

Word Usage Exercise Comments

In the Word Usage exercise and other homework exercises Mr. H doesn't mark all problems. His intention is to give you general comments and guidance, not to find and correct every mistake. (Use "Reconstruction" regularly for improving your grammar and lexicals usage.) Here are some common problems that Mr. H found in previous homework assignments.

You're advised to begin now getting used to doing your English writing on the computer. And get used to MS Word, which is used internationally (as opposed to "HWP.")

Scoring

- **C: 3** The content is satisfying, because it completely answers the question and gives satisfactory explanation.
- **C: 3** The answers are clear, because they use a helpful structure. The writer used the 3-step method to build this useful structure. The 3-step method is not only helpful in understanding but also indicates that the writer's composition skills are quite sophisticated.

Mastery of the 3-step method is a requirement for this course.

The 3-step method: The first sentence, which uses the language of the question, presents the main point. The second sentence presents a general reason for making the main point. And the third sentence presents a detailed explanation of the general reason.

By the way, whether or not you see "Closure" on your paper, carefully study the article "Closure" at E>G, Composition.

- **L: 3**
 - There are no *avoidable* mistakes.
 - The writer used resourcefulness to find the right way of expressing themselves.
 - The writer used as much of the reading's language as possible. The writer did *not* use old learner's language instead of the new language in the reading.
 - **T: 1** The writer followed the guidelines in both "Standard Formatting in the ELP" and "Technical Features in Written Work."
1. Do not use your learner's language instead of the reading's language. Using learner language instead of the reading's language causes your learner's language to fossilize and prevents you from expanding your language inventory.
 2. Careless (avoidable) mistakes (noun number, subject-verb agreement, etc.) can be avoided with more careful attention. Careless mistakes are evidence of a careless mind and careless thinking.
 3. Punctuation should be clear; make a comma look like a comma and a period like a period, and make your punctuation bold. Learn about restricted and non-restricted phrases (for using the comma), and learn how a semi-colon is used (especially with however and therefore).
 4. Make sure that you directly and clearly answer the question. This means that you have to make sure that you have a clear understanding of the question.
 5. Try to answer the question in just a couple (two or three) sentences. This means be concise, and do not ramble. It is difficult to be concise, because you have to think more. Conciseness means both complete and short; this means that your answer should answer the question to the satisfaction of the reader, but be economical with words and avoid redundancy.
 6. Make a habit of presenting your point *before* presenting the support (explanation and proof) for your point. Presenting the general point before specific explanation is the method that is most commonly used in the English speaking community, and, because it is the most commonly used method, the reader may be confused if you don't use it.
 7. Don't answer with "True," or "Yes." If your first complete sentence is the answer, and if it uses the language of the question, you do not need "True" or "Yes." If you answer in a complete sentence, using the language in the question, your answer will be clearer and you will get a little extra practice.
 8. A nonsensical answer tells me that maybe the student who wrote such an answer just mechanically and mindlessly copied the related sentences from the reading. We must pay attention to the FORM of words and sentences, but just as important is paying attention to the MEANING of words and sentences. Be sure you know what they are actually saying. Be sure that a native speaker understands your expression the same way that you understand it.
 9. Always give a sense of *logical completion* to your answer and to your argument. Read "Closure" at E>G, Writing.

10. Follow technical guidelines in “Technical Features in Written Work” and “Standard Formatting in the ELP.” (E>G, Composition)
11. “It” or “this”? Read “This/that or it?” in E>G, Grammar.
12. Provide clear pronoun reference.
13. Develop the quality of initiative, be resourceful.

Here’s an example of the result of a lack of initiative and resourcefulness: [In answer to #8:] “The rate of the number of population [sic]* is not known. The number of large cities will multiply. 26 cities have 5 million or more residents each and a combined population of 252 million. By the end of the decade, the number will escalate to 60, with an estimated total of almost 650 million people.” “Not known” (in the first sentence) is not an acceptable answer in the ELP.

And here’s an example of initiative and resourcefulness: [In response to #8:] “The number of large cities won’t grow at a faster rate than the world’s population. Now 26 cities have a combined population of 252 million and this number will escalate to 60, with an estimated total of almost 650 million. We can show the rate of each through this information. The number of large cities will grow by 130 percent and the population will grow by 157 percent. This means that the population growth rate will be faster than that of cities.”

14. Say the answer before you write it. This is an especially good exercise to do with your homework partner. (Work together on the oral answer, then individually write your answer.)

*[sic] indicates a spelling or grammar mistake in a word or a text string in the quoted material. The one who is quoting the passage writes this after the mistake. Here, the problem is “The rate of the number of population.”