

# Exercise walk-through

Writing clear sentences ■ 8.6

eXercise

## You must be able to

- start a sentence with the subject when time is short
- avoid the constructions that most often go wrong under pressure
- repair a sentence quickly without rewriting the paragraph
- keep clarity while writing at speed

## Method — Subject first

Under time pressure, the safest sentence begins with its subject and reaches its verb quickly. Elaborate openings are where timed writing collapses.

## Method — Constructions that fail under pressure

Long introductory clauses; multiple embedded qualifications; a pronoun three sentences from its noun. Each is manageable with time to check, and each fails without it.

## Method — Fast repair

If a sentence has gone wrong, do not rewrite the paragraph. Break it at the nearest full stop and start a new sentence with the subject. Two plain sentences beat one broken one.

## Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State the safest sentence shape under time pressure.

## Solution 2.1

Method: Subject first

### Worked steps

begin with the subject **B1** and reach the verb quickly **B1**.

## Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

Name two constructions that fail under pressure.

## Solution 2.2

Method: Constructions that fail under pressure

### Worked steps

any two of: long introductory clauses; multiple embedded qualifications; a pronoun far from its noun **B2**.

## Practice 2.3 ■ 1 mark

A sentence has run out of control mid-paragraph.

- (a) State the fastest repair.
- (b) State why rewriting the paragraph is the wrong move.

## Solution 2.3

Method: Fast repair

### Worked steps

(a) end the sentence at the nearest full stop and start a new one with the subject **B1**. (b) it costs time the essay does not have, for no gain in clarity **B1**.

## Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

In a timed essay, an elaborate opening clause is risky because

- A** it is too formal
- B** the sentence often collapses before the verb
- C** it is ungrammatical
- D** it wastes ink

## Solution 3.1

Method: Subject first

- A it is too formal
- B the sentence often collapses before the verb 
- C it is ungrammatical
- D it wastes ink

### Worked steps

- B. the sentence loses its shape before the verb arrives.

## Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

Two plain sentences instead of one broken one is

- A** a stylistic failure
- B** the correct fast repair
- C** a comma splice
- D** a concession

## Solution 3.2

Method: Fast repair

- A a stylistic failure
- B the correct fast repair 
- C a comma splice
- D a concession

### Worked steps

B. clarity beats one elaborate sentence.

## Exam-style 3.3 ■ 4 marks

Rewrite as two clear sentences: “Given that the evidence, which comes from several sources including the department’s own figures that were published last year, points in one direction, it seems that the policy should change.”

## Solution 3.3

Method: Fast repair

### Worked steps

two grammatical sentences **B2**; each begins with its subject **B1**; meaning preserved **B1**.