

## SENTENCE BUILDING: SUBSTITUTIONS

Each English sentence is different, because have many options in putting a sentence together. Many sentence elements can do double duty. We can lift them out of their usual place in the sentence and use them for a special purpose. Here are two options that help make possible greater variety in sentence structure:

- (1) We can take all or part of a verb substitute it for another sentence part. When we adapt all or part of a verb for this special purpose, we call it a **verbal**. For instance, we can lift the *-ing* form of a verb from its usual spot and use it to replace a noun. It can then serve as a subject or as a completer in a sentence. (We then call it a **verbal noun**.)

**Verb:** My friends were jogging.      **Verbal:** Jogging has become popular.  
**Verbal:** The doctor recommended jogging.  
**Verbal:** Sue called jogging a bore.

Another verbal can also serve as a noun substitute. We can take the plain form of a verb and combine it with the word *to*. The resulting form (or infinitive) can serve as a subject or as a completer. It also has many other possible uses.

**Verb:** My friends study on weekends.      **Verbal:** To study became impossible.  
**Verbal:** Sue started to study.

Here are some other uses of the *to* form:

The guard asked her friend <i>to leave</i> .		The thing <i>to do</i> is <i>to agree</i> .
We asked for pizza <i>to go</i> .		To succeed, she worked hard.

Both the *-ing* form and the *to* form can carry other material along with them as if they were still used as verbs.

**Verb:** Swedes were driving on the left side of the road.  
**Verbal:** Swedes stopped driving on the left side of the road.

**Verb:** Rich Nations send astronauts into space.  
**Verbal:** To send astronauts into space takes money.

- (2) We can replace a noun with a whole clause-- a sentence unit with its own subject and verb. Such a **noun clause** often starts with *that*, *who*, *what*, or *why*.

<b>Noun:</b> We noticed his handicap.		She told us the reason
<b>Noun Clause:</b> We noticed that he was limping.		She told why she had resigned.

<b>Noun:</b> I can't remember the person.		His words surprised me.
<b>Noun Clause:</b> I can't remember who told me.		What he said surprised me.

- A. In the following sentence, fill in an *-ing* form plus any other material needed to complete the sentence.

**Model Sentence:** Charity is giving freely to those in need.

**Your Turn:**

1. Freedom is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Generosity is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Optimism is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

B. In the following sentences, complete the *to* form and fill in any other material.

**Model Sentence:** To light a fire in a wet forest requires skill.

**Your Turn:**

4. To \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ takes courage.
5. To \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ is difficult.
6. To \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ is a pleasure.

C. The following model sentences show something of the full range and variety of basic English sentence structure. For each model, write a sentence of your own that follows the structure of the original. Use similar sentence elements in a similar order. (Use content from your *own* observation or experience.)

**Model Sentence:** Stealing has always been a means of redistributing the wealth.

**Your Turn:**

7. \_\_\_\_\_ has always been \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**Model Sentence:** To err is human; to forgive, divine. (Alexander Pope)

**Your Turn:**

8. To \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_; to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Model Sentence:** Economy is the art of making the most of life.

(George Bernard Shaw)

**Your Turn:**

9. \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**Model Sentence:** What I call my self-respect is more important to me than anything else.

(Doris Lessing)

**Your Turn:**

10. What I call \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.