*Mixed Constructions*

A mixed construction contains elements that do not sensibly fit together. The mismatch may be a matter of grammar or of logic.

*A. Untangle the grammatical structure.*

Once you head into a sentence, your choices are limited by the range of grammatical patterns in English. You cannot begin with one grammatical plan and switch without warning to another.

Mixed: Although I feel that Mr. Dawe is an excellent counsellor, but a few changes in his approach would benefit both him and his clients.

Revised: Although I feel that Mr. Dawe is an excellent counsellor, he and his clients would benefit from a few changes in his approach.

*B. Straighten out the logical connections.*

The subject and the predicate should make sense together. When they don’t, the error is known as *faulty predication*.

*Tiffany*

Reluctantly we decided that ~~Tiffany’s welfare~~ would not be safe living with

her mother.

*\*Tiffany, not her welfare, would not be safe.\**

An appositive and the noun to which it refers should be logically equivalent. When they are not, the error is known as *faulty apposition*.

*Professional sports*

~~Professional athletes~~, a very lucrative business, requires dedication, hard work, and perseverance.

*\*Professional athletes are people, not a business.\**

*C. Avoid “is when”, “is where”, and “reason... is because” constructions.*

In formal English many readers object to *is when, is where*, and *reason... is because* constructions on either logical or grammatical grounds.

*a disorder suffered by people who*

Anorexia nervosa is ~~where people~~ diet to the point of starvation because

they believe they are too fat.

*\*Anorexia nervosa is a disorder, not a place.\**

The reason I missed the party is because my motorcycle broke down.

*\*The writer might have replaced the word “because” with “that”, but the*

*revision above is more concise.\**

Exercise A: Fix the following sentences.

1. Most people who like to go running, they need good shoes.

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1. Even though we are going on vacation tomorrow, but I’m going to miss my friends.

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1. We drove all the way down the coast in a car in which it was red.

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1. After giving the matter a lot of thought, we decided that Jenny’s birthday party it would be better to organize a small event.

*After giving the matter a lot of thought, we decided that Jenny’s birthday party would be better as a small event.*

1. A mixed construction error is when elements in a sentence don’t make sense together.

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