

Grammatical Necessities



Diction

Diction means word choice. Diction is what words we choose to use and why so. Certain words fit better in sentences and phrases than others. Diction can be tricky because certain words have the same connotation (tone or meaning) but may not function the same.

Try the examples below

The students were able to view but not touch the _____ artifacts at the archeological site.

- A) Fragile
- B) Sickly
- C) Ugly
- D) Rare

The answer is Fragile! The sentence's meaning is that students are able to look at and observe but not physically handle the artifacts.

Sickly is **wrong** because artifacts cannot be sick or ill. Artifacts are inanimate objects.

Ugly is **wrong** because while they can be ugly, the term doesn't match the rest of the sentence which refers to the artifacts being delicate to handle.

Rare is **wrong** because while artifact's can be rare and antiques, the term doesn't match the rest of the sentence which refers to the artifacts being delicate to handle.

The author went to great lengths to _____ the subjects of his book

- A) Neglect
- B) Ridicule
- C) Torment
- D) Bother

The answer is Ridicule! The sentence's meaning is that the author is taking a negative aim at the characters by mocking them.

Neglect is **wrong** because the author cannot neglect the characters of his book. The characters of his book are inanimate objects. Now, he could be neglecting ELABORATING OR DESCRIBING certain ones.

Torment is **wrong** since the author's characters are inanimate, he cannot physically torment them. The characters, however, can be tormented themselves. Bother is **wrong** since the author's characters are inanimate, he cannot physically bother them.

Note that in this example, the author cannot exhibit any PHYSICAL actions towards the characters since they are inanimate, which is why torment, neglect, and bother don't work in the context of the sentence. However, the characters themselves can neglect, bother, or torment another if the author write that they do. Additionally, the characters can be physically bothered, tormented, or neglected themselves if the author intends them to.



Syntax means sentence structure. There are two types of syntax structure :

Dependent

Independent

That can be combined in many different way:

Dependent-Independent

Independent-Independent

Independent- Dependent

So what exactly are independent and dependent clauses (phrases)?

“An **independent clause** is a group of words that contains a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought. An independent clause is a sentence.” (Purdue)

Example: Jim went to the lake.

Jim is the subject.

Went is the verb

Lake is the subject of Jim

The is an article

This is an independent clause because it contains a subject, a verb, and expresses a complete thought.

““A **dependent clause** is a group of words that contains a subject and verb but does not express a complete thought. A dependent clause cannot be a sentence.” (Purdue)

Example: The fish.

There is no verb attached to “The fish”. There is no action described.

Now you try!

Identify if the following sentences are independent. If they are, state their subject and verb.

1) He hopped on the boat.

I or NI?

If I, subject- verb-

2) The fish cute

I or NI?

If I, subject- verb-

3) He ate the lobster all by himself, even though his stomach after.

I or NI?

If I, subject- verb-

3) Even so, pretty Jim.

I or NI?

If I, subject- verb-

4) It made me sad that my fish died.

I or NI?

If I, subject- verb-

5) It made me sad.

I or NI?

If I, subject- verb-

6) Made me sad.

I or NI?

If I, subject- verb-

7) The bakery is open all day long.

I or NI?

If I, subject- verb-

8) The bakery is open.

I or NI?

If I, subject- verb-

Got it? Time to Check the answers!

1) Independent. Subject: He, boat. Verb: Hopped. The is just an article

2) No Independent. There is a subject: fish. But, there is not verb expressed. In order to be independent, the sentence should be "The fish IS cute"

3) Independent. This one may seem tricky since the sentence is long, but just check for all the criteria and if it formulates to one cohesive thought. Subject: He, lobster, stomach. Verb: ate.

4) Independent. Subject: me, fish. Verb: made

5) Independent. Verb: made. Subject: me.

6) Not independent. This one is tricky because there is both the subject of me and the verb of made. BUT what made me sad? There is no subject connecting me and what me sad, which means that this is not a cohesive thought.

7) Independent. Subject: bakery, day. Verb: is, open

8) Independent. Subject: baker. Verb: is, open.

Before we get into how independent and dependent clauses can be combined, you have to be able to identify which phrases are independent and which are combined.

Identify which phrases are independent and which are dependent below by writing below each underlined portion “I” or “D”.

The dog is big, and I am strong.

He has four cats and one dog.

The llama lives in Peru and I am going there next summer.

Independent because they contain a subject and a verb: The dog is big; I am strong; He has four cats; The llama lives in Peru; I am going there next summer.

Dependent because it doesn't have both a subject and verb or/and doesn't express a cohesive thought: One dog

Got it? Now lets see how they can be combined!

But first, lets introuce you to FANBOYS.

For
And
Nor
But
Or
Yet
So

A sentence that has an independent and dependent clause **MUST** have one of the fanboys.

If the sentence has two independent clauses separated by a FANBOY there is a COMMA.

Example: I am small, but I can still eat a lot.

If the sentence has one independent clause and one dependent clause separated by a FANBOY there is NO COMMA.

Example: I am small but also eat a lot.