

Exercise walk-through

Control over the elements of composition ■ 3.10

eXercise

You must be able to

- state what grammar and mechanics allow a writer to do
- explain why this is a communication issue rather than an etiquette one
- identify the errors that most obscure meaning
- proofread for meaning rather than for rules

Method — What they allow

Grammar and mechanics that follow established conventions of language allow writers to clearly communicate their interpretation of a text. The stated purpose is clarity of interpretation.

Method — Not etiquette

The CED does not say correct writing is polite or expected; it says it lets the interpretation reach the reader. An error matters in proportion to what it obscures.

Method — The worst errors

Unclear pronoun reference (which character?), a misplaced modifier (who did what?), and a sentence with no main verb. Each of these hides the claim, which is the one thing the essay exists to make.

Method — Proofreading for meaning

Read each sentence asking whether a stranger could say who did what to whom. That test finds the errors that cost marks and ignores the ones that do not.

Practice 2.1 ■ 2 marks

State what grammar and mechanics allow a writer to do.

Solution 2.1

Method: What they allow

Worked steps

clearly communicate their interpretation of a text **B1** by following established conventions of language **B1**.

Practice 2.2 ■ 2 marks

Name two errors that most obscure meaning.

Solution 2.2

Method: Proofreading for meaning

Worked steps

any two of: unclear pronoun reference; a misplaced modifier; a sentence with no main verb **B2**.

Practice 2.3 ■ 2 marks

An error matters in proportion to what it obscures.

- (a) State the test to apply when proofreading.
- (b) State the CED's stated purpose for conventions.

Solution 2.3

Method: Not etiquette

Worked steps

(a) ask whether a stranger could say who did what to whom **B2**. (b) to allow the writer's interpretation to be clearly communicated **B1**.

Exam-style 3.1 ■ 1 mark

The CED's stated purpose for grammar and mechanics is

- A** politeness
- B** clear communication of an interpretation
- C** tradition
- D** length

Solution 3.1

Method: What they allow

- A politeness
- B clear communication of an interpretation 
- C tradition
- D length

Worked steps

- B. clear communication.

Exam-style 3.2 ■ 1 mark

Unclear pronoun reference obscures

A which character is meant

B the page number

C the genre

D the title

Solution 3.2

Method: The worst errors

A which character is meant



B the page number

C the genre

D the title

Worked steps

A. which character is meant.

Exam-style 3.3 ■ 1 mark

A sentence leaves it unclear whose motive is being described.

- (a) State the error type.
- (b) Explain why it costs more than a spelling slip.

Solution 3.3

Method: The worst errors

Worked steps

(a) unclear pronoun reference **B1**. (b) it hides the claim the sentence exists to make **B1**, whereas a misspelling leaves the meaning recoverable **B1**.