

Subject and Object Pronouns

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun. Two kinds of pronouns are **subject pronouns** and **object pronouns**.

Subject pronouns take the place of the subject of a sentence.

- **Ron** is a nice person.
He is a nice person.

Object pronouns take the place of the object of the verb.

- Frank read **the book** from cover to cover.
Frank read **it** from cover to cover.

Pronouns that follow a preposition (such as *for*, *to*, or *of*) are also object pronouns.

- Betsy bought the birthday present for **Maria**.
Betsy bought the birthday present for **her**.

This chart shows the forms of subject and object pronouns.

Subject Pronouns	Object Pronouns
I	me
you	you
he, she, it	him, her, it
we	us
they	them

A **subject pronoun** is a pronoun that takes the place of a noun that is the subject of a sentence.

Example:

He is a very nice person.

An **object pronoun** is a pronoun that takes the place of a noun that is object of a verb or a preposition.

Examples:

I met **him** last week.
(object of the verb)

I set an e-mail to **them** yesterday.
(object of the preposition)

Tip

To figure out whether to use a subject or an object pronoun, find the verb in the sentence. Then decide whether the pronoun is the subject or the object of the verb. If the pronoun follows a preposition, use an object pronoun.

Here are some common subject and object pronoun errors and ways to correct them.

Examples:

- **Incorrect:** Phil and **me** saw a great movie last night.
Correct: Phil and **I** saw a great movie last night.
(The pronoun is the subject of the sentence, so it should be the subject pronoun, *I*.)
- **Incorrect:** I met Jennifer and **she** at the party last night.
Correct: I met Jennifer and **her** at the party last night.
(The pronoun is the object of the verb *met*, so it should be the object pronoun *her*.)
- **Incorrect:** Please keep this a secret between you and **I**.
Correct: Please keep this a secret between you and **me**.
(The pronoun is the object of the preposition *between*, so it should be the object pronoun *me*.)

GED Readiness

Questions 1 through 5 refer to the following information. Circle the number of the one best answer to each item.

(1) Identity theft is a growing problem. (2) Lawanda Roberson, for example, was a recent victim of identity theft. (3) Thieves accessed her checking and savings accounts and emptied them. (4) Her husband and her spent six months and over \$500 of their own money to get everything back. (5) Identity theft can happen to you or I.

(6) What can we do to stop it from happening to us? (7) First, you should never throw away any paper that has your name, address, or Social Security number on it. (8) Second, do not leave your mail in the mailbox for extended periods of time. (9) Finally, if you use the Internet for banking, should keep your passwords secret and change them frequently.

Correction

- ① Sentence 3: **Thieves accessed her checking and savings accounts and emptied them.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 3?

- ① insert them before emptied
- ② replace them with her
- ③ replace them with they
- ④ replace them with it
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Revision

- ② Sentence 4: **Her husband and her spent six months and over \$500 of their own money to get everything back.**

Which is the best way to write the underlined portion of this sentence? If the original is the best way, choose option (1).

- ① Her husband and her
- ② Her and her husband
- ③ Them
- ④ She and her husband
- ⑤ She and it

Revision

- ③ Sentence 5: **Identity theft can happen to you or I.**

Which is the best way to write the underlined portion of this sentence? If the original is the best way, choose option (1).

- ① you or I
- ② they or us
- ③ you or me
- ④ they or we
- ⑤ we

Correction

- ④ Sentence 6: **What can we do to stop it from happening to us?**

Which correction should be made to sentence 6?

- ① replace we with us
- ② replace we with them
- ③ replace it with them
- ④ replace us with we
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ⑤ Sentence 9: **Finally, if you use the Internet for banking, should keep your passwords secret and change them frequently.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 9?

- ① replace you with they
- ② insert you before should
- ③ insert we before should
- ④ change them to they
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Possessive Pronouns

Possessive pronouns show the ownership or possession of something. Possessive pronouns take the place of possessive nouns.

Examples:

- This is **Francisco's** book.
This is **his** book.
- Someone took **Diane's and Jim's** chairs from their desks.
Someone took **their** chairs from their desks.
- Those chairs are **Jim's and Diane's**.
Those chairs are **theirs**.

There are two kinds of possessive words:

- **Possessive pronouns** come before a noun.

Examples:

Walker always eats **his** lunch at 12:30.
Mr. and Mrs. Washington love **their** new car.
Let's try to finish **our** work by 5:00.

Examples:

- **Emphatic possessive pronouns** occur alone, usually at the end of a sentence.
Is this briefcase **yours** or **his**?
That problem is **yours**, not **ours**!
After I make the final payment, the car will be completely **mine**.

Here are the possessive and emphatic possessive pronouns:

Possessive Pronouns	Emphatic Possessives
my	mine
your	yours
his	his
her	hers
it	its
our	ours
their	theirs

Possessive pronouns do not use apostrophes, but possessive nouns do.

Examples:

Riley's bicycle has a flat tire. (possessive noun)
That bicycle is **Riley's**. (possessive noun)

His bicycle has a flat tire. (possessive pronoun)
The dog chased **its** tail. (possessive pronoun)

Possessive pronouns show who a noun belongs to. Possessive pronouns come before nouns.

An **emphatic possessive pronoun** shows possession but stands alone.

Example:
The kitten is **hers**.

Tip

When a pronoun comes before a noun, always use a possessive pronoun.

Example:
She loves **her** new kitten.

GED Readiness

Questions 1 through 5 refer to the following memo. Circle the number of the one best answer to each item.

To: All Employees
From: Bill Roberts, Operations

(1) All employees need to have his company ID cards with them at all times while at work.

(2) Office employees can either wear their cards around their necks or clip them to their clothes. (3) Employees in the warehouse should keep them in their pockets.

(4) If you leave the building without your card, the security guard must call your manager before you can reenter the building.

(5) Do not try to enter the building using a company ID that is not you. (6) An employee can be dismissed for using an ID that is not him or hers.

Correction

- ① Sentence 1: All employees need to have his company ID cards with them at all times while at work.

Which correction should be made to sentence 1?

- ① replace All employees with Your
- ② replace All employees with Yours
- ③ replace his with their
- ④ replace them with their
- ⑤ insert their after while

Correction

- ② Sentence 3: Employees in the warehouse should keep them in their pockets.

Which correction should be made to sentence 3?

- ① replace them with their
- ② replace their with them
- ③ replace their with his
- ④ replace their with theirs
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Revision

- ③ Sentence 4: If you leave the building without your card, the security guard must call your manager before you can reenter the building.

Which is the best way to write the underlined portion of this sentence? If the original is the best way, choose option (1).

- ① your card
- ② you card
- ③ yours card
- ④ their card
- ⑤ his or her card

Revision

- ④ Sentence 5: Do not try to enter the building using a company ID that is not you.

Which is the best way to write the underlined portion of this sentence? If the original is the best way, choose option (1).

- ① you
- ② your
- ③ yours
- ④ his or hers
- ⑤ theirs

Revision

- ⑤ Sentence 6: An employee can be dismissed for using an ID that is not him or hers.

Which is the best way to write the underlined portion of this sentence? If the original is the best way, choose option (1).

- ① him or hers
- ② his or her
- ③ him or her
- ④ he or her
- ⑤ his or hers

Pronouns must agree with the nouns they replace. They can be singular pronouns or plural pronouns.

The pronouns *he*, *him*, and *his* are masculine. Use them to replace singular, masculine nouns. The pronouns *she*, *her*, and *hers* are feminine. Use them to replace singular, feminine nouns.

Tip

The pronouns *you*, *your*, and *yours* are both singular and plural.

Pronouns must agree with the nouns they replace. Use **singular pronouns** to replace singular nouns. Use **plural pronouns** to replace plural nouns.

Some pronouns have masculine and feminine forms: *he*, *she*, *his*, *him*, *her*, and *hers*. Use these pronouns to refer to people. Use the pronoun *it* to refer to objects or animals.

Examples:

- Joni got **her** GED last year.
(*Her* agrees with the noun it replaces, *Joni*, which is feminine and singular.)
- The money that you found is not **yours**.
(*Yours* agrees with the person it replaces, *you*.)
- You need to return the money to **its** owner.
(*Its* agrees with the noun it replaces, *money*, which is singular.)
- At amusement parks, young children should be accompanied by **their** parents at all times.
(*Their* agrees with the noun it replaces, *children*, which is plural.)

You, *your*, and *yours* are both singular and plural.

Examples:

- Students, here are **your** assignments.
(*Your* refers to a plural noun, *students*.)
- Frank, is the car with its headlights on **yours**?
(*Yours* refers to a singular noun, *Frank*.)

Here are the subject, object, possessive, and emphatic possessive pronouns:

	Subject Pronouns	Object Pronouns	Possessive Pronouns	Emphatic Possessive
Singular	I	me	my	mine
Singular or plural	you	you	your	yours
Singular, masculine	he	him	his	his
Singular, feminine	she	her	her	hers
Singular, neuter	it	it	its	its
Plural	we, they	us, them	our, their	ours, theirs

GED Readiness

Questions 1 through 5 refer to the following information. Circle the number of the one best answer to each item.

(1) A good friend of yours is getting married.
(2) You want to give the bride and groom a gift, but you don't know what to get the bride and groom. (3) These ideas can help you find the perfect gift.

(4) If the couple registers at a store, finding a gift for them is easy. (5) You just choose them from a list of items that the couple selected. (6) If the couple is not registered, then ask someone close to her for advice. (7) Usually, the maid of honor is a good friend of the bride and groom, so they may have some ideas for you.

(8) You should make sure your name is inside the package. (9) That way, the couple will know it is from them and will be able to thank you.

Revision

- ① Sentence 2: **You want to give the bride and groom a gift, but you don't know what to get the bride and groom.**

Which is the best way to write the underlined portion of this sentence? If the original is the best way, choose option (1).

- ① the bride and groom
- ② it
- ③ him and she
- ④ them
- ⑤ us

Correction

- ② Sentence 5: **You just choose them from a list of items that the couple selected.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 5?

- ① replace You with We
- ② replace them with it
- ③ replace them with him
- ④ replace items with them
- ⑤ replace the couple with they

Revision

- ③ Sentence 6: **If the couple is not registered, then ask someone close to her for advice.**

Which is the best way to write the underlined portion of this sentence? If the original is the best way, choose option (1).

- ① her
- ② hers
- ③ them
- ④ they
- ⑤ their

Correction

- ④ Sentence 7: **Usually, the maid of honor is a good friend of the bride and groom, so they may have some ideas for you.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 7?

- ① replace the maid of honor with he
- ② replace they with it
- ③ replace they with she
- ④ replace you with her
- ⑤ replace you with them

Correction

- ⑤ Sentence 9: **That way, the couple will know it is from them and will be able to thank you.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 9?

- ① replace it is with they are
- ② replace from them with you
- ③ replace from them with theirs
- ④ replace from them with yours
- ⑤ replace you with yours

Reflexive and Indefinite Pronouns

A **reflexive pronoun** is a pronoun that refers to the same noun as the subject of the sentence. A reflexive pronoun should agree with that noun or pronoun.

An **indefinite pronoun** is a pronoun that refers to an unknown or unspecified noun. An indefinite pronoun can be singular or plural.

Tip

When an object and subject pronoun refer to the same person or thing, you need to use a reflexive pronoun.

Reflexive Pronouns

A **reflexive pronoun** is an object pronoun that refers to the same noun as the subject of the sentence. A reflexive pronoun should agree with that noun or pronoun.

Examples:

- **Marta** cut **herself** chopping the onions.
(The reflexive pronoun *herself* refers to the noun, *Marta*.)
- **We** laughed **ourselves** silly watching that old Laurel and Hardy movie.
(The reflexive pronoun *ourselves* refers to the pronoun *we*.)
- She made a mistake, but then **she** corrected **herself**.
(The reflexive pronoun *herself* refers to the pronoun *she*.)

Here are the reflexive pronouns:

Singular Reflexive Pronouns	Plural Reflexive Pronouns
myself	ourselves
yourself	yourselves
himself, herself, itself	themselves

Indefinite Pronouns

An **indefinite pronoun** is a pronoun that takes the place of an unspecified or unknown noun. Indefinite pronouns can be singular or plural.

Examples:

- Does **anyone** know the answer to this question?
- Many students applied for scholarships, and **several** got them.

Here are the most common indefinite pronouns:

Always Singular	Always Plural	Singular or Plural
another, anybody, anyone, anything, each, either, everybody, everyone, everything, nobody, no one, neither, nothing, one, somebody, someone, something	both, few, many, others, several	all, any, more, most, none, some

GED Readiness

Questions 1 through 5 refer to the following information. Circle the number of the one best answer to each item.

EVERYONE STILL LOVES LUCY

(1) *I Love Lucy* is one of the biggest success stories of television. (2) Almost no one has heard of the loveable redhead Lucy and her Cuban bandleader husband, Ricky. (3) The show premiered on October 15, 1951, and is still on the air today. (4) The show has been seen in almost every country around the world. (5) Why is the show so popular? (6) First, the show is really funny. (7) In one famous episode, Lucy stuffed themselves with chocolate in order to avoid losing her job at a candy factory. (8) But, more importantly, experts say that we can see us in the program. (9) Each episode focused on real problems that everyone face. (10) That's the real reason why we all love Lucy.

Correction

- ① Sentence 1: *I Love Lucy* is one of the biggest success stories of television.

Which correction should be made to sentence 1?

- ① change is to are
- ② replace one with some
- ③ replace one with each
- ④ replace one with something
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ② Sentence 2: Almost no one has heard of the loveable redhead Lucy and her Cuban bandleader husband, Ricky.

Which is the best way to write the underlined portion of this sentence? If the original is the best way, choose option (1).

- ① no one
- ② someone
- ③ everyone
- ④ everything
- ⑤ many

Correction

- ③ Sentence 7: In one famous episode, Lucy stuffed themselves with chocolate in order to avoid losing her job at a candy factory.

Which correction should be made to sentence 7?

- ① replace themselves with herself
- ② replace themselves with itself
- ③ insert herself after losing
- ④ replace her with herself
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ④ Sentence 8: But, more importantly, experts say that we can see us in the program.

Which correction should be made to sentence 8?

- ① replace we with they
- ② replace us with oneself
- ③ replace us with ourselves
- ④ replace us with everyone
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ⑤ Sentence 9: Each episode focused on real problems that everyone face.

Which correction should be made to sentence 9?

- ① remove Each
- ② replace everyone with oneself
- ③ replace everyone with anyone
- ④ change face to faces
- ⑤ change face to facing

Avoiding Pronoun Shift

If you refer to a noun with the pronouns *he* or *she*, all of the pronouns should be forms related to *he* (*him, his*) or *she* (*her, hers*), as called for by the sentence.

Example:

- You should remind **her** that **she** has a dentist's appointment on Tuesday.
(*She* and *her* are both singular and feminine.)

If the noun is plural, all of the pronouns that refer to that noun should be plural.

Example:

- At the airport, **we** checked our luggage and boarded **our** flight.

A common error is to change the number of the pronouns (singular or plural) or to change the person of the pronouns (from *you* to *one* or from *you* to *we*). To correct a **pronoun shift**, make sure that the pronouns that refer to the same noun match in number and person.

Examples:

- **Incorrect:** After **you** pick up the food from the kitchen, **one** brings it to the customers. (The pronoun *you* in the first clause changes person to *one* in the second clause.)
Correct: After **you** pick up the food from the kitchen, **you** bring it to the customers.
- **Incorrect:** When **you** do aerobics, **we** need to avoid hurting **ourselves**.
(The pronoun *you* in the first clause changes person to *we* and *ourselves* in the second clause.)
Correct: When **we** do aerobics, **we** need to avoid hurting **ourselves**.
- **Incorrect:** If a customer breaks **something**, the customer will have to pay for **them**.
(The singular indefinite pronoun *something* in the first clause changes to the plural *them* in the second clause.)
Correct: If a customer breaks **something**, the customer will have to pay for **it**.

People often use the pronouns *they* or *them* to avoid the awkward phrase *he or she*. This causes a pronoun error.

Example:

- **Incorrect:** If an **employee** is hurt on the job, **they** should report to the company nurse.
(The plural noun *they* incorrectly replaces the singular noun *employee*.)
Correct: If an **employee** is hurt on the job, **he or she** should report to the company nurse.

A **pronoun shift** occurs when the number or person of pronouns is changed when referring to the same person or thing.

Tip

To avoid pronoun shifts, compare the pronouns in the sentence. Do the pronouns refer to the same person or thing? If so, they should be in the same person and number.

GED Readiness

Questions 1 through 4 refer to the following letter. Circle the number of the one best answer to each item.

Ryan-Park Home Theater
Your local source for home entertainment
Dear Customers,

(1) We are proud to announce that after 49 years in downtown Parkville, Ryan-Park Home Theater is moving from our original location to their new, larger location in Parkville Mall.

(2) Our new store will have more room to show the state-of-the art widescreen TVs and home theater systems that we specialize in.

(3) To reward you, our valued customers, we are having a special moving sale from May 2 to May 22. (4) During this time, you can get 20 percent off all purchases of in-stock merchandise if one orders by May 20.

(5) All of our loyal customers are invited to our Grand Opening celebration May 21 at the Parkville Mall at 7:00. (6) You can win free DVDs, CDs, DVD players, or a complete home theater system. (7) If a name is called but that person is not present, they cannot win.

(8) Our store has been serving Parkville families like theirs for almost 50 years, and we hope to continue to do so from our new location for 50 more years.

Correction

- ① Sentence 1: **We are proud to announce that after 49 years in downtown Parkville, Ryan-Park Home Theater is moving from our original location to their new, larger location in Parkville Mall.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 1?

- ① replace We with They
- ② replace our with their
- ③ replace our with its
- ④ replace their with our
- ⑤ replace their with its

Correction

- ② Sentence 4: **During this time, you can get 20 percent off all purchases of in-stock merchandise if one orders by May 20.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 4?

- ① replace you with they
- ② replace you with we
- ③ replace one orders with you order
- ④ replace one orders with they order
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ③ Sentence 7: **If a name is called but that person is not present, they cannot win.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 7?

- ① replace a with your
- ② replace a with someone's
- ③ replace that person is with you are
- ④ replace that person is with they are
- ⑤ replace they with he or she

Correction

- ④ Sentence 8: **Our store has been serving Parkville families like theirs for almost 50 years, and we hope to continue to do so from our new location for 50 more years.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 8?

- ① replace Our with My
- ② replace theirs with yours
- ③ replace we hope with one hopes
- ④ replace our with its
- ⑤ replace our with their

When you write, you should capitalize the first letters of these words:

- The first word of a sentence
The truck just pulled up to the loading dock.
- The pronoun **I**
My boss told me that **I** am a good worker.
- Proper nouns (names of a specific person, place, group, or thing)
Phil and Marie think that Lake Tahoe is one of the most scenic spots in the **United States**.
- Proper adjectives (adjectives that come from proper nouns)
I think that **Moroccan** cooking is delicious.
- People's titles (such as **doctor** or **aunt**), when they come directly before the person's name
He was checked by **Dr. Ida Steinberg**, but she couldn't find anything wrong.
I visited my **Aunt Phyllis** yesterday.
- The names of days of the week, months of the year, and holidays
The bank will be closed on **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**, **Monday**, January 21.

Do not capitalize:

- Names of seasons
I can't wait for **winter** to be over!
- Directional words (such as **north**) unless they refer to parts of the country
We are going **south** for the winter.
The **South** lost the Civil War.
- Subjects in school (such as **math**), unless they refer to specific courses (such as **Math 1**)
We had a great **math** teacher for Algebra 1.
- People's titles (such as **doctor** or **aunt**), when they are not next to a name
We took my grandmother to the **doctor's** office.

Capitalize specific nouns, such as **Doctor Jones** or **Christmas**.
Do not capitalize general nouns, such as **summer** or **holiday**.

Questions 1 through 5 refer to the following letter. Circle the number of the **one best answer** to each item.

Dear Ms. Gray,

(1) I am writing to you to apply for the position of Office Assistant at Heartland Printing Company. (2) I read about this opening in the Sunday, May 8 edition of the Daily News.

(3) For the last three years, I have been a clerk for Dr. Mary Wells. (4) In this position, I answered phones, ordered supplies, and handled all patient billing. (5) I am looking for a new job because the Doctor is retiring at the end of this month. (6) Prior to this position, I was a clerk in the purchasing office of Capitol Electric in Springfield.

(7) My education includes graduation from High School, where I studied office occupations and keyboarding and took Accounting 1.

Correction

- ① Sentence 1: **I am writing to you to apply for the position of Office Assistant at Heartland Printing Company.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 1?

- ① change you to You
- ② change Office Assistant to office assistant
- ③ change Printing Company to printing company
- ④ change Company to company
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ② Sentence 2: **I read about this opening in the Sunday, May 8 edition of the Daily News.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 2?

- ① change Sunday to sunday
- ② change May to may
- ③ change edition to Edition
- ④ change Daily News to daily news
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ③ Sentence 5: **I am looking for a new job because the Doctor is retiring at the end of this month.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 5?

- ① change new job to New Job
- ② change Doctor to doctor
- ③ change end to End
- ④ change month to Month
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ④ Sentence 6: **Prior to this position, I was a clerk in the purchasing office of Capitol Electric in Springfield.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 6?

- ① change clerk to Clerk
- ② change purchasing office to Purchasing Office
- ③ change Capitol Electric to capitol electric
- ④ change springfield to Springfield
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ⑤ Sentence 7: **My education includes graduation from High School, where I studied office occupations and keyboarding and took Accounting 1.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 7?

- ① change graduation to Graduation
- ② change High School to high school
- ③ change office occupations to Office Occupations
- ④ change keyboarding to Keyboarding
- ⑤ change Accounting to accounting

When you write lists of three or more items (such as nouns, verbs, or phrases) joined by *and* or *or*, use commas between the items in the list.

Examples:

- Pedro, Pablo, or Maria can help you. (three nouns)
- Today, I cleaned the supply room, planted flowers along the front walkway, and cut the grass. (four verb phrases)
- This recipe for chicken salad calls for cooked chicken, artichokes, sun-dried tomatoes, celery, onion, and mayonnaise. (six nouns)

The items in the list should be in the same grammatical form: all nouns, all verbs, and so on.

Example:

Incorrect: Mexican cooking is often hot, spicy, and tastes delicious. (two adjectives and a verb phrase)

Correct: Mexican cooking is often hot, spicy, and delicious. (three adjectives)

Use a comma before *and* or *or* and between each of the items in a list of three or more. Do not put a comma after the last item.

Example:

Incorrect: Do you want sugar, honey, or lemon, in your tea? (comma after the last item)

Correct: Do you want sugar, honey, or lemon in your tea? (three nouns in a list with commas)

When you write lists of only two items joined by *and* or *or*, do not use a comma.

Examples:

- Pedro and Maria are early for work every day.
- Tomorrow I will either mow the lawn or fix the front door.

When a list of items is joined by *and* or *or* between each of the items, do not use a comma.

Examples:

- We don't have any onions or celery or parsley in the fridge.
- My dogs sits and begs and heels on command.

Tip

On the GED Test, the comma before *and* is not tested. However, the other commas in these sentences can be tested on the GED.

GED Readiness

Questions 1 through 4 refer to the following information. Circle the number of the one best answer to each item.

(1) Do you like cereal? (2) Do you crave granola corn flakes raisin bran or oatmeal at different times of the day? (3) If so, downtown's newest and most unusual restaurant, the Cereal Bowl, might be for you. (4) This fun spot is a great place for a bowl of cereal morning, noon, or night. (5) The Cereal Bowl has a selection of hundreds of hot and cold cereals. (6) You can top off your cereal with whole milk, low-fat milk, or fat-free milk. (7) What if your oatmeal isn't sweet enough? (8) You can add sweeteners such as sugar, brown sugar, honey, or molasses. (9) You can also add raisins, nuts, strawberries, bananas, blueberries to your cereal. (10) Are you in a hurry but can't stop for a bowl of cereal? (11) In that case, you might want to grab a milk and a cereal bar. (12) You can also get a bag of granola, order a breakfast tortilla, a cup of yogurt, or get a donut to go. (13) The Cereal Bowl is not just for breakfast. (14) It's open from 6:00 in the morning until 9:00 at night.

Revision

- ① Sentence 2: Do you crave granola corn flakes raisin bran or oatmeal at different times of the day?

Which is the best way to write the underlined portion of this sentence? If the original is the best way, choose option (1).

- ① granola corn flakes raisin bran or oatmeal
- ② granola, corn, flakes, raisin, bran, or, oatmeal
- ③ granola, corn flakes, raisin bran, or oatmeal
- ④ granola, corn, flakes, raisin, bran, or oatmeal
- ⑤ granola, corn flakes, raisin, bran, or oatmeal,

Revision

- ② Sentence 5: The Cereal Bowl has a selection of hundreds of hot and cold cereals.

Which is the best way to write the underlined portion of this sentence? If the original is the best way, choose option (1).

- ① of hundreds of hot and cold cereals
- ② of hundreds, of hot, and cold cereals
- ③ of hundreds of hot, and cold cereals
- ④ of hundreds of hot, and, cold cereals
- ⑤ of hundreds of hot, and cold, cereals

Correction

- ③ Sentence 9: You can also add raisins, nuts, strawberries, bananas, blueberries to your cereal.

Which correction should be made to sentence 9?

- ① replace raisins, nuts with raisins and nuts
- ② insert a comma after add
- ③ insert but after bananas
- ④ insert or after bananas
- ⑤ add a comma after blueberries

Correction

- ④ Sentence 12: You can also get a bag of granola, order a breakfast tortilla, a cup of yogurt, or get a donut to go.

Which correction should be made to sentence 12?

- ① remove order
- ② insert buy before a cup
- ③ remove the comma after tortilla
- ④ insert a comma after donut
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Commas Joining Independent Clauses

Independent Clauses

A clause is a group of words with a complete subject and verb. An **independent clause** is a complete thought that can stand alone as a sentence.

Examples:

- Tony and Tina got married last year.
(*Tony and Tina* are the subject, *got married* is the verb)
- This year they bought a house.
(*They* is the subject, *bought* is the verb.)

Joining Independent Clauses

When joining two independent clauses with *and*, *but*, or *or*, always use a comma.

Examples:

- Tony and Tina got married last year, **and** this year they bought a house.
- This summer, my son will go to summer school, **or** he will find a summer job.
- I fixed the car, **but** I didn't wash it.

Joining Predicates

Do not use a comma to join two predicates into a compound predicate with *and* or *or*.

Examples:

- This summer, my son will go to summer school **or** find a summer job.
- Diane bought a new dress **and** went to the movies.

Use commas to join three or more predicates with *and*, *but*, or *or*.

Examples:

- We bought some flowers at the nursery, planted them, **and** watered them.
- Jeff walks, takes the bus, **or** rides the subway to work.

An **independent clause** is a complete thought that can stand alone as a sentence. When joining two independent clauses with *and*, *but*, or *or*, always use a comma. Do not use a comma to join two predicates.

Tip

To figure out if you are joining clauses or predicates, look for the subjects. If they are clauses, each clause will have a subject. If they are predicates, there will be only one subject.

Examples:

John works in New York but lives in New Jersey. (one subject; no comma)

John works in New York, but his wife works in New Jersey. (two subjects; use a comma)

GED Readiness

Questions 1 through 5 refer to the following information. Circle the number of the one best answer to each item.

(1) You may have a lot of old clothes that your children outgrew, or maybe you have household items and collectables that you no longer need. (2) You want to sell them but you don't want to have a garage sale. (3) You can try an Internet auction.

(4) There are several places on the Internet where you can sell used items online. (5) You just go to the site, fill out a form, and upload pictures of your items. (6) At the end of the auction, you simply examine the bids and the customer with the highest bid gets the item. (7) The customer sends you a payment using a credit card or an online payment system. (8) You ship the customer his or her purchase. (9) You will soon find out that buying and selling things on the Internet is easy and fun.

Correction

- ① Sentence 1: **You may have a lot of old clothes that your children outgrew, or maybe you have household items and collectables that you no longer need.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 1?

- ① remove the comma after outgrew
- ② insert a comma after or
- ③ insert commas after household and items
- ④ insert a comma after items
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Revision

- ② Sentence 2: **You want to sell them but you don't want to have a garage sale.**

Which is the best way to write the underlined portion of this sentence? If the original is the best way, choose option (1).

- ① them but you
- ② them, but you
- ③ them you
- ④ them, you
- ⑤ them, but, you

Correction

- ③ Sentence 6: **At the end of the auction, you simply examine the bids and the customer with the highest bid gets the item.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 6?

- ① remove the comma after auction
- ② insert a comma after bids
- ③ remove and
- ④ replace and with or
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Construction Shift

- ④ Sentences 7 and 8: **The customer sends you a payment using a credit card or an online payment system. You ship the customer his or her purchase.**

The most effective combination of sentences 7 and 8 would include which group of words?

- ① online payment system, you ship
- ② online payment system you ship
- ③ online payment system, and you ship
- ④ online payment system, but you ship
- ⑤ online payment system and ships

Correction

- ⑤ Sentence 9: **You will soon find out that buying and selling things on the Internet is easy and fun.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 9?

- ① insert a comma after buying
- ② insert a comma after things
- ③ insert a comma after Internet
- ④ insert a comma after easy
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Commas Joining Subordinate Clauses

Subordinate, or Dependent, Clauses

An independent clause is a complete thought that can stand alone as a sentence. A **subordinate or dependent clause** is not a complete thought and cannot stand alone as a sentence. Join a subordinate clause with an independent clause to make a sentence that makes sense.

Examples:

- We won't go on a picnic.
(An independent clause—a complete thought that can stand alone)
- If it rains tomorrow.
(A subordinate clause—not a complete thought and cannot stand alone)
- We won't go on a picnic if it rains tomorrow.
(Subordinate clause joined with an independent clause)

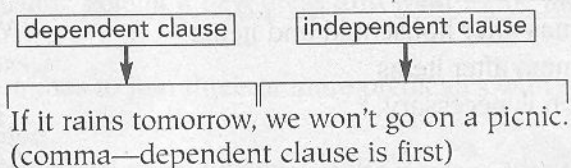
A subordinating conjunction always begins a dependent clause. Some common conjunctions are *after*, *because*, *since*, *when*, *while*, *unless*, *if*, and *until*. A complete list of subordinating conjunctions is in Skill 4.

Joining Independent and Dependent Clauses

When you join independent and dependent clauses, a comma is sometimes needed. How do you decide when to use a comma? It depends on which clause is first.

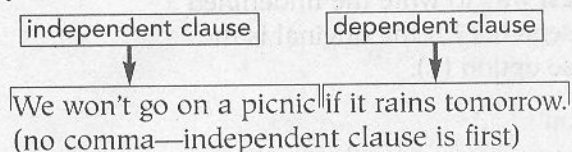
- Use a comma when the dependent clause is first in the sentence.

Example:



- A comma is not needed when the independent clause is first in the sentence.

Example:



A **subordinate or dependent clause** is not a complete thought and cannot stand alone as a sentence. To fix it, join the subordinate clause with an independent clause.

Tip

To figure out whether a comma is needed when joining independent and dependent clauses, look for the subordinating conjunction. If it's at the beginning of the sentence, a comma is needed at the end of the clause. If it's in the middle of the sentence, a comma is not needed.

GED Readiness

Questions 1 through 5 refer to the following information. Circle the number of the one best answer to each item.

(1) Although all adult citizens can vote, voter turnout has been low in recent elections.
(2) Voter participation will continue to decrease, unless we take action and reverse this trend.

(3) There are many reasons why people don't vote. (4) For example, many citizens can't vote because they are not registered. (5) People are registered to vote but often do not exercise this vital right. (6) Many citizens fail to vote. (7) They think that voting is time-consuming.

(8) The government needs to do more to encourage people to vote. (9) Before each election, the city should hold registration drives. (10) In addition, people should get time off from work they can vote.

Correction

- ① Sentence 1: **Although all adult citizens can vote, voter turnout has been low in recent elections.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 1?

- ① insert a comma after Although
- ② remove the comma after vote
- ③ insert and before voter
- ④ insert a comma before turnout
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ② Sentence 2: **Voter participation will continue to decrease, unless we take action and reverse this trend.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 2?

- ① insert a comma after participation
- ② remove the comma after decrease
- ③ remove unless
- ④ insert a comma after action
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Construction Shift

- ③ Sentence 5: **People are registered to vote but often do not exercise this vital right.**

If you rewrote sentence 5 beginning with Even though people are registered the next words should be

- ① to vote but often do not
- ② to vote, they often do not
- ③ to vote they often do not
- ④ to vote often do not
- ⑤ to vote, but they often do not

Construction Shift

- ④ Sentences 6 and 7: **Many citizens fail to vote. They think that voting is time-consuming.**

Which is the most effective combination of sentences 6 and 7?

- ① Many citizens fail to vote they think that voting is time-consuming.
- ② Many citizens fail to vote, they think that voting is time-consuming.
- ③ Many citizens fail to vote because they think that voting is time-consuming.
- ④ Many citizens fail to vote, because they think that voting is time-consuming.
- ⑤ Many citizens fail to vote although they think that voting is time-consuming.

Correction

- ⑤ Sentence 10: **In addition, people should get time off from work they can vote.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 10?

- ① remove the comma after addition
- ② insert a comma after work
- ③ insert a comma and so that after work
- ④ insert so that after work
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Commas After Introductory Prepositional Phrases

A **prepositional phrase** consists of a preposition and its object (the noun or pronoun that follows the preposition). Common prepositions include *on*, *at*, *for*, *in*, *with*, *without*, *before*, *after*, *to*, *during*, and *by*.

Examples:

- on the right
- at work
- for lunch
- in June
- with Anna's help
- after work
- during the movie

When a prepositional phrase begins a sentence, it is usually followed by a comma.

Examples:

- **On the right**, you can see one of the most famous buildings in our city.
- **At work**, Francisco sells car insurance.
- **For lunch**, I ate a fresh salad.
- **In June**, I will take the GED test.
- **With Anna's help**, I was able to repair the computer.
- **After work**, we are having a baby shower for Mrs. Papovich.
- **During the movie**, the people sitting in front of me kept talking.

Do not use a comma when the prepositional phrase comes later in the sentence.

Examples:

- You can see one of the most famous buildings in our city **on the right**.
- Francisco sells car insurance **at work**.
- I ate a fresh salad **for lunch**.
- I will take the GED test **in June**.
- I was able to repair the computer **with Anna's help**.
- We are having a baby shower for Mrs. Papovich **after work**.
- The people sitting in front of me kept talking **during the movie**.

Tip

When a **prepositional phrase** begins a sentence, it is followed by a comma. Do not use a comma when the prepositional phrase comes later in the sentence.

GED Readiness

Questions 1 through 4 refer to the following information. Circle the number of the one best answer to each item.

ARTS COMPLEX ANNOUNCES GRAND OPENING

(1) The Madison Performing Arts Complex, Grandville's brand-new theater complex, is having its grand opening on May 14. (2) With two auditoriums the complex has seats for 1,800 people in its main auditorium. (3) A second, smaller theater in the lower level seats 350 people. (4) The auditorium can be used for plays, pop and classical concerts, and ballets. (5) In downtown Grandville the beautiful white stone building with large windows looks out onto the large plaza on Main Street. (6) Inside the auditorium, large murals on each side of the state depict scenes from the history of Grandville. (7) Madison Arts Complex also has a great new restaurant, the Madison Café. (8) Before or after a concert or play enjoy a meal, a snack, or a delicious dessert. (9) On Saturday, May 14 residents can take a tour of the complex. (10) Later in May, residents can attend the first performance in the theater, *A Raisin in the Sun*.

Correction

- ① Sentence 2: **With two auditoriums the complex has seats for 1,800 people in its main auditorium.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 2?

- ① insert a comma after auditoriums
- ② replace complex with Complex
- ③ insert a comma after complex
- ④ insert a comma after people
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ② Sentence 5: **In downtown Grandville the beautiful white stone building with large windows looks out onto the large plaza on Main Street.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 5?

- ① insert a comma after Grandville
- ② insert a comma after building
- ③ insert commas after windows
- ④ insert a comma after out
- ⑤ insert a comma after plaza

Correction

- ③ Sentence 8: **Before or after a concert or play enjoy a meal, a snack, or a delicious dessert.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 8?

- ① insert a comma after Before
- ② insert a comma after concert
- ③ insert a comma after play
- ④ remove the comma after meal
- ⑤ remove the comma after snack

Correction

- ④ Sentence 9: **On Saturday, May 14 residents can take a tour of the complex.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 9?

- ① remove the comma after Saturday
- ② insert a comma after 14
- ③ insert a comma after residents
- ④ insert a comma after tour
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Use commas with introductory phrases, appositives, interrupting expressions, and words in direct address.

Tip

Be careful not to confuse an appositive with a list of two items with *or*.

- A list of two different items joined by *or* does not have commas.

Example:

- Were you trained to give artificial respiration or the Heimlich maneuver?
(*Artificial respiration* and *Heimlich maneuver* are items in a list joined by *or*. Commas are not needed.)

Introductory Phrases

You already know to use a comma after an introductory prepositional phrase. You should also use a comma after other introductory phrases.

Examples:

In the garden, he planted several kinds of vegetables.
(introductory prepositional phrase)

Carefully, the driver backed the truck into the loading dock entrance. (introductory adverb)

Unfortunately for Liz, she slipped and hurt her ankle.
(introductory adverb phrase)

Appositives

An **appositive** is a word or phrase that re-names a noun using different words. Use commas to separate appositives from the rest of the sentence.

Examples:

My neighbor, **Mrs. Green**, is 98 years old.

My car, **a sporty red convertible**, is the envy of my friends.

Interrupting Expressions

An adverb or a transition word or phrase can interrupt a sentence. Set off these expressions with commas.

Examples:

Mrs. Williamson, **unfortunately**, lost her car keys at the picnic.
(adverb)

She found her keys later, **however**, in the parking lot.
(transition word)

There are many things to do in this town. We could, **for example**, go to the movies. (transition phrase)

Direct Address

Use a comma when a word or phrase directly addresses someone.

Examples:

Mrs. Smith, may I offer a suggestion?

Ben, please put the casserole in the oven at 5:00.

GED Readiness

Questions 1 through 4 refer to the following information. Circle the number of the one best answer to each item.

(1) Getting a credit card is an important financial step for anyone. (2) However finding a credit card that offers a good deal is also important.

(3) When you look for a credit card, you should examine two key numbers: the annual fee and the annual percentage rate. (4) The annual fee is the amount you have to pay each year to keep the card. (5) The annual percentage rate, or APR, is the interest rate you pay each month.

(6) If you plan on paying your balance each month, then you should look for a card with a low annual fee. (7) Typically, annual fees range from \$29 to \$50, but some premium plastic, such as gold credit cards may cost more.

(8) Additionally, if you plan to pay your bill in full each month, you should ensure that the card offers a grace period. (9) The grace period, usually 30 days, is the time you have to pay the charges before interest starts.

(10) In contrast, if you will carry a balance each month, you should look for a low APR. (11) Saving even one or two percent in interest can mean hundreds of dollars over the course of a year if you carry a balance.

Correction

- ① Sentence 2: **However finding a credit card that offers a good deal is also important.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 2?

- ① insert a comma after However
- ② insert commas after card and deal
- ③ insert a comma after deal
- ④ insert commas after is and also
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ② Sentence 5: **The annual percentage rate, or APR, is the interest rate you pay each month.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 5?

- ① insert a comma after annual
- ② insert commas after annual and percentage
- ③ remove the comma after percentage rate
- ④ remove the comma after APR
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ③ Sentence 7: **Typically, annual fees range from \$29 to \$50, but some premium plastic, such as gold credit cards may cost more.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 7?

- ① remove the comma after Typically
- ② remove the comma after \$50
- ③ remove the comma after plastic
- ④ insert a comma after gold
- ⑤ insert a comma after cards

Correction

- ④ Sentence 9: **The grace period, usually 30 days, is the time you have to pay the charges before interest starts.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 9?

- ① remove the comma after period
- ② remove the comma after days
- ③ insert a comma after have
- ④ insert a comma after charges
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Sometimes writers use extra commas accidentally. In fact, the comma is the most misused punctuation mark. Here are some frequent comma errors:

Avoid Commas with Compound Predicates

A compound predicate is two predicates joined by a word like *and* or *or*. A comma is not needed between the predicates.

Incorrect: A player took a hard fall, and broke his wrist.
(compound predicate: *took a hard fall and broke his wrist*)

Correct: A player took a hard fall and broke his wrist.

Avoid Commas that Join a Dependent and an Independent Clause

When the independent clause comes first in the sentence, a comma is not needed between that clause and the dependent clause.

Incorrect: He moved to California, because he could get a better job there. (independent clause: *He moved to California*; dependent clause: *because he could get a better job there*)

Correct: He moved to California because he could get a better job there.

Tip

Unnecessary commas are a common error. To avoid unnecessary commas, only use a comma when it is required by a rule or when it is needed for clarity.

Avoid Commas in Lists of Two Items

Lists of two items joined by *and* or *or* do not need commas.

Incorrect: Mark, and Lindsey went to the supermarket, and bought groceries. (two subjects: *Mark and Lindsey*; two predicates: *went to the supermarket and bought groceries*)

Correct: Mark and Lindsey went to the supermarket and bought groceries.

Avoid Commas After *And* or *Or*

Commas are not needed after *and* or *or* when they are used to join lists of items.

Incorrect: This salad contains lettuce, onion, tomatoes, green pepper, and, grated carrot.

Correct: This salad contains lettuce, onion, tomatoes, green pepper, and grated carrot.

Avoid Commas Between a Subject and a Verb

A comma is not needed between the subject and the verb of a sentence.

Incorrect: Running for an hour, is an important part of his routine. (subject: *running for an hour*; verb: *is*)

Correct: Running for an hour is an important part of his routine.

Questions 1 through 5 refer to the following information. Circle the number of the one best answer to each item.

(1) Today, many parents worry that their children spend too much time watching TV, and playing video games. (2) What can you do to encourage a more active lifestyle?

(3) First, consider sports. (4) Your son or daughter, might like to participate in an organized sport, such as after-school soccer.

(5) Second, encourage your child to develop interests in new crafts or hobbies. (6) Your child might be interested in dancing, or collecting coins and stamps. (7) In many places community centers offer classes for kids on interesting subjects, such as acting and magic.

(8) If your child is interested he or she might want to learn to play a musical instrument.

Correction

- ① Sentence 1: **Today, many parents worry that their children spend too much time watching TV, and playing video games.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 1?

- ① remove the comma after Today
- ② insert a comma after parents
- ③ insert a comma after children
- ④ remove the comma after TV
- ⑤ insert a comma between and and playing

Correction

- ② Sentence 4: **Your son or daughter, might like to participate in an organized sport, such as after-school soccer.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 4?

- ① remove the comma after daughter
- ② insert a comma after participate
- ③ remove the comma after sport
- ④ insert a comma after school
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ③ Sentence 6: **Your child might be interested in dancing, or collecting coins and stamps.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 6?

- ① insert a comma after in
- ② remove the comma after dancing
- ③ insert a comma after collecting
- ④ insert a comma after coins
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ④ Sentence 7: **In many places community centers offer classes for kids on interesting subjects, such as acting and magic.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 7?

- ① insert a comma after places
- ② insert a comma after centers
- ③ remove the comma after subjects
- ④ insert a comma after acting
- ⑤ insert a comma after and

Correction

- ⑤ Sentence 8: **If your child is interested he or she might want to learn to play a musical instrument.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 8?

- ① add a comma after interested
- ② insert a comma after he
- ③ insert a comma after she
- ④ insert a comma after musical
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Using Apostrophes

25

Possessive nouns and possessive pronouns show who owns something.

Contractions are a shortened form of two words written together, such as a subject pronoun and a verb or a verb and *not*.

Tip

To figure out whether *its* needs an apostrophe, try saying *it is* in place of *its*. If you can say *it is*, use an apostrophe. If you cannot say *it is*, then do not use an apostrophe.

Tip

In contractions, use the apostrophe to show the letters that were omitted. *it is* = *it's*

Possessives

Possessive nouns show who owns or possesses another noun.

Add an apostrophe and an *s* (*'s*) to singular and plural nouns that do not end in *-s*.

Examples:

This is Martha's book. (singular noun)

The women's restroom is down the hall on the left. (plural noun)

The possessive pronoun *its* does not use an apostrophe. Only the contraction *it's* (*it is*) uses an apostrophe.

Examples:

The dog's feeding dish is in the kitchen, and **its** bed is in the hall. (possessive pronoun)

It's time to feed the dog. (contraction)

Add an apostrophe after plural possessive nouns ending in *-s*.

The twins' bedroom is at the end of the hall.

The classes' new teacher is Miss Applebee.

Contractions

Contractions are words that are shortened by combining two words and leaving out letters.

To write a contraction, put the apostrophe in the place where letters were omitted.

Example:

His bus **wasn't** on time this morning. (combines *was* and *not*; the apostrophe is where the letter *o* was omitted from *not*)

Many contractions are formed with

- a subject pronoun and a verb
- a verb and *not*

Subject Pronoun and a Verb		Verb and Not	
she's = she is or has	he'll = he will	couldn't = could not	isn't = is not
I'd = I would	I'm = I am	can't = cannot	wasn't = was not
they're = they are	they'd = they had or would	shouldn't = should not	
you're = you are			

GED Readiness

Questions 1 through 5 refer to the following information. Circle the number of the one best answer to each item.

(1) The Friends of Lakeview will have it's next regular meeting on Monday, May 23 at 7:30 P.M. (2) The meeting will take place in Wallace O. Williams High Schools community room. (3) The meeting's agenda includes planning Lakeview's annual fair. (4) Also on the agenda is a discussion of the cities plan for its annual back-to-school parade. (5) Finally, well' be joined by Bernie Hansen, a representative from the local branch of Commerce Bank, who will update us on the construction of the bank's new branch. (6) Were going to postpone the tour of the new school auditorium until June's meeting.

Correction

- ① Sentence 1: **The Friends of Lakeview will have it's next regular meeting on Monday, May 23 at 7:30 P.M.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 1?

- ① replace Friends with Friend's
- ② replace Friends with Friends'
- ③ replace it's with its
- ④ replace it's with its'
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ② Sentence 2: **The meeting will take place in Wallace O. Williams High Schools community room.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 2?

- ① replace Williams with William's
- ② replace Williams with Williams'
- ③ replace Schools with Schools'
- ④ replace Schools with School's
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ③ Sentence 4: **Also on the agenda is a discussion of the cities plan for its annual back-to-school parade.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 4?

- ① replace cities with cities'
- ② replace cities with city's
- ③ replace cities with citys'
- ④ replace its with it's
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ④ Sentence 5: **Finally, well' be joined by Bernie Hansen, a representative from the local branch of Commerce Bank, who will update us on the construction of the bank's new branch.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 5?

- ① replace well' with well
- ② replace well' with we'll
- ③ replace bank's with banks
- ④ replace bank's with banks'
- ⑤ no correction is necessary

Correction

- ⑤ Sentence 6: **Were going to postpone the tour of the new school auditorium until June's meeting.**

Which correction should be made to sentence 6?

- ① replace Were with We're
- ② replace Were with W're
- ③ replace June's with Junes'
- ④ replace June's with Junes
- ⑤ no correction is necessary