

FCE - CAE

Cambridge English

110

COMMON MISTAKES IN WRITING



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FCE/CAE 110 COMMON MISTAKES IN WRITING

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This book contains a compilation of 110 common and frequently seen writing mistakes in both the FCE and the CAE writing tasks. By learning to recognise and avoid such errors, you can improve your writing skills, and therefore get better marks in your exam. Take some time to familiarise yourself with the mistakes included on this ebook and remember to always check your piece of writing before you hand it in.

To your success,
M.C. Curley

110 COMMON MISTAKES IN WRITING

1. ~~X In accordance to me~~ - ✓ In my opinion / ✓ In my view, ✓ as I see it, etc.
2. ~~X In accordance to myself~~ - ✓ In my opinion / ✓ In my view, ✓ as I see it, etc.
3. ~~X Relax myself~~ - ✓ Relax - ~~X I feel myself with~~ the need to- ✓ I feel the need to ...
4. ~~X Get~~ more relaxed when... - ✓ **feel/be** more relaxed when...
5. ~~X I couldn't be able~~ I **wasn't** able
6. ~~X I have a doubt~~ about ✓ I have a **question** about... / ✓ I'm not sure about ...
7. ~~X He doubted~~ before answering ✓ He **hesitated** before answering...
8. ~~X Healthy~~ problem - ✓ **Health** Problem / Healthy = Strong and well
9. ~~X Familiar~~ reunion - ✓ **Family** reunion / Familiar = easy to recognize (seen, heard...before)
10. ~~X Economical~~ growth - ✓ **Economic** growth/ Economical = not using a lot of fuel, money, etc.
11. ~~X Much~~ people - ✓ **many** people / Much is used with uncountable nouns
12. ~~X I did~~ the reservation - ✓ I **made** the reservation
13. ~~X less~~ animals - ✓ **fewer** animals / Less is used with uncountable nouns
14. ~~X We could hardly see it for~~ the mist - We could hardly see it **because of** the mist
15. ~~X He gave me a good advice.~~ ✓ He gave me a good **piece of advice** / **some** good advice.

16. ~~X Until the moment~~, we haven't had any problems.

✓ Up to now/ So far/ Until now , we haven't had any problem.

17. ~~X What can we do to improve~~ deforestation?

✓ What can we do to / **stop /fight / reduce** deforestation?

18. ~~X What can we do to improve~~ pollution ?

✓ What can we do to / **stop /fight / reduce** pollution?

19. ~~X He was interesting~~ in music – ✓ He was interested in music

20. ~~X I stopped to work~~ there – ✓ I stopped **working** there.

21. ~~X A potato is no~~ fruit – ✓ A potato is **not** a fruit

When a noun has an ungradable meaning (it is either something or it is not)
we cannot use no + noun.

22. ✓ It's no secret that we ...= It's not a secret that we...

When a noun has a gradable meaning, no + noun means the same as not a/an + noun.
A secret is gradable. Something can be more of a secret than something else.

23. ~~X This exercise is basically consisted in ...~~ This exercise basically **consists in...**

(intransitive verbs do not take an object and ,therefore, have no passive voice)

24. ~~X They were explained the rules more than once.~~

The rules were explained to them more than once

Verbs which follow the structure : to + indirect object cannot form a passive form like
the one crossed out above.

Other verbs that follow this rule are : describe to, explain to,
Suggest to, talk to, dictate to,

25. ~~X Enough tickets aren't available.~~ / ✓ Not enough tickets are available.

26. ~~X He wasn't strong enough for lifting~~ the stone.

✓ He wasn't strong enough **to lift** the stone.

27. ~~X Enough wasn't given to me.~~ / ☒ I didn't get enough.

We do not use enough as the subject of a sentence.

28. ~~X This neighbourhood has risen~~ a lot during the last year.
☒ This neighbourhood has **grown** a lot during the last year.

29. ~~X Taxes have been risen~~ at an annual rate of 4.8%
☒ Taxes **have risen** at an annual rate of 4.8%
☒ Taxes **have been raised** at an annual rate of 4.8%

Rise is an intransitive verb. Therefore, it doesn't have passive voice.

Raise is a transitive verb. It does have passive voice.

30. ~~X How long do you spend to get to work?~~
☒ How long does it take you to get to work?
☒ How long do you spend on your homework?

We use "spend time" to talk about the time we do an activity.

31. ~~X I pass~~ a lot of time reading. / ☒ I **spend** a lot of time reading.

32. ~~X They should dispose of their rubbish in the provided bins.~~
☒ They should dispose of their rubbish in the **bins provided**.

Some participle forms can only be used AFTER a noun:

applying ,caused ,discussed ,found ,provided ,questioned ,taken

33. ~~X The battery life never reaches~~ more than one day.
☒ The battery life never **lasts (for)** more than one day.

The verb reach is not used before a time expression.

34. ~~X That has happened many times along~~ human history.
☒ That has happened many times **throughout** human history.

Along is not used to refer to time.

35. ~~X The issue of the number of days a week that the shops must be opened~~ is a contentious one.
☒ The issue of the number of days a week that the shops must be **open** is a contentious one.

Open = Not closed / Opened = past form of the verb opened

I opened the window vs the windows was open.

COMMA SPLICE (punctuation mistake).

36. **X** He was very angry, he complained a lot.
 ✓ He was very angry, so he complained a lot. (comma + conjunction)
 ✓ He was very angry; he complained a lot. (semicolon by itself)
 ✓ He was very angry. He complained a lot. (Full stop + start a new sentence)

A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses are connected with only a comma.

37. **X** It's so common nowadays to see ~~child~~- playing videogames.
✓ It's so common nowadays to see **children** playing videogames.

Children = Irregular plural

Other irregular plurals are :

Knives, teeth, men, women, mice, oxen, feet, geese, radii, stimuli, media, bacteria, criteria, curricula, data, phenomena.etc.

38. **X** Which **else** do you want apart from this blue shirt?
✓ Which **other one** do you want apart from this blue shirt?

We don't use **else** after **which**.

39. ~~X~~ The school will provide students pens.
 ✓ The school will **provide** students **with** pens.
 ✓ The school will **provide** pens **for** students.

FORMULA : The school will **provide** **students** with **pens**.
 provide [RECEIVER] with [SOMETHING]
 or
 The school will **provide** **pens** for **students**.
 provide [SOMETHING] (for [RECEIVER])

40. ☒ The sun is ~~secured~~ during June July and August
☒ The sun is **guaranteed** during June July and August

Secure = to get or achieve something important / make something safe

Guarantee= a promise that something will be done or will happen

41. ☒ Wind farms should only be located in the appropriate place.
☐ Wind farms should only be located in the accurate place.

Accurate = correct or true in every detail / able to do something in an exact way, without making a mistake

Would it be more accurate to say that the plan failed?

Appropriate = suitable or right for a particular situation or purpose

This isn't the appropriate time to discuss the problem.

42. **X** He sells as well as ~~writing~~ his own books.

✓ He sells as well as writes his own books.

AS WELL AS

If there are two main verbs, both **referring to the same single object**, they must be in the same tense.

43. **X** They offer not just clothes or complements but also food and books from ~~the worldwide~~.

✓ They offer not just clothes or complements but also food and books from **all over the world**.

Worldwide is an adjective/adverb

A worldwide network of more than 100 human rights organizations.

Our company employs 1,500 staff worldwide.

44. **X** The museum is ~~found~~ in the centre of Madrid.

✓ The museum is **located / situated** in the centre of Madrid.

Located / situated = to be in a particular place

45. **X** Ever since we ~~met~~ that restaurant, we've eaten there a couple of times a week.

✓ Ever since we've **known about** that restaurant, we've eaten there a couple of times a week.

✓ Ever since we **got to know** that restaurant, we've eaten there a couple of times a week.

✓ Ever since we **found out about** that restaurant, we've eaten there a couple of times a week.

We meet (see and speak for the first time) people but not things.

We know about, get to know, find out about things.

46. **X** This is a nice restaurant. How long ~~do you eat~~ in here?

✓ This is a nice restaurant. How long **have you eaten** in here?

The **present perfect** is used for something we have done several times in the past and continue to do.

47. **X** Each room in the hotel ~~counts with~~ a safe, television, chairs, desk and coffee table.

✓ Each room in the hotel **is equipped with** a safe, television, chairs, desk and coffee table.

✓ Each room in the hotel **offers** a safe, television, chairs, desk and coffee table.

Count with me = Count numbers with me.

48. ✗ This essay will ~~explain~~ some facilities that must be improved.

✓ This essay will **explain why** some facilities must be improved.

Explain = to make something clear by describing or giving information about it.
I will explain the problem = I will describe the problem.
Saying "I will explain the facility" is like saying "I will explain the house to you".
We don't explain a house or facility, we describe them or talk about them.

We explain rules, problems, methods, ideas, treatments, reasons, solutions, etc.
We explain why, how, when, what, who, etc.

49. ✗ That area of our city has been ~~abandoned~~ over the last decade.

✓ That area of our city has been **neglected** over the last decade.

Abandon = Leave a place, thing, or person for ever / stop doing something
Neglect = to fail to look after a person or place.

50. ✗ He attended ~~to~~ the meeting.

✓ He attended the meeting.

Attend = be present, to go to an event, place, etc.
Over two hundred people attended the wedding.
Attend to = to help someone or deal with something.
The waiter was attending to the customers.

51. ✗ He ~~assisted to~~ the meeting.

✓ He attended the meeting.

Assist = to help
These measures were designed to assist people with disabilities.

52. ✗ They ~~always aren't~~ willing to help.

✓ They **are never** willing to help.

53. ✗ I would highly recommend that ~~everyone not~~ go out without it.

✓ I would highly recommend (that) **nobody (should)** go out without it.

54. **X** ~~Experts recommended us these new measures.~~

✓ Experts recommended these new measures **to us**.

We can **recommend something to someone**.

I bought **this album** after a friend recommended it **to me**.

(something)

(to someone)

55. **X** The doctor recommended ~~him~~ staying at home.

X The doctor recommended ~~him to stay~~ at home.

✓ The doctor recommended **staying** at home.

✓ The doctor recommended **that he should** stay at home.

✓ The doctor recommended **that he stay** at home. (note that we say "stay" not "stays")

You can recommend that someone do something or recommend doing something

56. **X** We ~~usually are~~ the first people to arrive at work in the morning.

✓ We **are usually** the first people to arrive at work in the morning.

Adverbs of frequency usually come after the verb "BE".

57. **X** We need to make the city ~~safer~~ for cyclists.

✓ We need to make the city safer for cyclists.

Safer = more safe = not in danger / Surer = more sure = certain

58. **X** They were unable to find funding, so ~~that~~ they had to abandon the project.

✓ They were unable to find funding, so they had to abandon the project.

So (conjunction) = therefore / So that = in order to

59. **X** On the other hand, citizens are ~~very~~ furious because ...

✓ On the other hand, citizens are **very angry** because ...

✓ On the other hand, citizens are **absolutely furious** because ...

Furious (strong adjective) = very angry

Angry (weak adjective)

Strong adjective such as gorgeous, terrible, fantastic can't be preceded by very.

60. ✗ Neither you nor I ~~are~~ willing to walk that far.

✓ Neither you nor I am willing to walk that far.

Rule of proximity : When neither and nor are used to join two subjects, the verb should agree with the subject that is closer to it .

✓ Neither my mother nor I am going there today. (formal)

✓ Neither my mother nor I is going there today. (less formal)

61. ✗ Neither Susan nor I ~~are~~ willing to walk that far.

✓ Neither Susan nor I is willing to walk that far.

Two singular subjects connected by or, either/or, or neither/nor require a singular verb.

62. ✗ She fell asleep ~~in~~ the meeting.

✓ She fell asleep during the meeting.

To talk about events and activities we use "during".

63. ✗ I overslept and nearly ~~lost~~ my flight.

✓ I overslept and nearly missed my flight.

We use lose with objects and with sports games.

He is always losing his keys. / Real Madrid lost to Barcelona 3-1.

We use miss with transportation (flights, trains, buses) and with events and opportunities.

I had to hurry up not to miss the bus. / You missed a great party yesterday!

64. ✗ I was playing ~~good~~.

✓ I was playing well.

The adverb "well" modifies the action of "playing".

65. ✗ We hardly ~~never~~ go to concerts.

✓ We hardly ever go to concerts.

Hardly is a negative adverbial, i.e. it is a negative expression which conveys a negative meaning. Therefore, there is no need to use another negative word.

66. ~~X~~ Let him do whatever comes ~~naturally~~.
✓ Let him do whatever comes natural.

Comes serves as a linking verb.

"Natural" modifies "whatever", not the action of coming.

TRICK: Notice the relation between the subject and complement. If the relation is indicative of an equal sign (=), then it is a linking verb.

Consider the following examples:

He looks angry. (He = angry | linking verb)

He looked at the man. (He = at the man | action verb)

The inspector will feel the fabric. (The inspector = the fabric / action verb)

The fabric will be soft. (The fabric = soft / linking verb)

67. ~~X~~ I consulted a lawyer ~~who~~ I met in London.
✓ I consulted a lawyer whom I met in London.

We use "who" when we are referring to the subject of a clause and "whom" when we are referring to the object of a clause.

TIP : Use **who** when you can replace it or answer it with a subject pronoun (I, you , he, she, it, we, you , they).

We all know who did it. He/she/they did it

Tip : Use **whom** when you can replace it or answer it with an object pronoun (me, you, him , her, it, us, you , them).

I consulted a lawyer whom I met in London. / I met him in London

I bumped into a man with whom I used to work. / I used to work with him.

68. ~~X~~ We need to discuss ~~about~~ this new project with the government.
✓ We need to discuss this new project with the government.

The verb discuss is a transitive verbs. Transitive verbs should be followed by objects. They do not take a preposition before the object.

69. ✗ It's been months since I ~~haven't~~ seen you.

✓ It's been months since I (last) saw you.

✓ It's been months since I've seen you.

We do not use a negative with this structure.

✗ How long ~~haven't~~ you changed your socks?

✗ How long ~~has it been/is it~~ since you ~~haven't~~ changed your socks?

✓ How long **is it since** you have (last) changed your socks?

✓ How long **has it been since** you (last) changed your socks?

70. ✗ My antivirus will ~~assure~~ that my PC remains virus-free.

✓ My antivirus will **ensure** that my PC remains virus-free.

Assure: to tell someone confidently that something is true, so that they do not worry.

Only people can be assured. Things cannot be assured.

✓ The mechanic **assured me** that the car would be ready tomorrow.

Ensure : to guarantee an event or condition, to make something certain to happen.

People cannot be ensured.

✓ We will **ensure that** everything runs smoothly.

71. ✗ We counted ~~with~~ the support of the government.

✓ We counted **on** the support of the government.

Count with me = Count numbers with me.

Count on someone /something = to be confident that you can depend on someone/something.

✓ I'm counting on your help and advice. Do not let me down.

72. ✗ I was ~~counting that he was going to be~~ there.

✓ I was counting **on** him being there.

We use the structure "count on someone/something" doing something.

We hadn't counted on it being so cold.

73. ✗ They suggested ~~us to~~ wait.
✓ They suggested that we (should) wait.

We don't say 'suggest (someone) to do something'.

We suggest that sb do something / suggest doing something / suggest something

He suggested that we go to the cinema.

I suggest waiting a bit longer.

She suggested a walk after dinner.

74. ✗ He asked to me how many children I had.
✓ He asked me how many children I had.

The verb ask is never used with the preposition to.

It takes a direct personal object, so you can:

we ask somebody something / we ask somebody what/why/how/who/where, etc.

Amount vs number

75. ✗ A large ~~amount~~ of animal will be affected by global warming.
✓ A large number of animals will be affected by global warming.

The word "**amount**" is used to refer to mass nouns (i.e., uncountable nouns such as time, water, and power).

The word "**number**" is used to refer to count nouns (i.e., countable nouns such as animal, minute, and bottle).

SUBJECT AND VERB AGREEMENT

76. ✗ The manager, as well as the members of his team, ~~are~~ anxious.
✓ The manager, as well as the members of his team, is anxious.

SUBJECT AND VERB AGREEMENT

The verb agrees with the subject, not with a noun or pronoun in the phrase.

His work, including his last two books, **is** very controversial.

(Subject)

(verb)

One of the chairs is blue.

(Subject)

(verb)

77. ✗ When you ~~will~~ come in July, we'll go to the beach together.

✓ When you come in July, we'll go together to the beach.

If you are talking about something that is yet to happen in the future, use a present tense in the adverb clause and a future tense in the main clause.

✗ I will start when I ~~will be~~ ready.

✓ I will start when I am ready.

Conditional sentences

78. ✗ If the government increased taxes, it will reduce consumer spending and economic growth... (**2nd conditional** , **1st conditional**) **wrong**

✗ If the government increases taxes, it would reduce consumer spending and economic growth... (**Zero or 1st conditional** , **2nd conditional**) **wrong**

✓ If the government increases taxes, it will reduce consumer spending and economic growth... (First conditional - present simple, simple future (will))

✓ If the government increased taxes, it would reduce consumer spending and economic growth... (Second conditional - past simple, would /could)

Conditional sentences

79. ✗ If I ~~would have~~ lots of money, I would travel all around the world.

✓ If I **had** lots of money, I would travel all around the world.

There are not two "woulds" in a second conditional sentence

2nd Conditional rule : **WOULD + WOULD = NOT GOOD**

Uncountable nouns

80. ✗ They haven't got ~~many furnitures~~.

✓ They haven't got **much** furniture.

Furniture is an uncountable noun. Therefore, it cannot be pluralized.

Other uncountable nouns are :

music, art, love, happiness, advice, information, news, paper, luggage, rice, sugar, butter, water, electricity, gas, power, money, currency.

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(Subject)

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(Subject)

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Object or Subject pronouns

81. ✗ Neither **him** nor **her** mentioned anything about that.

✓ Neither **he** nor **she** mentioned anything about that.

Object or Subject pronouns

"Him" and "her" are object pronouns, and they refers to the person that the action of a verb is being done to, or to whom a preposition refers.

We say : ✓ He/She did not mention anything ...

We don't say : ✗ Him/her did not mention anything...

DOUBT vs SURE

82. ✗ If they asked me. I wouldn't have any doubts about my answer.

✓ If they asked me. I'm sure what my answer would be.

I have no doubts = I don't doubt = being certain about something , especially about how good or true it is.

I have no doubts about my ability and I am sure that I can do a job for the team.

I have no doubts about my ability = I know that my ability is good.

I have no doubts about my answer. = I know that my answer is good.

You could say this if, for example, you were a contestant on a quiz show or sitting an exam.

Present participle phrase

83. ✗ Listening to a radio programme, there was a discussion about what our community needed more. (**who is listening to a radio programme?**)

✓ Listening to a radio programme, **I heard a discussion** about what our community needed more...

✓ **I was** Listening to a radio programme, and there was a discussion about what our community needed more...

Listening to a radio programme about teenagers , I was struck by the difficulty of..

Present participle phrase = behaves as an adjective. It modifies the pronoun "I"

Have got vs Have

84. ✗ How many days of holiday ~~do you have got?~~

✓ How many days of holiday **do you have?**

✓ How many days of holiday **have you got?**

We can use either have or have got. The latter is more common in an informal style. However, we can't use the two structures at the same time. As in the example above.

✓ How much money **have you got?**

✓ How much money **do you have?**

DECREASE and INCREASE

85. **X** As a result, we can see how natural products are decreasing while the new sophisticated food is increasing their sales.
- ✓ As a result, we can see how **sales of** natural products are decreasing while the new sophisticated food is increasing its sales.
- ✓ As a result, we can see how **natural** products have experience a decrease **in sales** while the new sophisticated food is increasing its sales.

The verbs "increase" and "decrease" are use with nouns that can be subject to variation (,i.e. price, value, sales, population, consumption, etc.)

...natural products are decreasing = natural products are not subject to variation.
The sales of / the number of natural products can vary.

NO GOOD vs NOT GOOD

86. **X** Unfortunately, I won't be able to pick you up from the airport. My car is ~~not good~~. It doesn't run at all.
- ✓ Unfortunately, I won't be able to pick you up from the airport. My car is **no good**. It doesn't run at all.

"Not good" is not as judgmental as "no good." Something that's "not good" may still have redeeming qualities or can be made better. Something that's "no good" is useless for its intended purpose. For example:

. My car is **not good**, but it gets me to work.

(Maybe it is not an expensive car, but it still serves me well.)

. My car is **no good**. I'll have to buy another one.

(Maybe I can't use it because it has broken down very badly.)

. This milk is **not good**.

(I don't like this kind of milk, but I will drink it if there is no other kind available.)

. This milk is **no good**.

(It has gone sour. It will make you sick.)

UNTRUE vs UNREALISTIC

87. **X** The cost of the investment on the installations of the panels is quite considerable, and it is **unrealistic** that this renewable energy is not a threat to animals.
- ✓ The cost of the investment on the installations of the panels is quite considerable, and **(it is not true/ it is untrue)** that this renewable energy is not a threat to animals.

Unrealistic: It is not likely to happen

It is unrealistic to expect an answer before next week.

Verb tense consistency

88. ✗ The doctor was treating a patient who ~~suffers~~ from a bad cold.
✓ The doctor was treating a patient who **was suffering** from a bad cold.

Verb tense consistency refers to keeping the same tense throughout a clause.

- ✗ Incorrect: Kevin finished his breakfast, tidies his room, and went out to play.
(past tense) (present tense) (past tense)

The verb tenses do not agree throughout. "Finished" and "went" are in past tense, but "tidies" is in present tense.

- ✓ Correct: Kevin finished his breakfast, tidied his room, and went out to play.
(past tense) (past tense) (past tense)

PREPOSITIONS - DURING vs FOR

89. ✗ Many people do not have a weekend off ~~during~~ months.
✓ Many people do not have a weekend off **for** months.

During is followed by a noun. It means 'throughout the period' or 'in the course of' an action or event.

He works **during** the night and sleep by day.

During the Second World War, over 60 million people were killed.

For is followed by a length of time : for one hour. It answers the question : How long?

I have been waiting for Mike **for** ten minutes.

I haven't played football **for** years.

IN THE BEGINNING vs AT THE BEGINNING

90. ✗ In the beginning of the course , we studied phrasal verbs.
✓ At the beginning of the course , we studied phrasal verbs.

We use **at the beginning** (often with of) to talk about the point where something starts.

At the beginning of the week/year/story/movie/game, etc.

We are going to Germany **at the beginning of** August.

We usually use **in the beginning** when we contrast two situations in time:

I was sceptical **in the beginning**, but Facebook has won me over.

Position of adverbs

91. **X** The government only is interested in controlling people.
✓ The government is only interested in controlling people.

We usually put adverbs between the subject and the main verb, or after the modal verb or first auxiliary verb, or after "BE" as a main verb):

I only go to the cinema once a month. (between subject and main verb)

I have only worked here for two years. (after the first auxiliary verb)

He's only trying to help. (after be as a main verb)

92. **X** I would like to express the amazing job that this organization is doing.
✓ I would like to highlight the amazing job that this organization is doing.
✓ I would like to express my gratitude/appreciation to this organization for the amazing job that it is doing.

A job is a thing. **We express a feeling, opinion or fact, but not a thing.**

Saying "I'd like to express the amazing job" would be the same as saying "I'd like to express the amazing car." We don't express a job or car. We express how we feel about the car or the job.

Structure

We express something (appreciation, thanks, gratitude)

to someone (government, organization, etc)

for something (their professionalism, their participation, their help, etc.)

or

for doing something (helping us, being so understanding, etc.)

- ✓** I would like to express my **gratitude to** **this organization** **for** **the amazing job that it is doing.**
- | | | | | |
|---------|--------------|---------|-----|-----------|
| express | something to | someone | for | something |
|---------|--------------|---------|-----|-----------|

93. **X** ~~I'd better stop now and follow with my work again.~~
✓ I'd better stop now and **get back to** my work.
✓ I'd better stop now and **continue** working.

Follow = to go where someone or something goes.

Continue = keep doing something

Mistakes with reflexive verbs.

94. **X** I'm afraid of ~~losing myself~~ in the city, that's why I want to buy a map.
✓ I'm afraid of **getting lost** in the city, that's why I want to buy a map.

Lose oneself in something = to be thoroughly absorbed in someone or something; to become engrossed in someone or something.

When I lose myself in music, time just rushes by.

Get lost : not knowing where you are and how to get to a place.

I got lost in the city centre.

Punctuation mistakes with : "Therefore", "furthermore" and "however".

95. **X** Nevertheless I absolutely disagree with...
✓ Nevertheless, I absolutely disagree with
- X** We need to finish the report today, furthermore, we need to do it professionally.
✓ We need to finish the report today; furthermore, we need to do it professionally.
✓ We need to finish the report today. Furthermore, we need to do it professionally.
- X** I however, do not agree with the new proposal.
✓ I, however, do not agree with the new proposal.

Guidelines:

When you use these words at the beginning of a sentence, put a comma after them.

Nevertheless, I absolutely disagree with

Use a semicolon and comma with these words to introduce a new independent clause in the middle of a sentence.

We need to finish the report today; furthermore, we need to do it professionally.

When you use however, furthermore or therefore as intensifiers or for emphasis, you need commas around both sides of them.

I, however, do not agree with the new proposal.

What vs that

96. **X** It is the importance of this factor ~~what~~ shouldn't be underestimated
✓ It is the importance of this factor that shouldn't be underestimated.

"WHAT" cannot be used as an ordinary relative pronoun after a noun or pronoun.

✓ We have shipped everything that you ordered.

X We have shipped everything ~~what~~ you ordered.)

✓ The only thing that keeps me going is my desire to win.

X The only thing ~~what~~ keeps me going is my desire to win.

Sentences beginning with "IT". Preparatory "IT".

97. ✗ It should not be understated the importance of this factor
✓ The importance of this factor should not be underestimated.
✓ It should not be understated how important this factor is.

"IT" sentences show an opinion or condition and are usually followed by the verb be (or a modal + be).

The logical subject in sentences beginning with "IT" is often a to-infinitive phrase, a gerund or a noun clause.

A noun clause is a dependent clause that acts as a noun.

Noun clauses begin with words such as how, that, what, whatever, when, where, whether, which, whichever, who, whoever, whom, whomever, and why.

Example:

It is the importance of this factor that shouldn't be underestimated. (noun clause)

It is important **to do** it to the best of your ability. (to infinitive phrase)

It is **having to go** there that I don't like. (gerund clause)

LIKE vs AS IF / AS THOUGH

98. ✗ He looks like he is a lawyer
✓ He looks like a lawyer.
✓ He looks as if/as though he is a lawyer.
✓ He looks as if/as though he were a lawyer.

The word "LIKE" should never be used before a clause. It should be followed by a noun.

Example : He looks like his father.

When using a clause after like, we need to substitute "AS IF" / "AS THOUGH" for like.

Example : It looks as if it is going to rain.

99. ✗ Should we buy organic food ~~although~~ we have to spend more money?
✓ Should we buy organic food even if we have to spend more money?

We use **although** to introduce two contrasting ideas when talking about facts.

Example : She walked home by herself, although she knew it was dangerous.

We use **even if** to show a contrast between ideas when talking about possibilities or hypotheses.

Example : You may not be allowed to enter the nightclub, even if you are on the list.

Missing verb

100. **X** As I see it, solar panels is an even better solution than...
✓ As I see it, **using** solar panels **is** an even better solution than...

The gerund USING is the subject of the sentence. That's why after panels, which is a plural noun, we have the verb BE in the singular.

Adverb vs Adjective

101. **X** His speed is surprising. In fact, he is one of the ~~most quickly~~ runners in the...
✓ His speed is surprising. In fact, he is one of the quickest runners in the...

The word QUICKLY is an adverb. Adverbs modify verbs, therefore we can say :

He runs very quickly.

Quickly is an adverb of manner. It tells us how he runs.

The word QUICK is an adjective. Adjectives modify nouns, therefore we can say:

He is quick.

QUICK is an adjective describing he; it describes a quality of the noun.

Problems with -ly adjectives.

102. **X** The waiter behaved ~~friendlily~~ towards us.
✓ The waiter behaved in a friendly manner towards us.

We cannot add -ly to adjectives which end in **-ly**.

We cannot say: friendlily or uglily or sillily.

We have to modify the verb in a different way, e.g.:

They talked to us in a very friendly / silly manner/way.

X Each passenger shall queue at the bus stop ~~orderlily~~.

✓ Each passenger shall queue at the bus stop in an orderly manner.

Wrong expression

103. **X** Let's be honest and try to think carefully about it. ~~In the end~~, it is about our town and I think we don't really need much more than what we already have.
✓ Let's be honest and try to think carefully about it. **After all**, it is about our town and I think we don't really need much more than what we already have.

In the end = Finally, after a period of time or thought

In the end, we decided not to buy it.

After all = Used when giving a reason to explain what you have just said.

I will help you – after all, I'm an expert on this topic.

Dangling participles.

104. ✗ Despite not being very good at sports, zumba is completely different from all the other ones I've ever tried. (Dangling participle)

✓ Despite not being very good at sports, **I find that** zumba is completely different from all the other ones I've ever tried.

The sentence marked as wrong (✗) above means that Zumba is not very good at sports, but you knew it and didn't consider that important and praised it for being different.

If we use participles (present or past) at the beginning of a sentence to introduce a subordinate clause, **they need to be followed by the subject of the sentence right after the comma that separates the subordinate clause from the main clause.**

Present participles are easy to identify: they end in *-ing*.

Past participles of regular verbs end in *-d* or *-ed*, while those of irregular verbs may end in *-t* or *-en*.

Dangling noun phrase

✗ A "worker" to the core, his work does all the talking.

✓ A "worker" to the core, he (**subject**) lets his work do all the talking.

Dangling adjective phrase

✗ Tall and slim, people think of her as an exceptionally striking woman.

✓ Tall and slim, she (**subject**) is thought of as an exceptionally striking woman.

Dangling prepositional phrase

After hours of argument, the team finally agreed to provide him with copies of the documents.

✗ After reading the great new book, the movie based on it is sure to be exciting.

✓ After reading the great new book, I (**subject**) **think** that the movie based on it is sure to be exciting.

Misplaced adverb

105. ✗ Maybe if we knew more about our history, we could face ~~better~~ the future and not repeat the mistakes of the past.

✓ Maybe if we knew more about our history, we could face the future **better** and not repeat the mistakes of the past.

✓ Maybe if we knew more about our history, we could **better** face the future and not repeat the mistakes of the past. (more formal)

We don't put adverbs between the verb and the object:

✗ She plays ~~really well~~ the piano.
(verb) (direct object)

✓ She plays the piano really well.

Unnecessary pronouns

106. ✗ Therefore, they think that money is easy to get it.

✓ Therefore, they think that money is easy to get.

Misplaced modifiers

107. ✗ He saw a car in the street that was fantastic.

✓ He saw a fantastic car in the street.

What was fantastic - the car or the street?

A misplaced modifier is a word, phrase, or clause that is improperly separated from the word it modifies / describes.

Because of the separation, sentences with this error often sound awkward, ridiculous, or confusing. Furthermore, they can be downright illogical.

The position of the modifier (adjective, adverb, etc.) can change the meaning of the sentence:

- I met the younger woman's son.
(There were two women, and I met the son of the younger.)
- I met the woman's younger son.
(She had two sons and I met the younger.)
- They only contributed a relatively small amount.
(They were the only ones contributing a relatively small amount)
- They contributed only a relatively small amount.
(They contributed a small amount (not more)).

Mistakes with verbs

108. ✗ This situation can ~~produce that~~ parents are not able to...

✓ This situation can **lead to** parents not being able to...

✓ This situation can **cause** parents **to** be able to...

We produce something, e.g., a result, interest, an effect, etc.

The verb "produce" is usually followed by a direct object. It's never followed by a that clause.

109. ✗ To conclude, I would like to thank you ~~that you have asked~~ me to give my opinion ...

✓ To conclude, I would like to **thank you for asking** me to give my opinion...

THANK is a prepositional verb. It is usually followed by that preposition FOR.

The structure is: To thank someone (DO) for something (IO)

THANK is never followed by a that clause.

Mistakes with Used to

110. ~~X~~ I used to live for one month in Bournemouth. It is a coastal city in the south of England.

✓ I lived in Bournemouth for a month. It is a coastal city in the south of England.

If a time or length of time are specified, used to cannot be used.

Example :

~~X~~ I used to collect stamps animals for 20 years.

You have to say:

✓ I collected stamps for 20 years.

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