

**Clear Writing
Style Do's**

**Practice Exercises And
Answer Key**

by

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Lesson 1: Clear Subjects

Make your subjects clear. Three things often make subjects unclear:

(1) Brevity problems, (2) Lots of stuff to remember, (3) Not being straightforward.

Revise the sentences to make the subjects clear. Then note which problem(s) you fixed.

Example: Omni-Channel retail is a reflection of the changes along with the speed and this discontinuous nature of the changes that consumers are both experiencing in their personal life and then driving into their shopping practices.

Omni-Channel retail reflects how the fast, fitful changes in consumers' personal lives drive their shopping habits.

Brevity Problems Lots of stuff to remember Not straightforward

1. In the opinion of many, including my thinking, we should not enter that market.

Brevity Problems Lots of stuff to remember Not straightforward

2. Lateness is one of the greatest problems and then we might consider that the motivation to succeed is competing to be the second greatest problems.

Brevity Problems Lots of stuff to remember Not straightforward

3. This can be a very difficult realization because it requires that the buyer take on the responsibility of giving to a lesser or greater degree, the seller the ability to make choices for standards not unconnected to those previously decided on with a previous merchant.

Brevity Problems Lots of stuff to remember Not straightforward

4. She wasn't not upset by the hotel's billing her despite holding some blame for the loss of the equipment.

Brevity Problems Lots of stuff to remember Not straightforward

5. You may have heard of him already as the project was, with the assistance of the team down in Florida as well as Steve in California looking up information, finished by Michael our sales leader who also runs the soft ball league.

Brevity Problems Lots of stuff to remember Not straightforward

6. It has come to our attention that Mary has been less than honest about the giraffe.

Brevity Problems Lots of stuff to remember Not straightforward

7. Wild harvested mushrooms are well known for health beneficial effects—such as reduction of adult diseases, improvements to memory, and easing of joint pains—that are stronger than those of regular mushrooms thanks to the higher concentration of antioxidants (11 to 15 times those of regular mushrooms) from the natural, if harsher, growing environment.

Brevity Problems Lots of stuff to remember Not straightforward

8. Wouldn't you mind if you have some free time using some of it to spend some quality time with these performance evaluations?

Brevity Problems Lots of stuff to remember Not straightforward

9. Get Mark involved or you'll have better luck stepping in to do the work if Yuna has the not to be unexpected problems (like last time).

Brevity Problems Lots of stuff to remember Not straightforward

10. The extrapolation of larger ideas about the company from the procedures and the conclusions of various related companies is quite common, but it is not in itself justified.

Brevity Problems Lots of stuff to remember Not straightforward

Lesson 2: Strong Verbs

Strong verbs make the action clear. Avoid turning verbs into nouns. Use the active voice. Use short, simple verbs.

Revise the sentences with strong verbs.

Example: The project is a reflection of years of hard work.

The project reflects years of hard work.

1. Few companies provide transportation for hazardous materials.

2. We hope this competition will incentivize your to work extra hard.

3. The reports were requested by Ali last week. He's going to be angry.

4. By whom was this painted?

5. Their speed gives me a shock every single time.

6. The dense language obfuscates the meaning.

7. They enjoined me not to tell anyone, but if you promise not to tell anyone else...

8. I was given notice by my landlord to vacate the building.

9. She gives presentations on that pretty often.

10. We were given a replenishment of funds despite the taking of indulgences with the budget.

Lesson 3: Precise Vocabulary

Be clear. Use precise vocabulary. Say exactly what you mean.

Revise these sentences with precise vocabulary.

Example: Can you get this done sometime soon?

Can you get this done by Friday?

1. I think \$500 is fair. I worked on this for a long time.

2. The color is a little off.

3. We need a policy where you're let go after receiving multiple warnings.

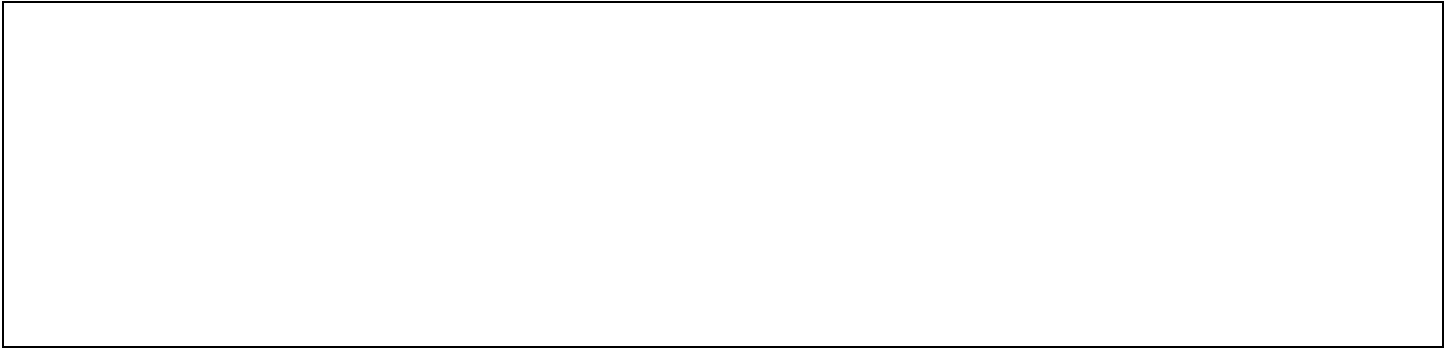
Describe the different meanings in these synonyms. Consider the example sentence in your answer.

Example: Complete, Exhaustive, Thorough. She did a complete/exhaustive/thorough job.

Complete means whole. The whole job was done—all the parts. Exhaustive means all that was possible. Like she explored a problem from many angles, but it sounds like a lot of effort. Thorough sounds like a focus on details.

4. Quit, Withdraw, Leave. She quit/withdrew/left after two years on the project.

5. Sell, Hawk, Trade. She'll sell/hawk/trade it.



Lesson 4: Clear Antecedents

An antecedent is the thing a word refers back to.

For example: Mike didn't come because he was sick. *Mike* is the antecedent of *he*.

Make sure your antecedents are clear. Don't make the reader guess.

Example: We need the camera and the light. Could you go back to the office and grab it?

We need the camera and the light. Could you go back to the office and grab the light?

1. HyeonMi and HaeYoung can't wait for her package to arrive.

2. I think Sarah has the reports from the teams in California. Could you ask her about them?

3. TASA Inc. sent a letter regarding copyright infringement to The Nelson Company after it discovered the similarities.

4. I installed the anti-virus software and then went for a smoke break. I guess that was my mistake.

5. After many false starts in negotiations with the Japanese company, we spoke with a professor of Japanese language and culture, which helped us all understand the Japanese culture better.

6. Though both Sasha and Artyom did equal work, he didn't want to take credit.

7. With the economy flailing, competition increasing, and the budget shortfall, reports showing the extent to which the new corporate structure affects them are useless in my opinion.

8. Michael was unconcerned with Sarah's reaction to the damage to the car despite its potential to set off a chain of negative effects.

9. Only after buying them did Jin realize the batteries were the wrong size for their cameras.

10. Miguel isn't here with the printed plan, which is why I asked you to call.

Lesson 5: Parallel Structure

Parallel structure pleases the reader. It gives your writing a nice beat.

Make sure similar parts of a sentence have the same form.

Example: I like running, dancing, and to sing.

I like running, dancing, and singing.

1. His days were long and his night short, but the hard work would pay off when his book became a bestseller.

2. I like to leave the lights on playing music while I sleep.

3. Keep track of where you go, who you meet, and the things you buy.

4. Neither the information nor the transporting was satisfactory.

5. From Milwaukee and on to Chicago will take about two hours.

6. The interns and the senior managers seem to do more work than a manager around here.

7. We have much to prepare: calling the clients, the equipment booking, the models should be found...

8. We not only led in sales, but led in customer satisfaction as well!

9. Hearing a speech by this guy is to be truly inspired.

10. I'll crunch the numbers, do some figuring, and be getting back to you shortly.

Sample Answers

Lesson 1

1. We should not enter that market. (Brevity.)
2. Our biggest problem is lateness, but motivation is right behind it. (Brevity. Not straightforward.)
3. Buyers are shocked to learn they must let sellers have a say in standards related to standards reached with previous merchants. (Brevity. Lots of stuff. Not Straightforward.)
4. It was kind of her fault, but she was still upset the hotel billed her for the equipment loss.
5. You may have heard of Michael already. He finished the project with help from the Florida team and research from Steve in California. Michael is also our sales leader and runs the softball league. (Brevity. Lots of stuff. Not Straightforward.)
6. We learned Mary lied about the giraffe. (Brevity.)
7. Wild harvested mushrooms grow in natural, if harsh, conditions. Because of this, they are very healthy and have 11 to 15 times the antioxidant concentration found in regular mushrooms. They thereby reduce adult diseases, improve the memory, and ease joint pain. (Lots of stuff.)
8. Will you have time to do these performance evaluations? (Brevity. Not straightforward.)
9. If Yuna has problems again, do it yourself or ask Mark to help. (Brevity. Not straightforward.)
10. A lot of people do it, but you shouldn't feel like you can understand this company by looking at related companies.

Lesson 2

1. Few companies transport hazardous materials.
2. We hope this competition will motivate you to work extra hard.
3. Ali requested the reports last week. He's going to be angry.
4. Who painted this?
5. Their speed shocks me every single time.
6. The dense language hides the meaning.
7. They told me not to tell anyone, but if you promise not to tell anyone else...
8. My landlord told me to move out.
9. She presents on that pretty often.
10. They gave us funding again even though we wasted money in the budget.

Lesson 3

1. I think \$500 is fair. I worked on this for 25 hours
2. The color is too dark and too red.
3. We need a policy where you're let go after receiving three warnings.
4. Quit sounds like leaving because you don't like something, so maybe she wasn't getting paid enough. Withdrew sounds like she had another reason for leaving—not because she was angry—maybe she had a better project. Leave sounds neutral. I'm not sure why she left.
5. Selling is the simple version. Hawk is when you, for example, sell your watch because you need cash fast. Trade means you're not getting cash, you're getting some other item.

Lesson 4

1. HyeonMi and HaeYoung can't wait for HaeYoung's package to arrive.
2. I think Sarah has the reports from the teams in California. Could you ask her about the reports?
3. TASA Inc. sent a letter regarding copyright infringement to The Nelson Company after TASA Inc. discovered the similarities.
4. I installed the anti-virus software and then went for a smoke break. I guess installing the software was my mistake.
5. After many false starts in negotiations with the Japanese company, we spoke with a professor of Japanese language and culture. Our conversation helped us all understand the Japanese culture better.
6. Though both Sasha and Artyom did equal work, Artyom didn't want to take credit.
7. With the economy flailing, competition increasing, and the budget shortfall, reports showing the extent to which the new corporate structure affects the competition and budget are useless in my opinion.
8. Michael was unconcerned with Sarah's reaction to the damage to the car despite her reaction's potential to set off a chain of negative effects.
9. Only after buying the batteries did Jin realize they were the wrong size for their cameras.
10. Miguel isn't here with the printed plan. Because he's not here, I asked you to call.

Lesson 5

1. His days were long and his nights short, but the hard work would pay off when his book became a bestseller.
2. I like to leave the lights on and play music while I sleep.
3. Keep track of where you go, who you meet, and what you buy.
4. Neither the information nor the transportation was satisfactory.
5. From Milwaukee to Chicago will take about two hours.
6. The interns and the senior managers seem to do more work than the managers around here.
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