomplete sentence, complete sentence.

Because he was hungry, he bought a burrito.

By inserting *because* in front, the first half is no longer a complete sentence, and we're no longer mashing two complete sentences together. As a result, we don't need anything more than the comma. *Because he was hungry* is a **dependent clause—it doesn't make sense by itself**. An **independent clause** is just another term for a complete sentence or thought like *he bought a Chipotle burrito*. **It makes sense by itself**. A dependent clause with an independent clause is not a run-on and therefore does not require a conjunction or a semicolon.

When it comes to rewording the burrito example, using a dependent clause turns out to be the best solution, but let's take a look at some examples where other solutions work better.

##### B. Relative clause (*who*, *which*, *that*)

###### Example 1

Wrong: The teacher yelled at Alicia, she had left her homework at home.

Correct: The teacher yelled at Alicia, who had left her homework at home.

###### Example 2

Wrong: The hackers copied the company's central databases, these contain sensitive data on customers.

Correct: The hackers copied the company's central databases, which contain sensitive data on customers.

##### C. A noun phrase set off by commas

###### Example 3

Wrong: Yesterday, Russia deployed troops on the border, this is a clear violation of the peace agreement.

Correct: Yesterday, Russia deployed troops on the border, a clear violation of the peace agreement.

###### Example 4

Wrong: The Burj Khalifa is the tallest building in the world, it attracts thousands of tourists each year.

Correct: The Burj Khalifa is the tallest building in the world, attracting thousands of tourists each year.

## D. Modifier

## Example 5

Wrong:	People named it after inventor Nikola Tesla, the tesla coil is used in radio transmitters and electrotherapy.
Correct:	Named after inventor Nikola Tesla, the tesla coil is used in radio transmitters and electrotherapy.

## Example 6

Wrong:	He is reflecting on the meaning of life, Henry tried to find philosophical answers to life's problems.
Correct:	Reflecting on the meaning of life, Henry tried to find philosophical answers to life's problems.

E. Use *and* to join verbs

## Example 7

Wrong:	James turned up the music, he danced like there was no tomorrow.
Correct:	James turned up the music and danced like there was no tomorrow.

Let's recap what we've learned so far with some examples that are revised in several different ways.

## Example 8

Wrong:	You should memorize the list of conjunctions, it will help immensely on the SAT.
Correct:	You should memorize the list of conjunctions, for it will help immensely on the SAT.
Correct:	You should memorize the list of conjunctions; it will help immensely on the SAT.
Correct:	You should memorize the list of conjunctions because it will help immensely on the SAT.

As a side note, the conjunction *for* is rarely used in conversation.

## Example 9

Wrong:	I love the game of basketball, however, I don't play it myself.
Correct:	I love the game of basketball, but I don't play it myself.
Correct:	I love the game of basketball; however, I don't play it myself.
Correct:	I love the game of basketball, even though I don't play it myself.

After reading the third correct version, you might be wondering why *even though* is correct and *however* is incorrect. What's the difference? Well, with *however*, you still have two independent clauses on either side of the comma. With *even though*, you have an independent clause with a dependent clause, which is not a run-on:

**Wrong:** I love the game of basketball, however, I don't play it myself.  
Independent clause Independent clause

**Fine:** I love the game of basketball, even though I don't play it myself.  
Independent clause                      Dependent clause

### Example 10

Wrong: Nightmares keep me awake at night; yet I oddly feel energized in the morning

**Correct:** Nightmares keep me awake at night; however, I oddly feel energized in the morning.

**Correct:** Nightmares keep me awake at night, yet I oddly feel energized in the morning.

**Correct:** Although nightmares keep me awake at night, I oddly feel energized in the morning.

Again, don't use semicolons and conjunctions (like *yet* in this example) together. Semicolons require two complete sentences on either side.

### Example 11

**Wrong:** One of my idols is Michael Jackson, he was one of the best performers of his time.

**Correct:** One of my idols is Michael Jackson, who was one of the best performers of his time.

**Correct:** One of my idols is Michael Jackson, one of the best performers of his time.

The first correct version uses a relative clause. The second uses a noun phrase.

### Example 12

**Wrong:** When I try to go to sleep, nightmares keep me awake at night, after brushing my teeth, I oddly feel energized in the morning.

**Correct:** When I try to go to sleep, nightmares keep me awake at night, yet after brushing my teeth, I oddly feel energized in the morning.

Correct: When I try to go to sleep, nightmares keep me awake at night; after brushing my teeth, however, I oddly feel energized in the morning.

Despite all the clauses in example 12, we have two complete thoughts being mashed together:

1. When I try to go to sleep, nightmares keep me awake at night.
2. After brushing my teeth, I oddly feel energized in the morning.

The SAT will try to trick you in this way by putting in a lot of relative clauses and comma phrases to keep you from realizing something's a run-on. When that happens, read carefully and look for where a complete thought ends and where another one begins.

### Reminder 1

If there's already a conjunction or if we're not connecting two complete sentences in the first place, then there's NO error. For example:

*Although the plan was perfect, the clumsy criminals, who by now would have been millionaires, are locked in jail cells, slowly waiting out their sentences.*

Looking at where the commas are, at no point are we trying to combine two complete sentences on either side, so the sentence is perfectly fine.

### Reminder 2

Never use more than one way of correcting a run-on within the same sentence. Don't use a semicolon with a conjunction. Don't use a conjunction with a dependent clause, etc. The following examples are all incorrect:

- Jerry ran away last summer; and I haven't seen him since.
- Even though the coffee in Rome is amazing, but I still like Starbucks coffee more.
- Every year my brother visits New York City; which he considers the greatest city in the world.
- Henry tripped over the rock, and falling head first into the water.
- Running through the finish line, and Donna leaped for joy.



**Exercise 1:** Identify whether the sentence is a run-on (some may be correct) and if so, where it occurs. The first one is done for you. Answers for this chapter start on page 217.

1. A caller from Memorial Park reported a man beating his head against a wall, he was heading to work.  
↑
2. A completely naked long-haired brunette in her 20s was pumping gas into a Hummer on the corner of Beachmont, no one got a good look at the vehicle's license plate.
3. In New York, the train system is difficult to learn, however, the food is fantastic and diverse.
4. When a man became so upset with the lack of parking enforcement in his town, he reported his own parking violation, and the police showed up to subdue him with a stun gun, apparently he became combative and screamed at the officers that they weren't doing their job.
5. There's a big chance that if you're 16 or older, you've already met the person you'll marry. ✓
6. Wanting to be sure that what he had been sold was real weed, Phillip Donahue approached two officers and asked them to test his pipe, as a result, he was arrested and charged with drug possession.
7. Jimmy hid in the dumpster when Mr. Trump, his boss, walked by, unfortunately, Mr. Trump had to throw something away and saw him crouching there, forcing Jimmy to confess that he actually lived there.
8. Zoe likes to ace her tests but resents it when her classmates ask her how much she studied, sometimes Zoe will just say that she didn't study at all when in fact she had stayed up all night.
9. At the time, discovering quantum physics looked like a waste of time and money, but it is now the foundation of all modern technology, thus, when people claim that math and science are of no relevance, it drives Dr. Tyson into a deep rage.
10. Playing them day and night, Shawn and his video games were inseparable, however, once he got a girlfriend, everything changed.
11. Despite his friends' tearful pleas for forgiveness, Jonathan maintained a deep grudge against everyone who had ever asked for a pencil and never returned it, an act he considered a crime against humanity. ✓
12. Suddenly realizing the movie was too scary for her, Maya panicked and looked at her watch, there was still 20 minutes left, enough time to still make her uneasy about what was to come.
13. The salesman, aware that he was going to lose a sale if he didn't make something up, claimed that the laptop could not be customizable and that the only options were in the store. ✓
14. As a young girl, Lindsay was praised as a talented and burgeoning actress, as an adult, she fell into the dark world of sex, drugs, and alcohol and would never reclaim her former glory.
15. Omega-3 fish oil provides essential fatty acids for your nutritional health, furthermore, it soothes back pain and muscle aches.
16. Last Saturday, Peter Parker was bit by a spider, after that incident, he would never be the same again.

Exercise 2: Answers for this chapter start on page 217.

1. Despite the cracks in the kitchen wall and the leaky faucet; the apartment sold for over double what it was worth.  
A) NO CHANGE  
B) faucet  
☒ C) faucet,  
D) faucet, but
2. The waiter tried to sell the most expensive bottle of wine to the young diners, all of them decided that it wasn't worth it.  
A) NO CHANGE  
B) the diners  
☒ C) of whom  
D) DELETE the underlined portion.
3. The letter, which declared a revolution in Cuba, was drafted by the leader of the rebels, it was typed up by his brother.  
A) NO CHANGE  
B) rebels,  
☒ C) rebels and  
D) rebels; and it was
4. Because malaria, a disease transmitted by mosquitoes, can be fatal, so we made sure to take vaccinations before our trip to Africa.  
A) NO CHANGE  
B) and  
C) but  
☒ D) DELETE the underlined portion.
5. When the school board wanted to cut spending in half, which the teachers complained that they already didn't have enough textbooks to go around.  
A) NO CHANGE  
B) half;  
☒ C) half,  
D) half:
6. Jack bought the used car knowing that he would have to fix it up; it was the only one he liked.  
☒ A) NO CHANGE  
B) up; for  
C) up, it  
D) up, which
7. Fans stood in a long line that stretched down and around the block, they were waiting for the box office to open.  
A) NO CHANGE  
B) block and  
C) block; while  
☒ D) block,

8. Doctors must adhere to best practices and obey certain hospital guidelines, they limit the amount of medication that can be prescribed to patients.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - ☒ B) which
  - C) and
  - D) DELETE the underlined portion.
9. The managers debated the issue with the employees to get their feedback; even though they had already made their decision.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - B) feedback,
  - C) feedback; but
  - ☒ D) feedback even though
10. Most mixed martial arts fighters today practice brazilian jiu-jitsu, this is a brutal form of martial arts that focuses on grappling.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - B) jiu-jitsu, being
  - C) jiu-jitsu;
  - ☒ D) jiu-jitsu,
11. SAT scores are extremely important. They are only one part of the application, however, grades and teacher recommendations are other factors that colleges take into account.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - B) application however grades
  - ☒ C) application. However, grades
  - D) application, however. Grades
12. Although buyers are aware of their decisions and the marketing that plays into them, however, some persuasive forces that affect purchasing behavior go unnoticed.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - ☒ B) them, some
  - C) them, but some
  - D) them: some
13. It is praised as Tarantino's greatest accomplishment, the movie *Pulp Fiction* interlaces several stories of seemingly unrelated incidents.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - ☒ B) Praised as
  - C) People praise it as
  - D) It is
14. Environmentalists have worked hard to rid the river of toxic chemicals, but the population of fish still hasn't recovered to previous levels.
- ☒ A) NO CHANGE
  - B) chemicals; but
  - C) chemicals,
  - D) chemicals, however,

15. The movie theater provided large leather seats with slots for popcorn and drinks, furthermore, the screen was crystal clear to make for a great 3-D viewing experience.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - ☒ B) drinks; furthermore,
  - C) drinks; and
  - D) drinks, in addition,
16. As a doctor, Billy consults with patients about their conditions, he recommends a course of action to correct them.
- A) NO CHANGE
  - ☒ B) conditions and
  - C) conditions; and then
  - D) conditions, which he

Exercise 3: Answers for this chapter start on page 217.

### Sir John Alexander Macdonald

Sir John Alexander Macdonald, the first Prime Minister of Canada, is widely praised as a great Canadian hero. **1** We didn't have his determination and tenacity, our great country would not be the same as it is today.

**2** Born in Scotland on January 11, 1815, John immigrated to the New Country with his parents at a very young age. The exact year of his arrival is unknown. He soon began working under a local lawyer in **3** Kingston, his mentor died before he could complete his apprenticeship. Young Macdonald was not quite old enough to take over the **4** practice, however, this didn't stop the ambitious lad. He immediately opened his own practice.

**5** He had several high profile cases, John quickly became a prominent figure in legal venues. This notoriety prompted the young man to run for a legislative seat in the House of **6** Commons, he won in 1844.

1

- A) NO CHANGE
- ☒ B) Without
- C) We lacked
- D) Because

2

- ☒ A) NO CHANGE
- B) He was born;
- C) He was born
- D) Born,

3

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) Kingston, however, his mentor
- C) Kingston; but his mentor
- ☒ D) Kingston, but his mentor

4

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) practice, so
- ☒ C) practice; however,
- D) practice,

5

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) After,
- ☒ C) After
- D) He was in

6

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) Commons,
- C) Commons; which he
- ☒ D) Commons, which he

Just like John, the country was struggling to make a mark on the **7** world, in 1877, Mr. Macdonald was awarded the position of Premier of the United Province of Canada. However, at this point Canada was far from being **8** united, much less a real province.

The political state was in shambles. The efforts of the King of England to populate the country was a dismal **9** failure the people in the west had no interest at all in joining what politicians were calling "Canada." None of this deterred John's ambition of creating the country of his dreams. He developed the Canadian Pacific Railway and created the Northwest Mounted **10** Police; convincing British Columbia, Manitoba, and Prince Edward Island to join the confederation.

Even at the age of 60, Macdonald did not slow down **11** one bit, in 1885, he engineered the first National Park in Alberta. Believing that he could attract the attention of tourists to **12** Canada, so he gathered the country's best architects and construction workers to design one of the world's most beautiful destinations.

Sir John A. Macdonald served as the Prime Minister of Canada from 1867 to 1873 and then again from 1878 to 1891. He was given the honor of knighthood for his dedication to crown and **13** country, people today still travel on the Macdonald-Cartier highway every day!

7

- A) NO CHANGE
- ☒ B) world. In 1877,
- C) world, however, in 1877,
- D) world, moreover, in 1877,

8

- ☒ A) NO CHANGE
- B) united, and much less
- C) united; much less
- D) united, though much less

9

- A) NO CHANGE
- ☒ B) failure. The people
- C) failure; and the people
- D) failure, the people

10

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) Police convincing
- ☒ C) Police by convincing
- D) Police, he convinced

11

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) one bit, therefore, in 1885,
- ☒ C) one bit; in 1885,
- D) one bit; and in 1885,

12

- A) NO CHANGE
- ☒ B) Canada,
- C) Canada;
- D) Canada, and

13

- A) NO CHANGE
- B) country, with people
- C) country, so people
- ☒ D) country. People

# 24

## Who vs. Whom

Now's a good time to introduce an error you'll probably encounter just once on the SAT, but probably hundreds of times in your life: *who* vs. *whom*.

### Rule

Use *whom* after a preposition (*to, for, of, ...*). Use *who* for all other cases. Note that this rule is not always correct, but it's easier to memorize and it will get you through all SAT questions related to this error.

### Example 1

Wrong: Jane is the girl for **who** I brought these gifts.

Correct: Jane is the girl for **whom** I brought these gifts.

Correct: Jane is the girl **whom** I brought these gifts for.

Note the exception to the rule in the second correct version. Sometimes, the preposition (*for*, in this case) is moved to someplace later in the sentence, so just watch out. Here's another example of this:

### Example 2

Wrong: The chaperones **who** the students were assigned to made sure they walked in a single file.

Correct: The chaperones **whom** the students were assigned to made sure they walked in a single file.

Correct: The chaperones **to whom** the students were assigned made sure they walked in a single file.

In the example above, the preposition to look out for is *to*. Notice that the preposition can be moved back in front of the *whom*.

### Example 3

Wrong: The boys **whom** robbed the store should be thrown in jail.

Correct: The boys **who** robbed the store should be thrown in jail.



## Example 4

Wrong: To **who** should I send these flowers?

Correct: To **whom** should I send these flowers?

## Example 5

Wrong: The librarian yelled at the boy **whom** never returned his books.

Correct: The librarian yelled at the boy **who** never returned his books.

## Example 6

Wrong: He is the man **who** I love.

Correct: He is the man **whom** I love.

This is an example of an exception to the rule. Because *the man* is the object of your love, we have to use *whom*. These cases pretty much never come up on the SAT, so just trust in the rule above. However, knowing this exception will give you added confidence on the small chance it actually comes up.

**Exercise:** Answers for this chapter start on page 237.

1. The agency recruited overseas teachers (*who/whom*) would be able to demonstrate a native fluency in English.
2. At Kim's birthday party were millionaires and celebrities, some of (*who/whom*) had flown in from New York to attend.
3. Julie's math teacher was a graduate student (*who/whom*), after completing his finance degree, decided to get into teaching instead.
4. The police officers, (*who/whom*) were eating donuts at the time, didn't hear the cries for help.
5. The girl (*who/whom*) Dave was matched with was unimpressed by his sense of humor.
6. Anyone (*who/whom*) has read the book will say that it's much better than the movie.
7. Reflecting on all her past accomplishments, the winner thanked everyone with (*who/whom*) she had been associated.
8. Can you tell the boys (*who/whom*) are at the door to go away?
9. The girls with (*who/whom*) I'm going shopping need to borrow money.
10. I want to hire those chefs (*who/whom*) cooked the perfect pasta at the restaurant we ate at last week.