

Example from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests


With his friend B found the movie theater.

- (A) has
- (B) he
- (C) later
- (D) when

In this example you should look first for the subject and the verb. You should notice the verb *found* and should also notice that there is no subject. Do not think that *friend* is the subject; *friend* is the object of the preposition *with*, and one noun cannot be both a subject and an object at the same time. Because a subject is needed in this sentence, answer (B), *he*, is the best answer. Answers (A), (C), and (D) are not correct because they cannot be subjects.

The following chart outlines the key information that you should remember about objects of prepositions:

OBJECTS OF PREPOSITIONS

A *preposition* is followed by a noun, pronoun, gerund or noun clause that is called an *object of the preposition*. If a word is an *object of a preposition*, it is not the *subject*.

NOTE: A lengthy list of prepositions and practice in recognizing prepositions can be found in Appendix D at the back of the text. You may want to complete these exercises before continuing with Exercise 2.

EXERCISE 2: Each of the following sentences contains one or more prepositional phrases. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Circle the prepositional phrases that come before the verb. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. The interviews by radio broadcasters were carried live by the station.
- I 2. In the last possible moment before takeoff took his seat in the airplane.
- ___ 3. At the neighborhood flower shop, flowers in quantities of a dozen or a half dozen can be delivered for free.
- ___ 4. The progressive reading methods at this school are given credit for the improved test scores.
- ___ 5. For the last three years at various hospitals in the county has been practicing medicine.
- ___ 6. In the past a career in politics was not considered acceptable in some circles.
- ___ 7. Shopping in the downtown area of the city it has improved a lot in recent years.

- _____ 8. At the building site the carpenters with the most experience were given the most intricate work.
- _____ 9. For the fever and headache took two aspirin tablets.
- _____ 10. The report with complete documentation was delivered at the conference.

SKILL 3: BE CAREFUL OF APPOSITIVES

Appositives can cause confusion in structure questions on the TOEFL test because an appositive can be mistaken for the subject of a sentence. An appositive is a noun that comes before or after another noun and has the same meaning.

Sally, the best student in the class, got an A on the exam.

In this example *Sally* is the subject of the sentence and *the best student in the class* can easily be recognized as an appositive phrase because of the noun *student* and because of the commas. The sentence says that *Sally* and *the best student in the class* are the same person. Note that if you leave out the appositive phrase, the sentence still makes sense (*Sally got an A on the exam*).

The following example shows how an appositive can be confused with the subject of a sentence in structure questions on the TOEFL test.

Example 1 from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests



_____, George, is attending the lecture.

- (A) Right now
- (B) Happily
- (C) Because of the time
- (D) My friend

In this example you should recognize from the commas that *George* is not the subject of the sentence. *George* is an appositive. Because this sentence still needs a subject, the best answer is (D), *my friend*. Answers (A), (B), and (C) are incorrect because they are not subjects.

The next example shows that an appositive does not always come after the subject; an appositive can also come at the beginning of the sentence.

Example 2 from the Paper and Computer TOEFL® Tests



_____, Sarah rarely misses her basketball shots.

- (A) An excellent basketball player
- (B) An excellent basketball player is
- (C) Sarah is an excellent basketball player
- (D) Her excellent basketball play

In this example you can tell that *Sarah* is the subject and *misses* is the verb because there is no comma separating them. In the space you should put an appositive for Sarah, and Sarah is *an excellent basketball player*, so answer (A) is the best answer. Answers (B) and (C) are not correct because they each contain the verb *is*, and an appositive does not need a verb. Answer (D) contains a noun, *play*, that could possibly be an appositive, but *play* is not the same as *Sarah*, so this answer is not correct.

The following chart outlines the key information that you should remember about appositives:

APPOSITIVES				
An <i>appositive</i> is a noun that comes before or after another noun and is generally set off from the noun with commas. If a word is an <i>appositive</i> , it is not the <i>subject</i> . The following appositive structures are both possible in English:				
S,	APP,	V		
Tom,	a really good mechanic,	is fixing	the car.	
APP,		S	V	
A really good mechanic,		Tom	is fixing	the car.

EXERCISE 3: Each of the following sentences contains an appositive. Underline the subjects once and the verbs twice. Circle the appositive phrases. Then indicate if the sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I).

- C 1. (The son of the previous owner,) the new owner is undertaking some fairly broad changes in management policy.
- I 2. Last semester, (a friend,) graduated *cum laude* from the university.
3. Valentine's Day, February 14, is a special holiday for sweethearts.
4. At long last, the chief executive officer, has decided to step down.
5. Tonight's supper, leftovers from last night, did not taste any better tonight than last night.
6. The only entrance to the closet, the door was kept locked at all times.
7. In the cold of winter, a wall heating unit, would not turn on.
8. The new tile pattern, yellow flowers on a white background, really brightens up the room.
9. The high-powered computer the most powerful machine of its type, was finally readied for use.
10. A longtime friend and confidant, the psychologist was often invited over for Sunday dinner.