

Unit 5 Word Usage: Comments

These are comments written for last year's Word Usage assignment. Use them to help you avoid problems.

1. Mindless copying: “We should read about a job in the library once you’ve decided which job to go after.”
2. Two common problems:
 - a. “a good way”:
In the context of this question, we don’t say “It is a good way to find people who are working in that field.” The subject must be the way or method, and “it” must refer to the way. So, you can say, “Finding people who are working in that field is a good way to find out about a job.”
 - b. “Talk shop” is not a noun phrase, it’s a verb and a noun. Many used it as a noun phrase. Don’t say “Talk shop is one good way...” Say “One good way is to talk shop,” or “Talking shop with people in that field is one good way...”
 - c. Infinitive or gerund? “To talk shop with any people we know in that field is another way to get information about the job.” Review “Infinitive or Gerund: The Bolinger Principle” at E>G.
3. Articles: “The one who will look at your resume is a prospective employer. The prospective employer will examine whether you are suitable for the job.” In this case the native speaker would most likely use the definite article, because the speaker consciously or subconsciously has a specific publisher in mind, and can answer a “Which?” question if the reader asks. (“Which employer?” “The one you’re sending the resume to.”)
4. Articles: “We should put a distinguished work history in the first part of our resume. The distinguished work history in an area related to the job we’re seeking will impress the prospective employer.” This should be an indefinite article because the speaker is probably speaking of distinguished work histories in general, not a specific one.
7. The right subject: “The appearance of our resume ought to be clean and readable.” Logically, the appearance isn’t clean and readable, the resume is.
9. “It is a good source of information about job openings to keep up with trade publications, and to read help-wanted ads.” → Good sources of information about job openings are keeping up... OR Keeping up...are good sources of information...
10. “We should provide the prospective employer what we can bring to the company.” Logically, you can’t “provide...what you can bring to the company.” You can provide information that shows what you can bring to the company / provide explanation why we are approaching his company and what we can bring to the company.
12. Dangling modifiers: Put sentence modifiers at the beginning of the sentence. “If it’s for a sales position, you should go all out to show how articulate and persuasive you are at the interview.” See “Dangling Modifiers,” E>G.
15. “Even though”? No. In this context, it’s “even if.”