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SAT/PSAT Study Materials

Examples from the Writing Section



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Pronoun Usage

The area of pronoun usage is one of the most important sections for you. The test will have many questions regarding pronouns. What makes this section so difficult is that our spoken language does not always reflect the proper rules of pronoun usage. In other words, mistakes in pronoun usage are very common in our spoken language. You will find that what sounds good to you is often wrong, and what sounds horrible and ridiculous to you will often be correct. You will be able to raise your score in this area if you will make a commitment to yourself that every time you see a pronoun, you will find its antecedent and analyze its use.

You will be tested over only three kinds of pronouns: personal pronouns, indefinite pronouns, and demonstrative pronouns.

You will need to know what those are and how they are used.

Personal Pronoun Cases

Our personal pronouns are divided into cases just as they are in foreign languages. You will find it helpful to know these cases.

The **Nominative** case is used for subjects and predicate nominatives.

The **Possessive** case is used to show possession.

The **Objective** case is used for direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions.

Memorize the following chart.

Singular	Nominative	Possessive	Objective
1 st person	I	my, mine	me
2 nd person	you	your, yours	you
3 rd person	he, she, it who, whoever	his, her, hers, its	him, her, it whom, whomever
Plural			
1 st person	we	our, ours	us
2 nd person	you	your, yours	you
3 rd person	they	their, theirs	them

You will also need to recognize the person of the pronoun, whether it is 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person.

Let's Practice

Determine whether the pronouns in parentheses function as subjects or objects. Then choose the correct pronoun to complete the sentence based upon your assessment of its function.

- | Function | Pronoun |
|----------|---|
| _____ | _____ 1. (I, me) went to the movies last night. |
| _____ | _____ 2. Gary and (I, me) went to the movies last night. |
| _____ | _____ 3. Dad showed (I, me) how to build the project. |
| _____ | _____ 4. Dad showed Larry and (I, me) how to build the project. |
| _____ | _____ 5. Everyone saw (I, me) leave early. |
| _____ | _____ 6. Everyone saw Terry and (I, me) leave early. |
| _____ | _____ 7. (She, Her) ate the food very quickly. |
| _____ | _____ 8. Kelly and (she, her) ate the food very quickly. |
| _____ | _____ 9. (She and I, Me and her, Her and I) ate the food very quickly. |
| _____ | _____ 10. No one expected (him and I, he and I, me and him) to be at the party. |
| _____ | _____ 11. Margaret went to the zoo with Mary and (I, me). |

Check Your Answers

Function	Pronoun	Function	Pronoun
1. Subject	I	6. Direct Object	me
2. Subject	I	7. Subject	she
3. Direct Object	me	8. Subject	she
4. Direct Object	me	9. Subject	She and I
5. Direct Object	me	10. Direct Object	me and him
		11. Obj. of Prep.	me

Antecedents of Pronouns

You already know that a pronoun is a substitute for a noun.

Example: Mary washed her clothes. The pronoun *her* is a substitute for *Mary*.

Pronouns can also be substitutes for other pronouns.

Example: Everyone in the room received his materials. The pronoun *his* is a substitute for *everyone*.

The word that the pronoun refers to is called its *antecedent*. The critical thing for you to know is that all pronouns must agree with their antecedents in three ways: number (singular or plural), gender (masculine or feminine), and person (1st, 2nd, or 3rd person).

You will find several questions on the SAT/PSAT dealing with pronouns and their antecedents.

Indefinite Pronouns

We have already looked at Indefinite Pronouns when we discussed Subject-verb Agreement, but here they are again. You will need to memorize this list.

Singular

<i>everyone</i>	<i>someone</i>	<i>no one</i>	<i>anyone</i>	<i>each</i>
<i>everybody</i>	<i>somebody</i>	<i>nobody</i>	<i>anybody</i>	<i>either</i>
<i>everything</i>	<i>something</i>	<i>nothing</i>	<i>anything</i>	<i>neither</i>
				<i>one</i>

Plural

<i>both</i>	<i>few</i>	<i>many</i>	<i>several</i>
-------------	------------	-------------	----------------

Singular / Plural

<i>all</i>	<i>some</i>	<i>more</i>	<i>most</i>	<i>none</i>	<i>any</i>
------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	-------------	------------

You will find sentences on the SAT/PSAT that use these Indefinite Pronouns as antecedents to other pronouns. You **must** know whether the pronoun is singular or plural in order to know whether the pronoun in question should be singular or plural. You'll have to memorize the list.

Example: Everyone in the room is going to (his, their) seat.

Everyone is the antecedent. It is singular. Therefore, we must choose the singular pronoun *his* to agree with the antecedent *everyone*.

Agreement with the Antecedent

You will find several questions that deal with antecedent agreement. The antecedent is the word that the pronoun refers to. To approach these questions, you will look at the pronoun, find the word it refers to, and check to be sure the pronoun agrees with its antecedent in number (singular or plural), in gender (masculine or feminine), and in person (1st, 2nd, or 3rd person). One big hint is that you should always get rid of prepositional phrases first. A pronoun will rarely refer to an object of the preposition.

Example: *Each* of the candidates did a great job in presenting (*his, their*) view point.

In this example we have to choose between the pronoun *his* and the pronoun *their*. You must find the antecedent, which in this sentence is *each*, and then check to be sure the pronoun agrees with its antecedent in the three ways listed above (in number, in gender, and in person). Since *each* is singular, the pronoun must be singular. Thus the pronoun must be *his*, and not *their*, which is what we commonly hear.

Let's Practice

In the first blank write the antecedent of the pronoun in parentheses. In the second blank write the form of the pronoun required for correct agreement to its antecedent.

Antecedent	Pronoun	
_____	_____	1. Neither of the doctors knew how (he, they) might best treat the patient with the rare disease.
_____	_____	2. Everyone on the train was eager to see the unusual sights that (he, they) had been told were in the region.
_____	_____	3. Far from the view of the spectators, the player found an isolated spot where (he, they) could relax before the game.
_____	_____	4. The driver was told that each of the children was to be delivered to (his, their) front steps.
_____	_____	5. The employer was determined that each of the men would do (his, their) fair share of the work assigned.
_____	_____	6. In the aftermath of the storm, none of the displaced citizens knew where (he, they) could go for help.
_____	_____	7. If Henry gives the book to either of the girls, (she, they) can read it during the weekend.
_____	_____	8. The counselor knew that even though there were several problems with the student, (it, they) could be solved with time.
_____	_____	9. Someone left (his, their) lunch tray on the table in the cafeteria.
_____	_____	10. Some of the students must have forgotten to bring (his, their) notebooks to class.
_____	_____	11. Each of the campers was supposed to bring a flashlight with (him, them) on the overnight hike.

- _____ 12. Each choir member had (his, their) music in the folder before the concert.
- _____ 13. Every police officer filed (his, their) report after the accident.
- _____ 14. Everyone has (his, their) own opinion about what constitutes a good meal.

Check Your Answers

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. neither, he | 8. problems, they |
| 2. everyone, he | 9. someone, his |
| 3. player, he | 10. some (students), their |
| 4. each, his | 11. each, him |
| 5. each, his | 12. member, his |
| 6. none (citizens), they | 13. officer, his |
| 7. either, she | 14. everyone, his |

Ambiguous Reference to the Antecedent

Several questions on the test will have pronouns that do not clearly refer to their antecedents. We call this error *ambiguous reference to the antecedent*. Sometimes the antecedent isn't in the sentence, and sometimes the reference could be to two different antecedents, leaving the reader uncertain about what the writer really intends.

Example: They say in that magazine that the issue of health insurance will soon be a thing of the past and that all people will be able to afford some form of insurance.

Remember that you must look at every pronoun and find its antecedent. When you try to find the antecedent of the pronoun *they* in this sentence, you are in trouble. We really don't know who it refers to. *They* cannot refer to the magazine. It likely refers to the writers of the magazine, or perhaps the editors. Because the antecedent is vague, the sentence is faulty.

Here's another example that has a different problem with the antecedent.

Example: Bob was distressed when Jonathan told him that he was in trouble with the law.

In this sentence we don't know which noun is the antecedent to the pronoun *he*. It could be *Bob*, or it could be *Jonathan*. Bob could be in trouble with the law, and so could Jonathan. We do not know. Since the antecedent is not clear, the sentence is faulty.

Errors of this kind are hard to correct. It usually requires rewriting the entire sentence. On the SAT, you will be required to recognize that an error exists. You will not have to correct it.

Let's Practice

In the space provided, list the pronouns that have ambiguous antecedents

- _____ 1. The lawyer told her legal assistant that she must go to the court house after lunch.
- _____ 2. The manager of the office told his clerk that he needed to keep the window shut.
- _____ 3. When the two men met, James told the other that he was very happy with the poem he had written.
- _____ 4. They say in that magazine that the eclipse will happen within the month.
- _____ 5. It shocked me when you said you were not running for office this year.
- _____ 6. Janice was reluctant to tell Stephanie that she had failed the test.
- _____ 7. Jeff was distressed when David told him he was not invited to the party.
- _____ 8. In that book it tells all about sun spots.

Check Your Answers

- | | |
|---------|--------|
| 1. she | 5. it |
| 2. he | 6. she |
| 3. he | 7. he |
| 4. they | 8. it |

Who Versus Which

You will be required to know the difference between *who* and *which*. This is the simplest part of the test. *Who* refers to people, and *which* refers to things. That is really all you need to know. If you are talking about a martyr, a philanthropist, a jingoist, or any other number of nouns that describe people, you are still talking about a person. You refer to people with the pronoun *who*.

Example: This is the man *who* will present the award at the ceremony. (refers to *man*)
Our house, *which* sits on a very large lot, is surrounded by trees. (refers to a thing)

Let's Practice

Choose the correct form of the pronoun: *who* or *which*.
remember that *who* refers to people; *which* refers to things.

1. This book is about the woman (who, which) flew across the Atlantic.
2. I searched everywhere for the book *The Gift*, (who, which) was assigned as outside reading.

3. Nowhere could I locate a plastic surgeon (who, which) was able to operate within the hour.
4. This award goes to the student (who, which) has made the greatest gains on his scores.
5. The government did not want to create a martyr (who, which) would gain public support.
6. Jeff is a member of the committee (who, which) have cast their votes for the opposition.
7. That club is careful to watch each neophyte (who, which) goes through the initiation process.
8. Kathleen was the president (who, which) supported the club's charity efforts.

Check Your Answers:

1. who 2. which 3. who 4. who 5. who 6. who 7. who 8. who

Who Versus Whom

At the moment ETS does not test you over the difference between *who* and *whom*, but you should be prepared in case the test makers suddenly decide to add that concept to the test.

When you learned about the three cases of pronouns, you saw that *who* is in the nominative case, and *whom* is in the objective case. More specifically, *who* is used as subjects and predicate nominatives while *whom* is used as direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions.

There is a step-by-step process you can go through to determine which pronoun to use. Getting the answer correct will be easy if you use this method.

- Step 1: Isolate the clause that uses *who/whom* and ignore everything else.
- Step 2: Find the verb in the isolated clause. The verb is the word that generally shows action
- Step 3: Find the subject of the verb in the clause. Ask yourself who is doing the action.
- Step 4: If the pronoun choice (*who/whom*) is the subject of the verb or a predicate nominative, the answer is *who*. If the pronoun is not the subject, but is an object of the verb, the answer is *whom*. Choose the correct answer.

Example: I can see the girl (who/whom) is wearing the red dress.

- Step 1: Isolate the clause that uses *who/whom* and ignore everything else.
[(who/whom) is wearing the red dress] Ignore everything else.
- Step 2: Find the verb in the isolated clause.
is wearing
- Step 3: Find the subject of the verb in the isolated clause. Ask yourself who is doing the action.
(who/whom) is wearing the red dress. The pronoun *who/whom*, then, is the subject.
- Step 4: Choose the correct answer.
Since the pronoun choice is used as the subject, you would choose *who* as the answer. Remember that ***who*** is used as subjects; ***whom*** is used as objects.

Let's look at another example and use the same process to find the correct answer.

Example: That is the man (who, whom) Janet saw at the movies last night.

Step 1: Isolate the clause that uses *who/whom* and ignore everything else.

[(who/whom) Janet saw at the movies last night] Ignore everything else.

Step 2: Find the verb in the isolated clause.

saw

Step 3: Find the subject of the verb in the isolated clause. Ask yourself who is doing the action.

Who saw? Janet saw. **Janet**, then, is the subject. That means your pronoun choice cannot be the subject. It actually functions as the direct object. *Janet saw (who, whom)*.

Step 4: Choose the correct answer.

Since the pronoun choice is used as the object, you would choose *whom* as the answer.

Remember that **who** is used as subjects; **whom** is used as objects.

One more tip. When the sentence adds extra clauses like "I think," and "it seems to me," you must ignore those clauses. They have their own subjects and verbs and are complete within themselves.

Example: *He is the man (who, whom) I think will succeed.* Ignore *I think*. *He is the man (who, whom) will succeed.* Then you can solve the problem of whether to use *who* or *whom*. Look first at the clause with the pronoun choice: *(who, whom) will succeed*. Next you must decide how the pronoun is used in the clause. Here, it is the subject. Since it functions as the subject, you must use the Nominative form: *who*. Answer: *He is the man who I think will succeed.*

Let's Practice

Underline the clause that includes the pronoun choice. Sometimes this will be the entire sentence. Decide how the pronoun is used within the clause. Then, choose the correct form of the pronoun: *who* or *whom*.

Remember that *who* is used for subjects and *whom* is used for objects.

1. (Who, whom) washed the dishes?
2. (Who, whom) do you think is on the phone?
3. (Who, whom) is she calling?
4. (Who, whom) did you see at the theater?
5. Jeffrey will not tell me (who, whom) he took to the movies.
6. Becky, (who, whom) has been the librarian for five years, is planning to retire soon.
7. She is the woman to (who, whom) this book belongs.
8. You may give these gifts to (whoever, whomever) sits on the front row.
9. The club will accept (whoever, whomever) you choose as your partner.
10. The man (who, whom) I met at the game is from New York.
11. (Who, Whom) did you see at the movies last week?
12. (Whoever, Whomever) is chosen will be required to make a presentation to the committee.
13. I wanted to know (who, whom) came over to visit today.
14. Rhonda, (who, whom) has been my best friend since first grade, just moved to St. Louis.
15. Sally will not tell me (who, whom) she called.

Check Your Answers

1. (Who, whom) washed the dishes?
2. (Who, whom) do you think is on the phone?
3. (Who, whom) is she calling? Make a statement: She is calling (who, whom).
4. (Who, whom) did you see at the theater?
5. Jeffrey will not tell me (who, whom) he took to the movies.
6. Becky, (who, whom) has been the librarian for five years, is planning to retire soon.
7. She is the woman to (who, whom) this book belongs.
8. You may give these gifts to (whoever, whomever) sits on the front row.
9. The club will accept (whoever, whomever) you choose as your partner.
10. The man (who, whom) I met at the game is from New York.
11. (Who, Whom) did you see at the movies last week?
12. (Whoever, Whomever) is chosen will be required to make a presentation to the committee.
13. I wanted to know (who, whom) came over to visit today.
14. Rhonda, (who, whom) has been my best friend since first grade, just moved to St. Louis.
15. Sally will not tell me (who, whom) she called.

- | | | |
|---------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. who | 6. who | 11. whom |
| 2. who | 7. whom | 12. whoever |
| 3. whom | 8. whoever | 13. who |
| 4. whom | 9. whomever | 14. who |
| 5. whom | 10. whom | 15. whom |

Pronouns as a Compound Element

Probably the most frequent error we see in our language has to do with the use of pronouns as a compound element. It stands to reason then that you will see many questions dealing with this error on the test. If you will analyze the use of the pronouns in the sentences, you will have no problem. If you depend upon what *sounds* right, you might miss the question because we use the pronoun incorrectly very, very often in our spoken language, and you are accustomed to hearing it wrong. Your first step is to make a commitment to yourself that every time you see a pronoun as a compound element, you will analyze how that pronoun is being used.

For example, if you see the set of pronouns **he and I**, you should know from your pronoun chart that those pronouns are in the Nominative Case. You should know that Nominative Case pronouns function only as subjects and predicate nominatives. Therefore, the pronouns **he and I** can only be used as subjects or predicate nominatives.

Example: Martha gave the tickets to (*he and I, me and him*).

Explanation: The pronouns function as the object of the preposition. They are **not** the subject. Therefore you must use **me and him**. Martha gave the tickets to me and him.

Another way to solve the problem is to read the sentence twice and plug in one pronoun at a time. Martha gave the tickets to *me*. Martha gave the tickets to *him*. You certainly wouldn't say *Martha gave the tickets to he* or *Martha gave the tickets to I*.

The process is the same if you have a noun paired with a pronoun. It is still a compound element and must be solved the same way.

Example: Dad said that James and (I, me) could go to the movies.

First decide how the pronoun choice is used in the sentence. It appears in a clause of its own. Within that clause, *James and (I, me) could go to the movies*, the pronoun functions as part of the compound subject. That should give you the answer. Since it is the subject, you must use a Nominative Case pronoun ... *I*.

The other way to solve the problem is by inserting the pronoun choices alone in the sentence. *Dad said that I could go to the movies.* *Dad said that me could go to the movies.*

If you choose this method to find the correct answer, just remember to use each part of the compound element separately. In the above example, you must leave out *James* when you are looking for the correct pronoun.

You will do well to understand that you do not change your language just because you are suddenly talking about more than one person. Whatever you say when using a single pronoun will be the same when you use two pronouns or when you pair a noun and a pronoun.

Let's Practice

Choose the correct form of the pronoun in parentheses.

Remember to analyze the use of the pronouns and determine whether it is used as a subject or an object. Use Nominative Case pronouns for subjects and Objective Case pronouns for objects. Read each sentence twice, using each compound element separately.

1. Samuel told Cathy and (I, me) that we already had tickets to the fair. _____
2. Mom went to the library for David and (I, me). _____
3. Reba and (I, me) tried to get the attendant's attention. _____
4. You and (he, him) can get into the line now. _____
5. If you and (she, her) had waited, the theater would have opened. _____
6. The manager gave the passes to David and (she, her). _____
7. The man at the door surprised (me and him, he and I, him and I). _____
8. The movie's ending upset both Debbie and (I, me). _____

Check Your Answers

- | | |
|-------|---------------|
| 1. me | 5. she |
| 2. me | 6. her |
| 3. I | 7. me and him |
| 4. he | 8. me |

Shift in Person

There is one more thing to know about pronoun usage in order to be prepared for the test. Earlier in the writing section we learned that we cannot shift verb tense without a proper reason. The same idea is true about pronouns. We cannot have a shift in person in our sentences. We generally see this error occur when we begin in 3rd person and then suddenly shift to 2nd person.

Example: A student needs to study hard if you expect to get good grades.

A student is 3rd person. *You* is 2nd person. There is a shift there from 3rd person to 2nd person. It is an error.

Corrected version: A **student** needs to study hard if **he** expects to get good grades.

Many errors of this kind can be easily averted if you will identify the antecedent of each pronoun and be sure that they agree.

Here's another faulty sentence: **I** tried to be diligent, but **you** can never be too careful.

You will not be asked to repair these sentence. You merely have to recognize the mistake.

Let's Practice

Read each of the following sentences for shifts in person. If the sentence is correct as it is, write *correct* in the blank. If the sentence contains an inappropriate shift in person, write *incorrect* in the blank.

- _____ 1. I think I can do well on the test, but you have to be prepared for the very worst.
- _____ 2. A person has to work diligently if you expect to succeed in life.
- _____ 3. If you want to become a doctor, one should take several science courses in college.
- _____ 4. He tried to answer the ladies' questions, but you can only provide so much help.
- _____ 5. When you decide to study, you should find a quiet, dedicated space.

Check your answers

1. incorrect 2. incorrect 3. incorrect 4. incorrect 5. correct

Demonstrative Pronouns

Demonstrative pronouns are words that we use to point out things. Those pronouns are as follows:

This That These Those

This and *That* point out singular things, while *These* and *Those* point out plural things. You will note that these words are often used as adjectives. They are pronouns only when they are used as substitutes for nouns. *This* is my favorite dress. I was not ready for *that*. She wanted *those*.

ETS tests you over the usage of these words. Basically, they want to know if you know the difference between the singular words and the plural words. In their test questions you will find an indicator in the sentence to tell you whether to use a plural pronoun or a singular pronoun.

Example: The book we enjoyed most was ***that of*** the author Mark Twain. *That* refers to *book*.
Of all the books we read, ***those of*** Mark Twain were the best. *Those* refers to *books*.

Pronouns as Appositives

An appositive is a noun (or pronoun) that renames a noun (or pronoun) that it follows.

Example: Bob Smith, my friend, is in charge. *My friend* is the appositive.
My friend Bob Smith is in charge. *Bob Smith* is the appositive

We use the appositive in a strange construction that you can expect to see on your SAT/PSAT tests.

Example: Our teacher gave **us students** the assignment. *Students* is the appositive to *us*.
We students received the assignment. *Students* is the appositive to *we*.

Your task will be to decide which pronoun to use with the appositive. If you know the parts of the sentence and the cases of all pronouns, you will have no trouble. Otherwise, you have to learn a “trick.” It’s simple. When you see a pronoun sitting next to an appositive, merely cross out the noun and read only the pronoun. You will automatically choose the correct pronoun. However, if you read the noun also, you stand a good chance of missing the question because it doesn’t sound right.

Example: Mom gave the pie to (us boys, we boys). Solution: Leave out the word *boys*.
Reworded: Mom gave the pie to us. Correct Version: Mom gave the pie to us boys.

Example: (We students, Us students) went to the play. Solution: Leave out the word *students*.
Reworded: We went to the play. Correct Version: We students went to the play.

In this next test we will combine all the rules we have learned about pronoun usage, as well as all the rules we have learned about verb tense and subject-verb agreement. You must learn to approach the test methodically and look for specific types of errors. It may require reading the question several times. It will definitely require serious analysis, but if you will approach each question in this manner, you will raise your scores because you will answer more questions correctly.

Test Taking Practice

Circle the letter of the underlined portion of the sentence that contains an error.

Approach each question methodically. Look specifically for errors in **verb tense, subject verb agreement, and pronoun usage**. Above each error, write the word or words that would make the sentence correct.

1. Last week we went into the art museum, and an attendant shows us a secluded, secret alcove.
A B C D
No error
E
2. As the business grows and prospers, we will require additional employees which are better prepared to take the company into a new era. No error
A B C D E
3. When we went to the office to file our reports, we saw photos of the damage that had been caused by the recent hurricane. No error
A B C D E
4. The reader must ask himself how the character in this novel can remain so calm after he had returned from such a horrendous event. No error
A B C D E
5. When I went to the hotel garage, neither the manager of the facility nor the attendant told me where he parked my car. No error
A B C D E
6. When I read the newspaper last night, I was surprised that they said the cost of living has not increased. No error
A B C D E
7. Did the teacher assign you and I more math homework, or was that just a figment of my imagination? No error
A B C D E
8. Neither the doctors nor the nurse who administered the pills were aware that the patient had severe allergies. No error
A B C D E
9. The owner of the company hired Ms. Freeport because she lived for several years in France and could speak French fluently. No error
A B C D E

GERUNDS

A gerund is a verb form ending in *ing* that is used as a noun.

Gerunds

I. Identifying Gerunds

Description: A gerund is a verb form ending in *ing* that is used as a noun.

Example: Swimming is fun.

Verb form: swim

-ing form: swimming

used as a noun: *Swimming* is fun.

Remember that nouns can be substituted with pronouns. Therefore, we can substitute the gerund *swimming* with the pronoun *it*, and we will still have a good sentence.

Example: *Swimming* is fun. *It* is fun.

How to find it: Look for a word that looks like a verb ending in -ing. Try to replace the word with *it*. If the replacement leaves you with a good sentence, you have found a gerund.

Example: Skiing can be dangerous. *It* can be dangerous.

Instructions: Underline the gerunds in the following sentences.

Example: Singing is fun.

1. Crying will get you nowhere.
2. Reading can be exciting.
3. Laughing is good for your health.
4. Have you thought about exercising?
5. Would you please stop shouting?
6. Walking is good for your health.
7. You should try dieting.
8. You can learn more by studying.
9. He was awarded for winning.
10. Studying will lead to better grades.

II. Identifying Gerund Phrases

Definition: A gerund phrase consists of a gerund and any modifiers or complements it may have.

Example: Walking in the rain is sometimes fun.

How to find it: Look for the entire group of words that can be substituted by the word *it*. Remember that nouns can be substituted with pronouns and that a gerund is a noun. Therefore it can be substituted with *it*.

Example: *Swinging in the trees* can be dangerous. *It* can be dangerous.

Instructions: Underline the gerund phrases in the following sentences. Then rewrite the sentence replacing the gerund phrase with the word *it*.

Example: Reading from that book will be exciting. It will be exciting.

1. She won the contest by singing an aria. _____
2. Waiting in long lines really bothers me. _____
3. Playing golf is his hobby. _____
4. We tried walking down the road alone. _____
5. My thinking is not always clear on this issue. _____
6. His trying to excel in this area is commendable. _____

7. I was shocked by her speaking so rudely to an adult. _____
8. We were saddened by their leaving so suddenly. _____

III. Using possessive nouns and pronouns with gerunds

Rule: One important thing you must know is that when you put a noun or pronoun in front of a gerund, you must use the possessive form of the noun or pronoun.

Example: *His* singing disturbed me. *It* disturbed me. What did? *His singing*, not him.

We could never say, "Him singing disturbed me." The thing that disturbed me was just that ---- a thing, ---- and things can be owned or possessed.

His singing disturbed me.

Sam's singing disturbed me

I was disturbed by *his* singing.

I was disturbed by *Sam's* singing.

Instructions: Underline the correct form of the noun or pronoun to precede the gerund.

1. (His, Him) talking so loud is a distraction.
2. I was upset by (Sam, Sam's) failing the test.
3. We really enjoyed (Mary, Mary's) singing last night.
4. When (them, their) watching television interferes with school work, I get annoyed.
5. What do you think about (me, my) taking that job?
6. I was amazed by (you, your) running so quickly.
7. We were all surprised by (him, his) speaking so boldly.
8. No one understood (him, his) making such an issue of a simple issue.

IV. Beginning sentences with gerund phrases

Instructions: Rewrite each of the following sentences so that each sentence **begins** with a gerund phrase. Change the infinitives in the sentence into gerunds. You may add or delete words to make the sentence flow smoothly.

Example: It is fun *to swim*. *Swimming* is fun.

1. It is necessary to study for the exam.

2. _____
My favorite pastime is to read good books.

3. _____
The motivation for many businessmen is to climb the ladder of success.

4. _____
It makes the time drag to watch the clock.

5. _____
It is not an option for me to go to college.

6. _____
It is a regular occurrence at my school to raise the flag each morning.

7. His greatest dream was to become a teacher.

8. His hobby was to build websites.

9. The most difficult chore I have is to clean windows.

10. It is not polite to speak out of turn in class.

11. A senior's privilege is to go off campus for lunch.

V. Combining sentences with gerund phrases

Instructions: Combine the following short sentences into one longer sentence that contains a gerund or a gerund phrase. Try to begin the sentences you create with the gerund or the gerund phrase.

Example: I love to play golf. It is my hobby.
Playing golf is my hobby.

1. I like to paint. It is fun.

2. I like to play baseball. It is my favorite pastime.

3. I wanted the attention. I got the attention. I rang the bell.

4. Many students have a goal. It is to graduate with honors.

5. I want to backpack across Europe. It can be very educational.

6. Some things are important in life. It is good to learn about different cultures.

7. We should prepare for the SAT. It is a worthwhile endeavor.

8. He promises to reduce taxes. It is a promise of every politician.

9. Don't come to class late. It is a disruption.

10. If you press the red button, something will happen. It will cause the alarm to sound.

Answers to the Gerund Section

I. Identifying gerunds

- | | | | | |
|------------|------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. crying | 2. reading | 3. laughing | 4. exercising | 5. shouting |
| 6. walking | 7. dieting | 8. studying | 9. winning | 10. studying |

II. Identifying gerund phrases

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. singing an aria | 5. my thinking |
| 2. waiting in long lines | 6. his trying to excel in this area |
| 3. playing golf | 7. her speaking so rudely to an adult |
| 4. walking down the road alone | 8. their leaving so suddenly |

III. Using possessive nouns and pronouns with gerunds

1. his
2. Sam's
3. Mary's
4. their
5. my
6. your
7. his
8. his

IV. Beginning sentences with gerund phrases

1. Studying for the exam is necessary
2. Reading good books is my favorite pastime.
3. Climbing the ladder of success is motivation for many businessmen.
4. Watching the clock makes the time drag.
5. Going to college is not an option for me.
6. Raising the flag each morning is a regular occurrence at my school.
7. Becoming a teacher was his greatest dream.
8. Building websites was his hobby.
9. Cleaning windows is my most difficult chore.
10. Speaking out of turn in class is not polite.
11. Going off campus for lunch is a senior's privilege.

V. Combining sentences with gerund phrases

1. Painting is fun.
2. Playing baseball is my favorite pastime.
3. Ringing the bell got me the attention that I wanted.
4. Graduating with honors is the goal of many students.
5. Backpacking across Europe can be very educational.
6. Learning about different cultures is something important in life.
7. Preparing for the SAT is a worthwhile endeavor.
8. Reducing taxes is a promise of every politician.
9. Coming to class late is a disruption.
10. Pressing the red button will cause the alarm to sound.