High School English Writing/Grammar: The Fundamentals Student Review Guide

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Verbs and Pronouns

Section 1.4 Faulty Pronoun References



Pre-View 1.4

- **Pronouns** words that take the place of a noun; examples: he, she, it, they
- Noun a person, place, thing, or idea; examples: child, school, pencil, love
- **Antecedent** the noun that a pronoun replaces
- **Ambiguous** describes a pronoun that could refer to more than one different noun, so the antecedent is unclear

<u>Pronouns</u> take the place of nouns. (Remember that a <u>noun</u> is a person, place, thing, or idea.) For a quick review, look at the example below. Can you pick out the pronouns? They are underlined.

Example 1: Cory sent Mrs. Smith <u>his</u> résumé. <u>She</u> read many people's résumés. <u>They</u> were all well-written.

Since pronouns take the place of nouns, each pronoun must agree with the noun that it stands for. The noun that a pronoun replaces is called the pronoun's **antecedent**. If the noun is singular, the pronoun must be singular. If the noun is masculine, feminine, or neuter, the pronoun must be the same. Singular possessive pronouns are **his, her, its**; plural are **their, theirs**.

The antecedent must be a clearly identified noun or pronoun. If the antecedent isn't clear, the sentence has a faulty pronoun reference. Let's look at several common mistakes in pronoun reference and how to fix those mistakes.

Ambiguous Pronoun Reference

If two people or things are mentioned in a sentence, it is important for the reader to know whom or what a pronoun refers to. Otherwise, the pronoun is said to be *ambiguous*, which means it's unclear which noun the pronoun is replacing. A sentence with ambiguous pronouns should be rewritten so that its meaning is clear.



Example 2: Mrs. Brooks made an appointment for Savannah while she was at the dentist. ambiguous

It is unclear whether <u>she</u> refers to <u>Mrs. Brooks</u> or to <u>Savannah</u>. In this sentence, <u>she</u> is an ambiguous pronoun reference because it could refer to more than one noun.

While Mrs. Brooks was at the dentist, she made an appointment for Savannah.

In this sentence, it is now clear that *she* refers to *Mrs. Brooks* and not *Savannah*.

Section 1.4, continued Faulty Pronoun References

Example 3: Jason asked Henry to move his car. ambiguous Does his refer to Jason's car or to Henry's car? It is unclear, so his is an ambiguous pronoun. Can you rewrite this sentence so that it has a clear pronoun reference? One way to correct this ambiguous pronoun reference is to use a direct quote. Look at the sentences below. Jason asked Henry, "Would you move your car?" clear Jason asked Henry, "Would you move my car?" clear Practice 1 Identify the sentence that contains an ambiguous pronoun reference. (A) (B) (C) (D) A. Melissa helped me pick out new frames for my glasses. B. The bird flew away when it heard us walk up. C. Mother gave me her phone. D. The nurse gave Jane her pen. (A) (B) (C) (D) A. Corrina asked George to walk her dog. B. The coaches showed the team members their mistakes. C. My cousin told me about his accident. D. I gave her my new address. (A) (B) (C) (D) A. Jake said he would call you. B. Her cousin emailed me yesterday. C. Dad told Nate to take his jacket to the game. D. Your sister gave me her notes. Practice 2 Rewrite each sentence to correct the ambiguous pronoun reference. 1. Bob gave Jonathan his jacket. 2. The members of the team showed the boys their rings. The girl called Shelbi while she was at school.

4. Kendra met with her sister after she returned from Georgia.

Parts of the Sentence

Section 2.3 Active and Passive Voice



Pre-View 2.3

- Active voice verbs that show the subject doing the action
- Passive voice verbs that have the subject acted upon

The subject of a sentence may not always be performing the action. Sometimes, the subject is acted upon. The difference in these two cases depends on the voice of the verb. Verbs can be **active voice** with the subject doing the action or **passive voice** where the subject is acted upon.

Example 1: The <u>student read</u> the book. Active

The subject of this sentence is *student*, and the student is doing the reading. To pick out the subject, you still look at the verb and ask "who" or "what" *read*.

Example 2: The book was read by the student. Passive

The subject of this sentence is *book* and the verb is *was read*. To pick out the subject, you can still ask "who" or "what" *was read*, and the answer is *book*. However, the book isn't actually performing the action. The book isn't reading; the student is. The book is being acted upon, so the verb *was read* is passive. Remember, the student cannot be the subject because it is the object of a prepositional phrase.

When writing, you need to remember that active voice is usually more effective than passive voice. Active voice verbs are more direct and should be used in most cases. In your writing, use active voice whenever it is possible. Change passive voice to active voice when you can.

Example 3: The <u>series of quick flips</u> <u>were done</u> by the acrobat. Passive subject verb

In this sentence, *series* is the subject and *were done* is the verb. It is written in passive tense. The prepositional phrase *by the acrobat* tells you who actually did the action, so this sentence can easily be rewritten in active voice.

Example 4: The <u>acrobat did</u> a series of quick flips. Active subject verb

This sentence written in active voice is much more effective.

Parts of the Sentence

Section 2.7 **Objective Complements**



Objective complement – a noun or an adjective that completes the meaning of a direct object and describes or identifies it

An **objective complement** completes the meaning of a direct object. It can be a noun or an adjective that describes or identifies the direct object. You cannot have an objective complement without a direct object. To identify an objective complement, first identify the direct object.

Example 1: He painted the house (white).

First pick out the direct object. The direct object is *house* since it tells what was painted. The word *white* is an objective complement. It is an adjective that tells what he painted the house. It completes the meaning and describes house.

Example 2: Sayid considers her his (hero).

The direct object in this sentence is her. Hero is the objective complement. In this case, the objective complement is a noun that identifies her.

Objective complements can have modifiers, such as adjectives and/or prepositional phrases.



Example 3: They elected <u>him</u> the first (mayor) of the town.

Here mayor is the objective complement and is modified by the adjectives the and first and the prepositional phrase of the town.

Be careful not to confuse objective complements with an indirect object.

Example 4: They sent <u>us</u> the <u>tickets</u>.

Tickets does not describe or identify us. Tickets is the direct object and us in the indirect object.



Subject-Verb Agreement

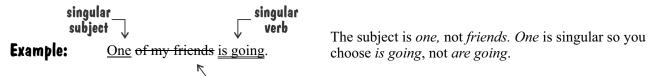
Section 3.2
Phrases Between
the Subject and the Verb



Pre-View 3.2

• **BE CAREFUL** – Don't confuse the object of the preposition as the subject! The subject of a sentence will NEVER be found in a prepositional phrase.

In the previous practice, the subject was located right before the verb. Many times, there are words or phrases between the subject and the verb. Be careful to see **who** or **what** is doing the action or is being.



Note:

Of my friends is a prepositional phrase. Of is a preposition and friends is the object of the preposition. Remember, mark out the prepositional phrases because objects of prepositions cannot be subjects.

Practice

Circle the correct verb. Be careful to pick out the subject (not just the word before the verb) to make the verb agree with it. Remember, singular verbs end in -s.

- 1. The tiles in the corner (is / are) broken.
- 2. Which type of pens (was / were) your favorite?
- 3. The letters from Cale (has / have) been found in the drawer.
- 4. The forks in the drawer (was / were) bent.
- 5. My interest in crafts (keeps / keep) me busy.
- 6. Two colors of the flag (has / have) been changed.
- 7. The best of all the entries (was / were) yours.
- 8. One of the robins (has / have) an injured wing.
- 9. Most members of her family (is / are) artistic.
- 10. The pieces of furniture (is / are) antique.
- 11. The houses on that street (is / are) huge.
- 12. The tires on the left (was / were) low in air pressure.
- 13. The challenge from the instructors (was / were) to break the record.
- 14. The orchids on the table (has / have) been drooping.
- 15. His focus on the issues (is / are) his strength.
- 16. Two horses in the pasture (was / were) eating grass.

Simple and Compound Sentences

Section 5.1 Complete Sentences





Pre-View 5.1

- **Declarative sentence** type of sentence that makes a statement and ends with a period
- Interrogative sentence type of sentence that asks a question and ends with a question mark
- Exclamatory sentence type of sentence that makes a strong statement and ends with an exclamation point
- Imperative sentence type of sentence that makes a request or gives a command and may end with a period or an exclamation point, depending on the writer's emotion
- **Fragment** an incomplete "sentence"
- **Run-on sentences** two or more sentences put together incorrectly

A <u>complete sentence</u> is a group of words that expresses a complete thought and contains a subject and a verb.

This section will review the different types of sentences and their proper punctuation. It will also review common mistakes.

All sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point.

Example 1: The weatherman gave his forecast of snow.

Weatherman is the subject, and gave is the verb; the whole sentence is a complete thought.

Sentence Forms

Sentences can be written in four different forms: declarative, interrogative, exclamatory, and imperative. Review these different sentence forms below.

Declarative: A **declarative sentence** makes a statement and ends with a period.

Example 2: She bought a sofa.

Interrogative: An <u>interrogative sentence</u> asks a question and ends with a question mark.

Example 3: Did you find some seashells?

Exclamatory: An <u>exclamatory sentence</u> makes a strong statement and ends with an exclamation point.

Example 4: I found a twenty-dollar bill!

Section 5.1, continued Complete Sentences

Imperative:

An <u>imperative sentence</u> makes a request or gives a command. The subject is *you*, but it is understood. It usually ends with a period. *You could have a one-word sentence with the subject understood.*



Example 5: Turn off the television.

The subject is *you* even though it isn't written.

Example 6: Stop!

This is a complete, one-word sentence. The subject is *you* and is understood. It is a complete thought.



Fragments

A <u>fragment</u> is a part of a sentence or a mistake in writing. The following examples show types of sentence fragments that you should recognize easily.

Example 7: The weatherman on television.

Weatherman could be the subject, but there is no verb. It is not a complete thought.



Example 8: Gave his forecast of snow.

Gave is the verb, but there is no subject. It is not a complete thought.

Example 9: Tom Jones, my favorite weatherman.

Tom Jones could be the subject and is followed by the appositive *my favorite weatherman* that renames Tom Jones. (See Section 4.2 to review appositives.) However, there is no verb in this example, so this is also a sentence fragment and not a complete sentence.

Example 10: On the counter of the kitchen under all the newspapers.

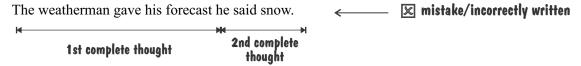
This example gives three prepositional phrases. There is no subject or verb. It is not a complete thought.

Section 5.1, continued Complete Sentences

Run-on Sentences and Comma Splices

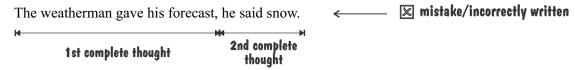
A <u>run-on sentence</u> is two or more sentences put together incorrectly without a period, a conjunction, or a semicolon. A <u>comma splice</u> is two or more sentences put together incorrectly using just a comma without using a conjunction. A comma splice is similar to a run-on sentence and can be thought of as a type of run-on sentence.

Example of a Run-on Sentence



This run-on sentence contains two complete thoughts. It is a run-on since the thoughts are not separated by a period, a conjunction, or a semicolon.

Example of a Comma Splice



This example contains the same two complete thoughts separated by a comma. It is a comma splice because it is incorrect to punctuate two complete thoughts by simply adding a comma between them.

Correcting Run-On Sentences and Comma Splices

The run-on sentence and comma splice examples shown above can be corrected three different ways:

1: The weatherman gave	e his forecast. He said snow.	Separate the two complete thoughts into two complete sentences. Add a period and capitalize the second sentence.
2: The weatherman gav	e his forecast; he said snow.	Separate the two complete thoughts by using a semicolon (;). A semicolon can be used to join two closely related sentences with no conjunction.
3: The weatherman gav	e his forecast, and he said snow.	Separate the two complete thoughts by adding a comma and using a coordinating conjunction. Conjunctions, such as <i>and</i> , <i>but</i> , <i>or</i> , <i>nor</i> , <i>for</i> , <i>so</i> , <i>yet</i> , can be used to join two sentences.
		Note: Just using a comma without the conjunction leaves the original comma splice and is incorrect.

Verbals

Section 7.1 Participles

Pre-View 7.1

- Verbal a form of a verb that is used as a noun, an adjective, or an adverb in a sentence; not the main verb
- Participle a verbal that acts as an adjective
- **Participial phrase** an adjective phrase made up of a participle and a prepositional phrase and/or an adverb
- **Dangling participle** a participle that is out of place

Verbals

<u>Verbals</u> are verb forms that are used as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs. A verbal looks like a verb, but it doesn't act as the main verb in a sentence. The three types of verbals are participles, infinitives, and gerunds. Let's look at participles first.

Recognizing Participles

A **participle** is a verb form that acts as an adjective. It is not a clause, so it does not have a subject and a verb. It can be one word, or it can be in a phrase with modifiers. Some end in *-ing*. Others have a past participle ending with *-ed* or an irregular ending. A participle must come either directly before or after the noun modified.

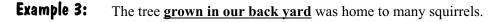


Example 1: The <u>hissing</u> snake scared her.

Hissing is a participle modifying snake.

Example 2: The squirrel, startled by the dog, ran up the tree.

Startled by the dog is the participial phrase modifying squirrel.



Grown in our back yard is the participial phrase modifying tree.

If the participle is after a being verb, it is just a part of the verb phrase and is not used as an adjective.



Example 4: The wagon was rolling down the hill.

Rolling is part of the verb was rolling.

Section 7.1, continued Participles

Practice 1

Underline the participial phrases and circle the noun modified. Remember that participles begin with a verb form. The rest of the sentence is the main clause.

Example: The (fish) <u>caught by the fishermen</u> were sold to local restaurants.

- 1. The necklace created by the artist drew much attention.
- 2. I bought the canvas done with oil paint.
- 3. The program produced by a famous actor received criticism.
- 4. Dancing to the music, the children all laughed.
- 5. The refrigerator, humming noisily, was distracting.
- 6. The shirt ironed by Cameron was ready.
- 7. Torn by the wind, the flag was replaced.
- 8. Sitting quietly, we enjoyed the scenery at the lake.
- 9. Temptest, worn out by shopping, propped up her feet.
- 10. We could hear my father singing in the shower.

Punctuating Participial Phrases

Similar to adjective clauses, participial phrases are either essential or nonessential. If the participial phrase is essential, it needs no commas. If it is nonessential, it needs to be set off with commas.

Example 5: The family, <u>sitting quietly</u>, watched the fireworks.

This participial phrase is nonessential because it is adding information to the sentence and not telling *which* family. If it were telling which family, there would be no commas.

Example 6: The books <u>sitting on the third shelf</u> are mine.

Sitting on the third shelf is telling which books. It is essential and needs no commas.



A participial phrase that comes at the beginning of the sentence needs a comma.

Example 7: Born in July, Lashara was older than her cousin.

Born in July is an introductory participial phrase and needs a comma after it.

Effective Writing

Section 8.1 Sentence Combining



Pre-View 8.1

- **Simple sentence** a sentence made up of only one main clause; the subject and/or the verb may be compound; sentence can include prepositions, gerunds, participles, and/or infinitives
- Compound sentence a sentence made up of two main clauses that are joined by a semi-colon or by words such as *and*, *but*, *or*
- **Complex sentence** a sentence made up of a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses (clauses that have a subject and a verb but that cannot stand on their own, such as adjective, adverb, or noun clauses)

Before looking at writing interesting paragraphs, let's look at how to write interesting sentences. <u>Simple sentences</u> can be interesting and appropriate to stand alone at times. But two or more simple sentences can often be combined to make a more effective <u>compound</u> or <u>complex sentence</u>. Other times, a more sophisticated simple sentence can be written to include prepositional, participial, gerund, or infinitive phrases. (Remember that phrases don't have a subject and a verb, but clauses do.)

Example 1: The dog tried to jump onto the golf cart. He wanted to ride on the golf cart.

2 simple sentences

These two sentences are both simple because each has only one main clause even though each contains an infinitive phrase. Notice how choppy these sentences sound together and how the second sentence repeats some of the same words. Could these two sentences be combined into one that is more interesting and effective?

The dog tried to jump onto the golf cart because he wanted to ride.

complex sentence with an adverb clause

This complex sentence eliminates the repeated words. Since it is one sentence instead of two, it no longer sounds choppy. Of course, there are usually several ways sentences can be combined. Some will sound better than others. When editing your own sentences, sometimes you have to write them several different ways until you decide which is best.

Example 2: She baked John a cake. She called him on the phone. She invited John to come to eat cake.

3 simple sentences

Here are three simple sentences that can be combined. Which of the following do you like the best? There is no right answer. Hopefully you see that each of these is an improvement over the 3 simple sentences.



She baked John a cake, so she called him on the phone and invited him to come to eat it.

After she baked John a cake, she called him on the phone and invited him to come to eat it.

Having baked John a cake, she called him on the phone to invite him to come to eat it.

compound sentence

complex sentence with an adverb clause

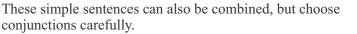
simple sentence with participial and infinitive phrases

Section 8.1, continued Sentence Combining

Choosing Conjunctions

When combining simple sentences into compound or complex ones, be careful to use a conjunction that makes sense. The conjunctions *but* and *however* are used for contrasting ideas. *And* and *so* are used to compare similar ideas. The subordinating conjunctions, such as *since*, *although*, *because*, show specific relationships, so choose the correct one.

Example 3: Darlene hurried down the hall. She was too late to catch the cat.





Darlene hurried down the hall; however, she was too late to catch the cat. correct

Although Darlene hurried down the hall, she was too late to catch the cat. correct

Darlene hurried down the hall, so she was too late to catch the cat.

wrong coordinating conjunction

Since Darlene hurried down the hall, she was too late to catch the cat. wrong subordinating conjunction

Misplaced Modifiers/Dangling Participles

When you combine ideas by using phrases, be sure that the phrases aren't misplaced and that you don't use dangling participles.

Example 4: The man was eating a cookie. He sat on a bench. He wore a blue hat. The man was lonesome. He was outside the mall.

These simple sentences can be combined many different ways, but be careful where you put modifiers!



While eating a cookie, the lonesome man in a blue hat sat on the bench outside the mall.

The lonesome man in a blue hat sat on the bench <u>eating a cookie</u> outside the mall. dangling participle

The man sitting on a bench outside the mall and eating a cookie with a blue hat was lonesome.

misplaced modifier

Section 8.1, continued Sentence Combining

Active versus Passive Voice

When combining sentences, remember to use active voice whenever you can. Avoid using passive voice unless it is necessary.

Example 5: The trophies in the case needed to be cleaned. The principal polished them. He wanted them to shine for his expected visitors.

It's not necessary to use passive voice when rewriting these sentences, so be careful.

Wanting them to shine for his expected visitors, the principal polished the trophies that needed cleaning in the case.

Needing to be cleaned, the trophies in the case <u>were polished</u> by the principal who wanted them to shine for his expected visitors.



correct, active voice

incorrect, passive voice

Faulty Pronoun Reference

Also be sure that all pronouns refer to a specific noun.

Example 6: Skylab astronauts manned the space station. They experienced zero gravity. Zero gravity caused their spines to lengthen. The astronauts grew over an inch taller.



Zero gravity, experienced by Skylab astronauts as they manned the space station, lengthened their spines, and as a result, the astronauts grew over an inch taller.

correct

Zero gravity, experienced by Skylab astronauts as they manned the space station, lengthened their spines, and <u>that</u> caused them to grow over an inch taller.

faulty pronoun reference

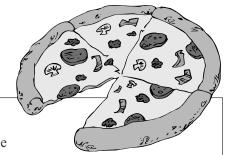
Practice

For each set of sentences given, pick the most effective way to combine them.

- (A) (B) (C) (D)
- 1. He missed the bus. He was late for school.
 - A. Since he missed his bus, he was late for school.
 - B. He was late for school, and he missed the bus.
 - C. He missed the bus because he was late for school.
 - D. Missing the bus when he was late for school.

Language Supplement

Lesson 1.4 Absolute Phrases



Key Term

• Absolute phrase – a noun or pronoun plus a participle or participial phrase

An **absolute phrase** is made up of a noun or a pronoun and a participle or participal phrase. It will modify the entire sentence and add information. It is set off by commas.

Example 1: The project finally completed, the students ordered pizza to celebrate.

The underlined phrase does not modify the noun *students*. Instead, the phrase modifies the idea of the students' ordering pizza to celebrate.

Example 2: The fishermen pulled the fish from the live well, the limit having been caught.

The absolute phrase again does not modify the noun before it, *live well*, but the whole sentence of the fishermen pulling the fish from the live well.

Now look at another sentence that may look similar.

Excited about the win, the players lifted the coach and carried him to the locker room.

In this sentence, the underlined phrase **does** modify a single word *players* so the phrase is a participial phrase, not an absolute one. Remember that an absolute phrase modifies the entire sentence.

Practice

In the blank, put an A if the sentence contains an absolute phrase. Leave it blank if it doesn't.

 1. Read by all her friends, the book was coming apart.
 2. The case solved, the FBI team flew home.
 3. The wedding dress finally finished, the seamstress took a vacation.
 4. Studying all weekend for the exam, Alicia was determined to do well.
 5. We basked in the sun on the beach, the sound of the waves lulling us to relax.
 6. Knocking softly on the door, her mother stood in the hall.
 7. Their victory assured, the fans stayed on their feet yelling and clapping.
 8. She led the fitness class's routines for thirty minutes, sweat running down her face.

English II Multiple Choice

DIRECTIONS

The following two boxes contain samples of Writing/Grammar items.

SAMPLE A

Which sentence is an appropriate and effective thesis for a persuasive essay on the topic of littering?

- **A** Once a month I volunteer to clean up litter.
- **B** People who litter should be required to pay a fine as well as to do community service.
- **C** Littering makes our community look bad to visitors.
- **D** Some trucks have litter blowing out of their beds.

SAMPLE B

Read the following sentences.

- Sentence 1: Kim and Scott will take their twins to the beach when they finish summer school.
- Sentence 2: Kim and Scott, after they finish summer school, will take the twins to the beach.
- Sentence 3: When they finish summer school, Kim and Scott will take their twins to the beach.
- Sentence 4: When their twins finish summer school, Kim and Scott will take them to the beach.

Which of the sentences avoids pronoun ambiguity?

- A Sentence 1 because the pronoun is separated from the antecedent
- **B** Sentence 2 because the pronoun is closer to the antecedent
- **C** Sentence 3 because its arrangement provides more clear references to both antecedents
- **D** Sentence 4 because the arrangement provides a clear reference between the pronoun and the antecedent

33 Read these two statements.

Statement 1

My cousin can't hear her alarm and doesn't always wake up on time.

Statement 2

She asks me to call her on the telephone.

Which sentence emphasizes the idea from Statement 2?

- A My cousin asks me to call her on the telephone, but she can't hear her alarm and doesn't always wake up on time.
- **B** My cousin can't hear her alarm clock and doesn't always wake her up on time because she asks me to call her on the telephone.
- **C** My cousin can't hear her alarm clock and doesn't always wake up, so I call her on the telephone.
- **D** Because my cousin can't hear her alarm and doesn't always wake up on time, she asks me to call her on the telephone.

\sim			
(A)	(R)	(C)	(D)
(\land)	(0)	(0)	(0)

34 Which sentence correctly uses the present emphatic tense of the verb to emphasize an action?

- **F** Misha does go to a public school and not a private one.
- **G** Freddie will be in Alaska all of July.
- **H** Did Vanessa check her email before she left?
- **J** If David had checked his oil, his engine would not have died.



35 Which sentence contains an error in comma usage?

- A Angie, who is Johnny's older sister, is never late to class like him.
- **B** George Washington, served as America's first President, and supposedly never told a lie.
- **C** Chocolate, America's favorite candy, is becoming very scarce in some countries.
- **D** George W. Bush, the father of twin daughters, served as President of the United States for eight years.



STOP

Writing/Grammar Practice Test 1

Evaluation Chart

If you missed question #:	Go to section(s):	If you missed question #:	Go to section(s):
1	9.3	21	12.4
2	4.2	22	9.1
3	11.4	23	8.2
4	9.1, 10.2	24	10.2, 10.3, 10.4
5	7.1, 7.4, 7.5	25	3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6
6	9.1	26	9.1, 10.2
7	10.1, 10.4	27	11.4
8	11.1	28	9.2
9	6.1, 6.6	29	12.3
10	9.1	30	10.2, 10.3, 10.4
11	12.2	31	11.2, 11.3
12	8.1, 8.2	32	11.4
13	11.4	33	6.1, 6.6
14	2.3	34	1.3
15	10.1	35	4.2
16	5.5		
17	8.3		
18	12.2		
19	7.1, 7.4		
20	11.4		