

Would you have marked it wrong?

The candidate wrote:

1. Florence Nightingale was *the one* who could help.
2. She was the first woman to *do* such a dangerous and difficult task.
3. She has *changed* the barracks into hospitals.
4. The Allies were divided into two armies, *one of which* had to check the Russians.
5. They *had* great losses.
6. He would *look* whether there was anything *in disorder*.
7. T. J. B. was a man of *deep comprehension* of all human things.
8. He felt *responsibility* for the poor chaps.
9. Dr. B. thought that this poor boy *never had* got enough to eat.
10. I awoke from a *deep* dream.

The examiner corrected:

- ... *the one person* ...
- ... *to undertake* ...
- ... *transformed* ...
- ... *one of them* ...
- ... *suffered* ...
- ... *look to see* ... *not in order*.
- ... *with deep comprehension* ...
- ... *responsible* ...
- ... *had never* ...
- ... *heavy* ...

Would you have marked it wrong? Schlüssel

Vergleiche Seite 91

1. Florence Nightingale was *the one* who could help. ... *the one person* ...

Both versions are possible, but there is a significant difference in emphasis. In the candidate's version, "Nightingale" would be the most prominent word; in the examiner's, "person" probably would be. The examiner's expansion also has the effect of reiterating the uniqueness of the Subject, and is consequently more dramatic.

2. She was the first woman *to do* such a dangerous and difficult task. ... *to undertake* ...

The examiner has changed the meaning considerably here: to "undertake" a task is to begin it or to prepare to begin it, and the sense cannot be stretched to mean completion. The candidate presumably means that the subject has done the task required. A more precise synonym would be "perform".

3. She has *changed* the barracks into hospitals. ... *transformed* ...

The examiner's version is perhaps better, but both versions are grammatically correct. Because the contrast between "barracks" and "hospitals" is so great, a correspondingly dramatic verb would seem to be suitable. "Transform" implies a much greater change in both form and function than "change", which is a verb generally used with reference to more routine matters.

4. The Allies were divided into two armies, *one of which* had to check the Russians. ... *one of them* ...

The examiner's correction is strange: to be acceptable, his sentence would have to be radically altered, with at least a semi-colon or colon following "armies", and possibly a full-stop.

5. They *had* great losses. ... *suffered* ...
"Had" produces a grammatically acceptable sentence, but it is a rather dull one: "suffered" is a much more specific and vivid term.

6. He would *look* whether there was anything *in disorder*. ... *look to see* ... *not in order*.

The first part of the candidate's sentence is wrong, and would have to be replaced either

by the examiner's version, or by "would see whether ...". Whether the change from "in disorder" to "not in order" is also for the better is not clear. "In disorder" implies disturbance or confusion, usually of a physical kind, whereas "not in order" is much less fierce a condition, referring more to impropriety or inappropriateness of an event or state (the opposite being "out of order").

7. T. J. B. was a man *of* deep comprehension of all human things. ... *with* ...

The "of" construction is the normal way of referring to qualities, and a phrase like "a man with deep comprehension" would be unacceptable English. The examiner's worry here is probably due to the fact that a second "of" construction has been used: this tends to jar stylistically, and one way of reducing this clash is by altering one or other of the two "of's". Even so, the examiner's version is still questionable.

8. He felt *responsibility* for the poor chaps. ... *responsible* ...

The candidate is wrong, but there are two alternatives. The examiner has opted for one possibility; he might also have kept the same noun and changed the preposition to "towards", though this would produce a rather more formal and artificial structure.

9. Dr. B. thought that this poor boy *never had* got enough to eat. ... *had never* ...

The candidate has made an elementary error here. "Never" is one of those adverbs with restrictions on its position in the verb phrase: it does not occur before the first auxiliary verb.

10. I awoke from a *deep* dream. ... *heavy* ...
"Dreams" can be neither "deep" nor "heavy"; "sleep" can be either.

DAVID CRYSTAL

Beilagenhinweis

Dieser Ausgabe liegt ein Prospekt Dr. Tigges-Fahrten, Wuppertal, und eine Kurzinformation des Verlages Lambert Lensing bei.

Would you have marked it wrong?

Die Besprechung der einzelnen Punkte erfolgt auf Seite 230.

The candidate wrote:

1. The other man listened *rather interested*.
2. "You seem to be an excellent observer," Adela *mocked*, "but I think ..."
3. Adela continued *saying* nothing.
4. He *had nearly given* up the search when he saw the man in a street a few steps ahead of him.
5. "You *look* very *suspicious*. Don't you believe my story?"
6. "I think *you to be* a clever and mighty man."
7. The ox seemed to eat the flowers *some-how delighted*.
8. We are *no* manufacturers, we are only agents.
9. She had felt pity *with* the poor old man.
10. "Only the children are wise enough to wear the right footgear," he thought *by* himself.
11. The assistant *went back some steps* with a strange expression on his face.
12. "An almost extraordinary circumstance came to my ears."

The examiner corrected:

- ... *with great interest*.
- ... *said in a mocking tone ...*
... *to say nothing*.
... *was about to give ...*
- ... *are looking ... suspiciously*.
- ... *that you are ...*
- ... *with enjoyment*.
- ... *not ...*
- ... *for ...*
- ... *to himself*.
... *stepped back ...*
- ... *knowledge*.

Would you have marked it wrong? Schlüssel

Vergleiche Seite 200

1. The other man listened *rather interested*.
... *with great interest* ...

The candidate is wrong. 'Rather interestedly' is possible if one wanted to avoid the adverbial phrase, but the examiner's version is the more natural.

2. "You seem to be an excellent observer," Adela *mocked*, "but I think ..." ... *said in a mocking tone* ...

'Mock' can be used in an intransitive sense, and is not an error; indeed, it seems a rather more dramatic use than the examiner's circumlocution. A competent author, generally speaking, would try to avoid monotony by varying his constructions between the two types.

3. Adela continued *saying* nothing. ... *to say* ...

Normally both uses are possible, 'She continued hitting him' and 'She continued to hit him' differ only in that there is more emphasis on duration in the former. Whether this repeated emphasis is justified in the present case, where there is an absence of activity, is debatable; but this is a question of a non-grammatical nature.

4. He *had nearly given up* the search when he saw the man in a street a few steps ahead of him. ... *was about to give up* ...

Both versions are possible, the difference being one of direction or perspective for the time of the action: in the first case, the temporal emphasis is on the action which has already taken place (i. e. on that part of the search which has been completed); in the second case, the emphasis is on the event which is about to take place (i. e. the actual completion of the search). One construction looks back; the other forward - cf. 'John had nearly finished', 'John was about to finish'. (Incidentally, did the candidate intend to refer to the *street* as being a few steps ahead, I wonder? If the *man* is referred to here, then the sentence should read 'in the street'.)

5. "You *look* very *suspicious*. Don't you believe my story?" ... *are looking* ... *suspiciously*.

'You look very suspicious' (or 'are looking') in standard English can only take the interpretation 'Your general appearance is one of suspicion' (though in some kinds of sub-standard speech, it will be heard as an equivalent for the examiner's construction). The context shows clearly that this is not the sense intended, however.

6. "I think *you to be* a clever and mighty man." ... *that you are* ...

This 'pronoun-plus-infinitive' construction is possible in very formal speech, but is getting increasingly uncommon even there.

7. The ox seemed to eat the flowers *somehow delighted*. ... *with enjoyment*.

The candidate's version seems a straightforward example of translation interference from German, and is quite wrong. The examiner has given an acceptable alternative, but 'with delight' would be closer to the original.

8. We are *no* manufacturers; we are only agents. ... *not* ...

The examiner's version would be more normal, as presumably a relatively unemotional contrast is intended. 'No' is quite possible, but it would imbue the utterance with a more intense and absolute force, as if in the preceding context someone had accused the speaker of being a manufacturer, and he was denying it hotly.

9. She had felt pity *with* the poor old man. ... *for* ...

In the candidate's version, both the 'she' and the 'old man' had felt pity together, which is a rather unlikely state of affairs. One feels pity *for* someone (or one takes or has pity *on*).

10. "Only the children are wise enough to wear the right footgear," he thought *by himself*. ... *to himself*.

In this context, 'by himself' can only mean 'on his own', which is clearly nonsensical.

11. The assistant *went back some steps* with a strange expression on his face. ... *stepped back* ...

'To step back' may involve more than one physical step, but it is rather more likely to mean just one step only. If the candidate meant that the assistant retreated some distance, then his construction, with a different verb (e. g. 'fell back some steps', 'took some steps back'), would be the more likely way of describing the event.

12. "An almost extraordinary circumstance came to my ears." ... *knowledge*.

The examiner is being rather artificial in his concern to avoid what is in fact a perfectly standard metaphor.

DAVID CRYSTAL

Would you have marked it wrong?

Die Besprechung der einzelnen Punkte erfolgt auf Seite 350

The candidate wrote:

1. "Twenty years are a long time," the policeman *put in*.
2. Perhaps he *is living* in a lodging where ...
3. He seized the young man by *his* arm.
4. A *general* happiness was prevalent.
5. They were in *danger to be washed* into the river.
6. The ox realized that he was to go and began to *walk*.
7. In autumn they *reached* St. Louis.
8. The rest of the Indians *was* ready to draw their bows.
9. Theophil and Adela were standing at the gate. *None* of them spoke a word.
10. Today we *have* St. Crispin's Day, the 25th of October.
11. He took it hastily and slipped it *in* his pocket.
12. It seemed that he had not spoken to a person *a long time*.

The examiner corrected:

- ... *interjected*.
- ... *lives* ...
- ... *the* arm.
- ... *universal* happiness ...
- ... *in the danger of being washed* ...
- ... *move*.
- ... *arrived at* ...
- ... *were* ready.
- ... *Neither* ...
- ... *it is* ...
- ... *into* his pocket.
- ... *for a long time*.

Would you have marked it wrong? Schlüssel

Vergleiche Seite 325

1. "Twenty years are a long time," the policeman *put in*. . . *interjected*.

Both verbs are grammatically acceptable, and the candidate has chosen the more normal, colloquial one. "Interjected" used in this way (like 'interposed', 'intervened', etc.) gives the impression that the author is consciously trying to be literary. A more relevant emendation to the sentence would be the change of "are" to 'is': presumably the twenty years is being viewed as a single unit, in a collective sense, and not as a collection of twenty individual units – and thus the singular verb would be the one to use.

2. Perhaps he *is living* in a lodging where . . . *lives* . . .

Both constructions are possible: it depends on what implication was intended, and here one needs context to resolve the issue. In the candidate's construction, the living is taking place at the time of speaking, the duration of the 'action' being emphasized. In the examiner's, this meaning could be read in, but the sentence would be more likely to be interpreted in a 'timeless' way (i. e. the living is viewed as an action which has no specific relevance to the time of speaking), or, possibly, in a 'habitual' way (i. e. he lives there from time to time).

3. He seized the young man by *his* arm. . . *the* arm.

Both are possible, and equally likely.

4. A *general* happiness was prevalent . . . *universal* happiness . . .

Neither of these sentences is satisfactory, the first because it is either vague or tautologous, depending on the sense of "general" intended, the second because it is contradictory. If "general" means 'of the majority', then the statement is tautologous; if it means 'an aspect of the quality (i. e. happiness) shared by all', then it is extremely vague, though grammatically acceptable. To substitute "universal", however, does not help matters: a quality which is found everywhere with no exceptions cannot be prevalent.

5. They were *in danger to be washed* into the river. . . *in the danger of being washed* . . .

The candidate has made an elementary lexical error here: the collocation is 'in danger of', which thus disallows the infinitive. The examiner's version is also incorrect, however, as "the" is not possible in this collocation.

6. The ox realized that he was to go and began to *walk*. . . *move*.

The answer to this depends on the perspective intended. "Move" refers to the whole of a specified object in motion, with no reference

being made to the cause or method of progress. "Walk" specifically refers to movement using the legs. In the present context, the choice of "move" rather than "walk" seems to me to imply greater ponderousness, and might perhaps be more appropriate.

7. In autumn they *reached* St. Louis. . . . *arrived at* . . .

Both are equally acceptable.

8. The rest of the Indians was ready to draw their bows. . . . *were ready* . . .

"Rest" is one of those nouns which can be used in both a non-collective and a collective sense: 'The rest are going now', 'The rest is silence'. In the present case, the postmodification in the noun phrase ("of the Indians"), plus the plural pronoun of the complement, makes it very clear that the sense intended is the non-collective, i. e. the Indians are viewed as an aggregate of individuals, and not as a single body. Consequently, the examiner's version is correct.

9. Theophil and Adela were standing at the gate. *None* of them spoke a word. . . . *Neither* . . .

This is an elementary error: 'none' refers to more than two. As it stands, the candidate's version could only be a (bad) joke.

10. Today we *have* St. Crispin's Day, the 25th of October. . . . *it is* . . .

The examiner is correct here – though I could at a pinch imagine a context for the former, e. g. a teacher in a classroom explaining the various feastdays on a calendar.

11. He took it hastily and slipped it *in* his pocket. . . . *into* his pocket.

There is little to choose between the two versions. Both are correct, but perhaps the candidate's is the more colloquial usage.

12. It seemed that he had not spoken to a person *a long time*. . . . *for a long time*.

Where "for a long time" refers to the duration of an action at a given time, and not to the distance of the action from a given time, then 'for' can usually be omitted, as in 'I went (for) a long time without beer' (but not 'I haven't had beer a long time'). The candidate is therefore incorrect.

Would you have marked it wrong?

The candidate wrote:

1. When they came into the light of a drug-store they stopped to look at each other's face.
2. When I determined to return to the hotel I *recognized* that I had forgotten the name and the street.
3. "Oh," returned the young man, "that's quite *another* thing."
4. You don't seem to believe that my story is true," he said rather *angry*.
5. Suddenly he looked to the ground.
6. Many houses *had no longer an* owner.
7. Only *by* the cleverness of Meriwether Lewis ...
8. I asked you *for driving* it (the ox) out of my garden.
9. But when he saw the old man in his dirty, tattered clothes and the *bloody trail* on the carpet, he asked ...
10. After a while he stopped before a shoemaker's shop whose windows showed a *great* number of modern shoes.
11. The train will depart in *some* minutes.
12. I did not dare to hope *it*.

The examiner corrected:

... faces.

... realized ...

... a different ...

... angrily.

... down at ...

... were without owners.

... through ...

... to drive ...

... trail of blood ...

... large ...

... a few ...

... for this.

par son contraire, et exprime donc l'obligation de ne pas accomplir l'action qu'il signifiait, autrement dit on affirme l'interdiction: autant dire: «Tu dois te taire». En outre, on peut nier les deux verbes: «Tu ne dois pas ne pas parler» (= «Tu ne dois pas te taire»), ce qui revient à nier l'interdiction. On peut étendre ce raisonnement à d'autres semi-auxiliaires: «Il ne veut pas dormir» – «Il veut ne pas dormir» – «Il ne veut pas ne pas dormir». «On ne peut pas admirer cet homme» – «On peut ne pas admirer cet homme» – «On ne peut pas ne pas admirer cet homme». «Il ne sait pas être cruel» – «Il sait ne pas être cruel» – «Il ne sait pas ne pas être cruel», etc.

Mais en fait la langue utilise assez peu ces moyens syntaxiques; dans les séries ci-dessus, seule la première phrase négative est vraiment naturelle et spontanée; la seconde, et surtout la phrase à double négation appartiennent à un langage recherché, un peu artificiel. Dans l'usage courant, la tendance est d'appliquer la négation au groupe semi-auxiliaire + infinitif, sans faire l'analyse assez subtile qui a été proposée plus haut.

Il en résulte que pour le sens commun la négation d'une obligation, d'une volonté est généralement assimilée moins à l'absence d'obligation ou de volonté qu'à l'affirmation d'une obligation contraire (d'une défense), d'une volonté contraire (d'un refus). Et il faut dire que la différence est souvent mince, et que l'écart entre «Il ne veut pas dormir» et «Il veut ne pas dormir» ne représente pas grand-chose dans la réalité pratique.

On notera qu'il n'en est pas de même avec le pouvoir et le savoir, sans doute parce que ce sont des notions d'un autre ordre, qui marquent un acquis (résultat), alors que les verbes précédents sont orientés vers une action future (but).

Ainsi, comme l'a fort bien senti notre correspondant, une phrase comme «Tu ne dois pas parler» (et la plupart de ses équivalents: «Il ne faut pas parler, ... que tu parles», «Je ne veux pas que tu parles», etc.) est comprise généralement comme signifiant l'interdiction de parler, et non l'autorisation de se taire. Pour lui donner ce dernier sens, il faudrait un contexte ou une situation appropriés, parfois soulignés par une intonation qui insiste sur le semi-auxiliaire («Tu ne *dois* pas parler», s. e. «mais tu peux le faire»), en lui faisant porter tout le poids de la négation. Puisque la syntaxe est peu utilisée pour exprimer cette distinction, il reste les moyens lexicaux, et c'est bien ceux qu'énumère mon interlocuteur. Je n'exclurais de ses suggestions que les exemples qui contiennent une construction assez désuète: «il te faut ...» + infinitif; construction vénérée par quelques grammairiens soucieuses de retarder l'acquisition du subjonctif et d'éviter pendant quelque temps la construction «il faut que ...», seule vivante et usuelle. J'évitais aussi de classer dans la seconde liste le tour «tu n'as pas à ...», qui est entraîné dans le même mouvement que «tu dois ...», et qui est souvent pris pour exprimer une défense: affaire de contexte.

CHARLES MULLER

Would you have marked it wrong? Schlüssel

Vergleiche Seite 427.

1 When they came into the light of a drugstore they stopped to look at each other's face. ... faces.

This problem can be clarified if we substitute 'book' for 'face'. The sentence 'We stopped to look at each other's books' is quite acceptable, but it is ambiguous: it is not clear whether we were each carrying one book only, or whether each of us had a pile of books. If it were important to emphasize the fact that only one book each was involved,

then it would be possible to say 'at each other's book'; but this construction sounds rather awkward, and an alternative might well be used (e. g. 'I stopped to look at his book and he had a look at mine'). In the case of 'face', as people have only one face each, the question of ambiguity does not arise, and the plural form is used quite normally. The examiner is therefore correct. (In passing, note that *drugstore* is American English; the nearest equivalent in British English is *chemist*.)

2. When I determined to return to the hotel I recognized that I had forgotten the name and the street. ... realized ...

Both sentences are possible, but the implications are normally different. 'Recognize' usually means in this context that one is acknowledging a given state of affairs to be as it is, the situation having been presented by someone else, e.g. 'I recognized that John's arguments were correct'. 'Realize', however, is a purely internal process: no-one else is involved, and one reaches a conclusion by a process of mental deduction. In addition, 'decide' would be a much more likely verb to use than 'determine', as a general term for simply 'making up one's mind'.

3. "Oh," returned the young man, "that's quite another thing." ... a different ...

Both sentences are acceptable, and in this context are synonymous. One should note, though, that the sentence 'that's another thing' is ambiguous, and can mean either 'that's a separate (i.e. different) issue' or 'that's an additional issue (to the one we've just been discussing)'.

4. "You don't seem to believe that my story is true," he said rather angry. ... angrily.

The examiner is correct. The only occasion when the candidate's version is possible is in a dramatic narrative context (or the like), where 'he said, rather angry' would be a permissible alternative - but the comma would be obligatory.

5. Suddenly he looked to the ground. ... down at ...

'Look to' means 'take into account', 'take care of', 'consider' or 'be careful about': meanings which are obviously not intended here. The examiner's version is correct, though 'down' is not essential and could be omitted - 'ground' is usually below one's vision!

6. Many houses had no longer an owner. ... were without owners.

The examiner's version is acceptable, but it would be closer to the original if he retained the 'have' construction and simply altered the position of the adverbial: 'no longer had an owner' is quite alright. Either the singular or the plural of the noun is possible: 'had an owner/owners', 'without an owner/owners'.

7. Only by the cleverness of Meriweather Lewis ... through ...

The candidate's choice of preposition is wrong here; the examiner is correct.

8. I asked you for driving it (the ox) out of my garden. ... to drive ...

Assuming the obvious sense of this sentence to be the one intended (i.e. 'Please drive the ox out'), then the candidate has made a fairly elementary error in not using the infinitive. But of course the sentence could be used in response to the question 'Why did you ask me (e.g. to come to my party)?', where it would mean 'I asked you in order to thank you for driving the ox out of my garden'.

9. But when he saw the old man in his dirty, tattered clothes and the bloody trail on the carpet, he asked ... trail of blood ...

Both versions are possible, but the candidate's is rather more vivid. Perhaps the examiner - whom one imagines to be a more genteel person than the candidate! - is remembering that 'bloody' in British English is frequently used as a swear word, with no literal sense of 'bloodiness' intended, and is trying to avoid its use here.

10. After a while he stopped before a shoemaker's shop whose windows showed a great number of modern shoes. ... large ...

Generally speaking, these two sentences are synonymous and equally acceptable; 'great' is perhaps slightly more forceful.

11. The train will depart in some minutes. ... a few ...

'Some' can be used thus with the implication of 'slightly more than a few' - cf. 'We'll be leaving in some five days', 'We'll be leaving in some few minutes'. But it is by no means a widespread usage, and for most purposes 'a few' is unquestionably the right answer.

12. I did not dare to hope it ... for this.

In the rather formal, stilted style that the candidate is using here, 'it' sounds most odd, and the examiner's version is much better. But 'I didn't dare hope that' (especially with emphasis on the final word) is quite possible, as is 'hope this'; and I have even heard 'hope it' in American English.

DAVID CRYSTAL