Basic English Grammar Module
Unit 3B: Interdependency Relationships between Clauses

Objectives of the Basic English Grammar module

As a student at any level of University study, when you write your assignments or your thesis, your writing needs to be grammatically well-structured and accurate in order to be clear. If you are unable to write sentences that are appropriately structured and clear in meaning, the reader may have difficulty understanding the meanings that you want to convey. Here are some typical and frequent comments made by markers or supervisors on students' written work. Such comments may also appear on marking sheets which use assessment criteria focussing on your grammar.

- *Be careful of your written expression.*
- *At times it is difficult to follow what you are saying.*
- *You must be clearer when making statements.*
- *Sentence structure and expression poor.*
- *This is not a sentence.*
- *At times your sentences do not make sense.*

In this module we are concerned with helping you to develop knowledge of those aspects of the grammar of English that will help you deal with the types of grammatical errors that are frequently made in writing.

Who is this module for?

All students at university who need to improve their knowledge of English grammar in order to write more clearly and accurately.

What does this module cover?

Unit 1A	Grammatical Units: the structure and constituents of the clause/sentence
Unit 1B	The Noun Group: the structure and constituents of the noun group
Unit 2A	The Verb Group: Finites and non-Finites
Unit 2B	The Verb Group: Tenses
Unit 3A	Logical Relationships between Clauses
Unit 3B	Interdependency Relationships between Clauses
Unit 4	Grammar and Punctuation

References

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Introduction

In written academic English we need to be able to show connections between various sized pieces of text - between whole stages of text, between paragraphs, between sentences, between clauses in a sentence and within clauses.

In Unit 3A we looked at **Logical Relationships** between clauses in a sentence and between sentences. In this Unit we will be concerned with **Interdependency Relationships** between clauses in a sentence.

You may find this unit helpful if you have been making errors like the following when you write sentences with more than one clause.

Example 1: They have little disposable income. **Because** they are unemployed.

Example 2: **Changing** our lifestyle by doing some exercises and trying to decrease our bad habits such as smoking.

Example 3: There are two aims to the programme. **That** is to do more exercise and improve our lifestyle.

Example 4 **Which** was a problem in motivation.

Objectives of Unit 3B

After you have completed this section, you should be able to :

- understand the difference between dependent and independent clauses

- identify dependent and independent clauses in a sentence

- identify when a sentence is not correct because of a dependency problem

- recognise and correct this type of problem in a longer text

Exercises

These are marked with the icon ✪ and you should try to complete them before checking your work in the **Answer Key**, marked ✪✪.

Answer Key to all Exercises

This can be found at the end of the Unit.

1.0   Introduction

In academic writing students need to make statements that are too complex or too detailed to be expressed in a single clause. To do this they need to combine clauses together in one sentence. When they do, they set up relationships between the clauses. One of these relationships is a logical one. We looked at this relationship in the last Unit. The other is an interdependency relationship. It is this relationship we want to examine in this unit.

1.1   Independent and dependent clauses

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between sentences and clauses and the dependency relationships between clauses.
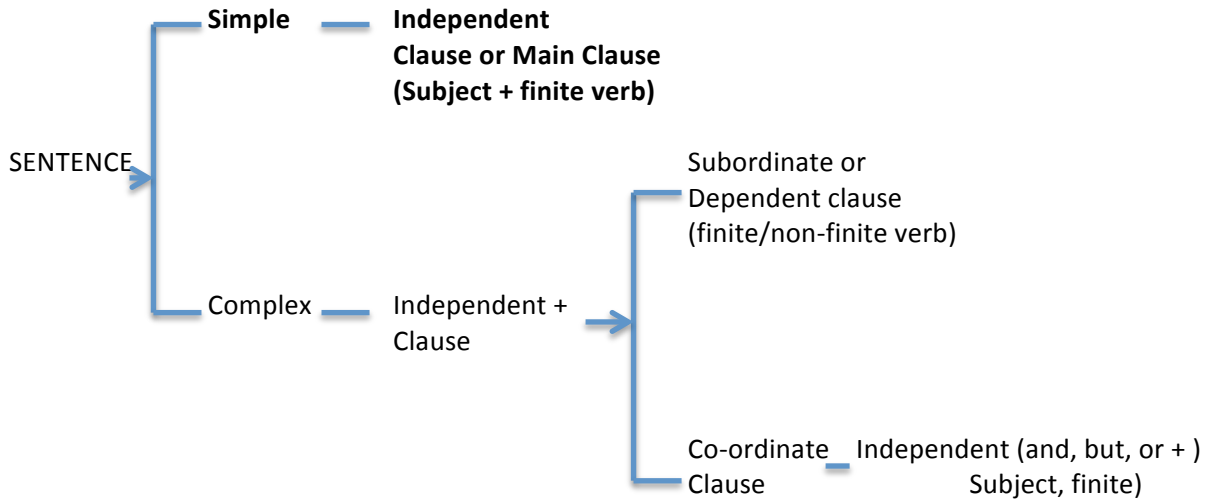
Diagram 1
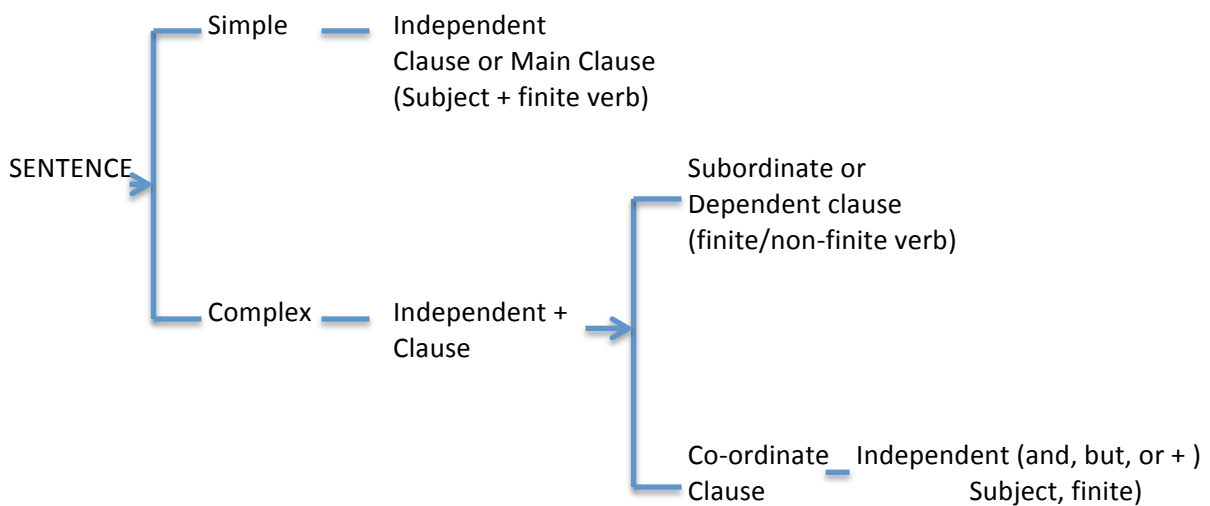
Let's look at each branch of the system in turn so examples can be given.

1.1.1   The independent or main clause

The first branch we will look at is highlighted in bold below.

Diagram 2

A simple sentence contains only one clause and it is an independent clause. It is sometimes called a main clause. An independent clause generally must have a **subject** and a **finite verb.**

The following is an example of a sentence consisting of only one independent clause.

> *Coal   /   provides thirty per cent of the world's energy requirements.*
> **Subject   Finite**

If you are not familiar with these terms and need practice in identifying Subjects and finite verbs, refer to Unit 2A.

⭐   **Exercise 1**

The following are all simple sentences consisting of one independent clause. Underline the subject with one line and the finite verb with two lines.

> *1.   The country town of Harden is four hundred kilometres from Sydney.*
>
> *2.   These people do not know the rules.*
>
> *3.   The parents ought to be responsible.*
>
> *4.   I see addiction as a psycho-social disease.*

✪ ✪ You can now check the answers in the Answer Key at the back of the unit.

1.2   The dependent or subordinate clauses

The second branch we will look at is highlighted in bold below.

Diagram 3
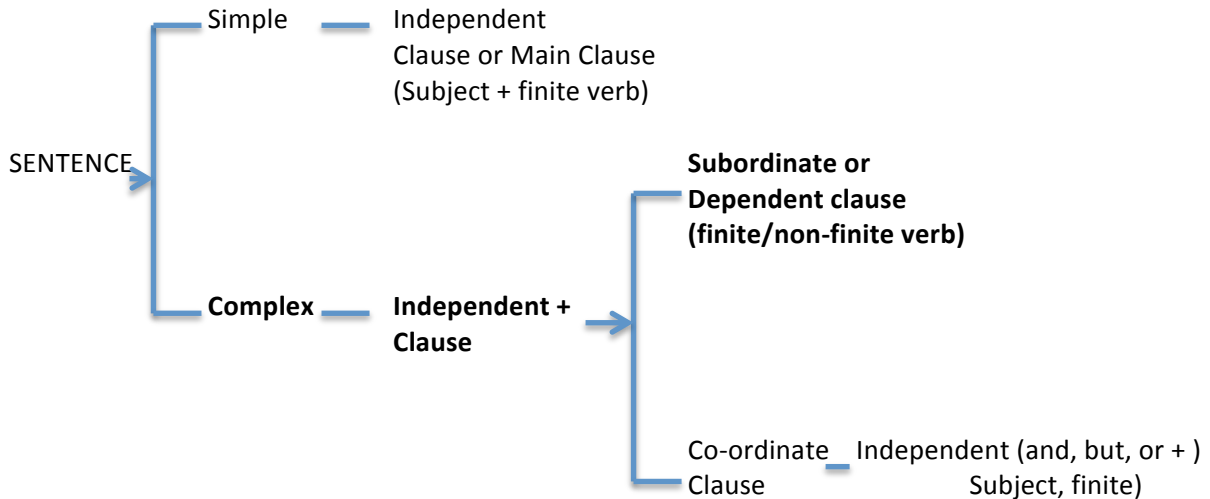
In a **complex sentence** there is always an independent clause. There may also be one or more **subordin**ate or **dependent clauses**. They are called dependent clauses because they depend on the main or independent clause to complete their meaning or argument. A finite or a non-finite verb can be the main verb in a dependent clause. There may or may not be a subject.

The following is an example of a complex sentence consisting of a dependent clause and an independent clause.

Because the gas lasts for a long time, it usually outlives its purpose.

Dependent	Subject	Finite
Because the gas lasts for a long time,	the gas	lasts
Independent		
it usually outlives its purpose	it	outlives

In the above example, even though the dependent clause has a subject and a finite verb it is not independent because it is related to the independent clause by the **subordinating conjunction - because**. Therefore it is dependent on the main clause.

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Other examples of subordinating conjunctions are summarised in Table 1 below.

This is another example of a sentence with an independent and dependent clause. In this example the dependent clause has a non-finite verb and no subject.

> *More women are now working to supplement the family income.*

Independent Clause	Subject	Finite	Non-Finite
More women are now working	more women	are...working	
Dependent Clause			
to supplement the family income			to supplement

⭐ **Exercise 2**

Identify the clauses in the following sentences and then label them either dependent (D) or independent clauses (I).

1. *Exercise-induced asthma is particularly troublesome in children because of their high level of their high level of physical activity.*

2. *When people stand in the water the flatworms can penetrate the skin.*

3. *The temperature is reduced so that heat is lost.*

4. *When a febrile patient receives a tepid sponge, their temperature is reduced.*

5. *If people identify too strongly with their ethnic groups, they may not wish to integrate.*

✪ ✪ You can now check the answers in the Answer Key at the back of the unit.

1.3   The co-ordinate clauses

Now look at the third branch of the system highlighted in bold below.

Diagram 4
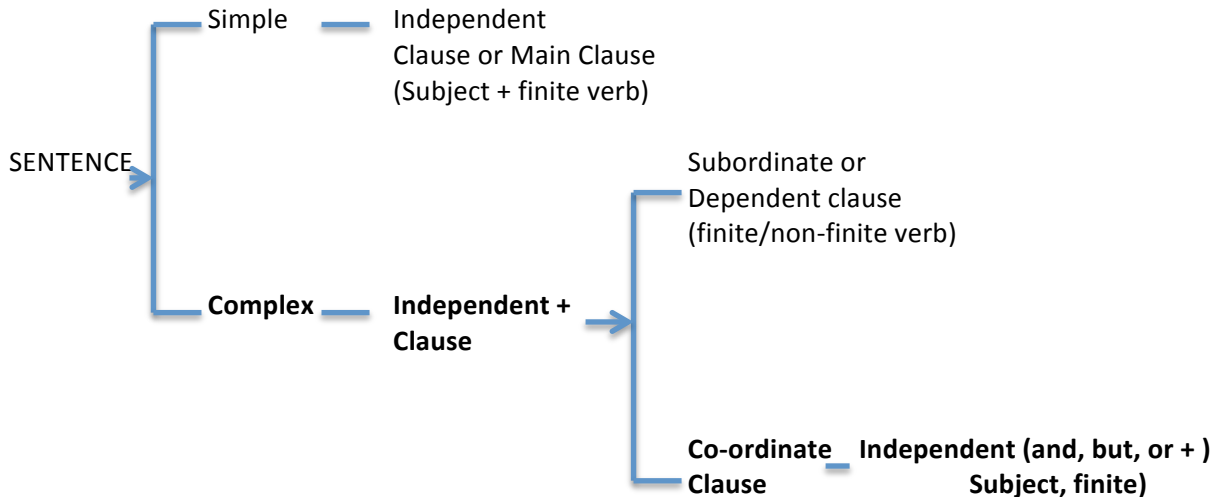
Co-ordinate clauses are clauses which are linked to other clauses by one of the co-ordinating conjunctions - **and**, **but** or **or**. They must have a subject and finite verb.

The following is an example of a sentence consisting of two co-ordinating clauses:

They could reduce costs and increase productivity.

Independent	Subject	Finite
They could reduce costs	They	could reduce
Independent (Co-ordinate)		
and increase productivity	(They)	(could) increase

Notice in this example that the independent co-ordinate clause begins with one of the co-ordinating conjunctions - **and.** It has a **subject** - which is understood to be **they -** and a **finite verb**. The possession of a subject and a finite is what makes this clause independent.

⭐ **Exercise 3**

Look at the following complex sentences. Do they have co-ordinating or subordinating clauses?

1. *Factory 'outwork' exploited female workers // but during the Depression it was the only work available.*

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Co-ordination [ ]   *Subordination [ ]*

2.   *When girls undertook domestic employment prior to marriage // they were considered well trained for their major roles in life as a wife and mother.*

Co-ordination [ ]   *Subordination [ ]*

3.   *The findings of the Report disapproved of married women working at all // and only grudgingly gave single women the option to work in factories.*

Co-ordination [ ]   *Subordination [ ]*

4.   *Because people are identifying more strongly with their ethnic groups // they are now more effective politically.*

Co-ordination [ ]   *Subordination [ ]*

✪ ✪ You can now check the answers in the Answer Key at the back of the unit.

2.0   Indicators of a dependency relationship

It is very important in academic writing to be able to recognise a dependent clause so that when you read over what you have written, you can check that you have not written a dependent clause as if it were a single sentence. This is a very common mistake.

Recognising a dependent clause is not too difficult because there is usually a signal in the clause. The signal may be any one of the following:

Table 1:

1. Subordinating Conjunctions	Simple (one word) after, (al)though, as, because, before, if, once, since, until, unless, whenever, whereas, whereby, whereupon, while, whilst, so.
	Compound (more than one word) in that, so that, in order that, such that, except that, now (that), providing (that), now (that), providing (that), provided (that), supposing (that) considering (that), granting (that), granted (that), given (that)

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	assuming (that), seeing (that)
	as long as, as far as, as soon as, so long as, insofar as, inasmuch as, so as, so as (to)
	sooner than, rather than
	as if, as though, in case
2. Relative clauses using a wh- word	where, what, why, how, whom, when, whether, which, whose.
3. that	e.g. It is thought **that** all men are equal
4. a non-finite verb form	e.g. a participle or infinitive

Let's look at each of these indicators in more detail.

2.1   Indicator #1: Subordinating conjunctions

These are summarised in the Table above.

You will remember in Unit 3A we showed you that some conjunctions are used to connect ideas between sentences and some are used to connect ideas between clauses. The conjunctions listed in the Table above are used only **to connect ideas between clauses**. If they begin a clause they place the clause in a subordinate or dependent relationship to another clause. If a reader sees one of these conjunctions at the beginning of a clause, they immediately look for the independent clause that this clause depends on.

⭐ Exercise 4

Some of the following clauses are independent (I) and can stand by themselves as sentences. Some are dependent clauses (D) and cannot stand alone. They need to have the sentence completed by the addition of the main clause that they depend on. Identify the dependent clauses and then correct them by thinking of an independent clause to complete them.

1. in case the experiment is not completed in time   (   )

....

2. children imitate their parents in most things   (   )

....

3. a dysfunctional family may manifest violent tendencies   (   )

....

4. as the alcohol tolerance increases over time   (   )

....

5. before entering the first year of university   (   )

....

6. the Council should provide a certain portion of capital investment   (   )

....

✪ ✪ You can now check the answers in the Answer Key at the back of the unit.

2.2   Indicator #2: Relative clauses

a **wh - word -** where, what, why, how, whom, when, whether, which, whose.

These are dependent clauses which begin with one of so-called '**wh'-**words. Their very name - **relative clause** - should suggest to you that that they cannot stand by themselves as independent clauses. The information that is contained in a relative clause **is related** to the information contained in another clause and can only be understood **in relation** to that other piece of information.

Relative clauses are a very frequently used type of dependent clause in academic writing because they are a means of packing more information into one complex sentence. For this reason, we will briefly review the two types of relative clauses: defining and non-defining relative clauses.

2.2.1   Defining and non-defining relative clauses

A relative clause gives extra information about a word or group of words.

The **defining relative clause** explains which person or thing is being talked about. It is a kind of qualifier.

For example, if you wrote the following

The gas is used primarily for home heating.

I might ask "*which gas*?" If you then wrote

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> *The gas which is produced in the western states is used primarily for home heating.*

"*which is produced in the western state*s" is a defining relative clause because it tells me more about **the thing** being talked about so that I can identify it.

The **non-defining relative clause** gives further information or adds more detail but it is not needed to identify the person or thing you are writing about. It is enclosed in commas and this signals to the reader that is not essential information and can be omitted.

Look at the following example:

> *A smile, which is one of the expressions of emotion that appears to be universally exhibited and understood, is thought to be sensitive to social context and to be shaped by social factors.*

In this example, it is clear what is meant by a "smile" but the writer has added additional information in a non-defining relative clause.

When you are trying to decide whether a clause is **defining** or **non-defining** and so whether you should use commas or not, you have to use your own judgement and general knowledge as to the meaning that you want to convey. The punctuation (commas) will help you to distinguish.

⭐ Exercise 5

The sentences below contain relative clauses. Decide what meaning is to be conveyed to the reader and insert commas if you think they are appropriate.

You will need to ask yourself questions about the meaning of the sentence as a whole.

Example:

> *Women whose husbands are dead are called widows.*

This is a defining relative clause. If we put commas in, it would suggest that all women are called widows and this isn't true.

> ***Women**, whose husbands are dead, **are called** widows.*

1.   *Girls who like to play with boys' toys should be allowed to.*

2.   *Adult literacy which is a relatively new area is concerned in part with the mastery of language in the workplace.*

3.   *Native speakers of English who need help with language skills can go to the Learning Centre.*

4.   *Cambodia which has suffered from continuous warfare since the 1970s has been inundated with aid agencies.*

5.   *Men whose wives are dead are known as widowers.*

✪ ✪ You can now check the answers in the Answer Key at the back of the unit.

2.3   Indicator #3: 'that' clauses

'that' is used in **defining relative clauses** to refer to:

a. inanimate things	e.g. The shops **that have been demolished** will be relocated.
b. people	e.g. The man **that risked his life** was given a citation.

If you are in doubt about whether it is grammatically appropriate to use **that**, you can always use **which** if you are referring to things and **who** if you are referring to people.

Example:

The shops **which have been demolished** will be demolished.

The man **who risked his life** was given a citation.

Like the relative clauses, a **'that' clause** indicates it is subordinate to another clause and cannot stand on its own as a sentence.

2.4   Indicator #4: non-finite verbs

The non-finite verb forms include the infinitives and the participles:

Table 2:   The Infinitives

to go	**To go** unaccompanied is dangerous.
to understand	**To understand** the relationship, we need more data.
to be	A smile is thought **to be** sensitive to social context.

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Table 3: The participles

Active forms -ing,	
asking	There has been an influx of students **asking** for help.
stating	After **stating** his position, the meeting ended,
Passive forms -n/-ed	
written	The book, **written** in 1980, is no longer applicable.
asked	**Asked** his opinion, he refused to answer.

The non-finite verbs cannot be the main verb of an independent clause; however, they can be the verb form in a dependent clause.

Refer to Unit 2A for further discussion of non-finite verb forms.

The next exercise will give you practice in recognising examples of the different indicators.

⭐ Exercise 6

The following are some examples of dependent clauses (*in italics*). Using the above indicators as a guide, decide which one is being used.

1. The conception of teaching as institutional leadership was first proposed by Waller (1932), *who paid explicit attention to the organization of schools*.

   ....

2. *Although these studies have examined mutual fund performance*, none has employed an analytical framework for dealing with the fluctuations.

   ....

3. *When you reach a conclusion*, let me know.

   ....

4. *Because I don't understand* I don't ask.

   ....

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5.   *Where you go* is your own business.

       ....

6.   *If I had I realised the implications of my act*, I would never have done it.

       ....

7.   The machinery selection decision *confronting agricultural producers* is recurrent, complex and important.

       ....

8.   The information *that you include in this section* depends greatly on the findings of your study.

       ....

9.   Sound waves, *which are conducted through the ear,* are translated into electrical impulses which then go to the brain.

       ....

10.   *How to adapt the program* is a problem *requiring urgent attention.*

       ....

✪ ✪ You can now check the answers in the Answer Key at the back of the unit.

✪ Exercise 7

Below is a list of clauses. Some of them are independent and can therefore be called sentences. Others are dependent clauses and need an independent clause to go with them in order to be called sentences. Identify the sentences (S) and the dependent clauses (DC). For the dependent clauses, invent an independent clause in order to make them complete sentences.

1. *the potential yearly income will jump from $17,000 to $19,000*   ( )

....

2. *the study completed last year*   ( )

....

3. assuming that the analysis is correct   (   )

....

 4. this alternative might still allow for the provision of accommodation   (   )

....

5. which can be used for establishing a set of guidelines   (   )

....

6. whereas previous users experienced difficulties   (   )

....

7. the council can consider alternative proposals   (   )

....

8. which data are used is not of concern   (   )

....

9. to fund this project adequately   (   )

....

10. all the information required has been presented   (   )

....

✪ ✪ You can now check the answers in the Answer Key at the back of the unit.

3.0   The Academic context

An examination of students' writing suggests that one of the major errors that students make when trying to use sentences of more than clause is **to use a dependent clause as a sentence on its own.** There are typically four manifestations of the problem:

Example 1:

They have little disposable income. ***Because*** *they are unemployed.*

Example 2:

Changing *our lifestyle by doing some exercises and trying to decrease our bad habits such as smoking.*

Example 3:

*T**here are two aims to the programme.*** ***That*** *is to do more exercise and improve our lifestyle.*

Example 4:

Which *was a problem in motivation.*

In all the above examples the writers have failed to recognise the indicators of dependent clauses: a subordinating conjunction, **because**; a non-finite verb form - **changing**; a **that** clause; and a **relative** clause.

3.1   Strategies for editing a text

a.   Read through the texts.

b.   Look at each sentence and divide it into clauses.

c.   Check the beginning of each clause. Does it begin with

a subordinating conjunction?
'that'?
a wh-word?
an infinitive?

d.   iI it does, it is a dependent clause.

e.   if it is a dependent clause, is it standing by itself as a sentence?

f.   If it is, make the necessary corrections.

⭐ Exercise 8

Now look at a longer piece of text, identify any problems with dependency relationships and try to correct them.

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TEXT 1

Popular western health systems often put emphasis on curative, rather than preventive measures. Early recognition of illness, or potential illness in the absence of sickness, is a major goal of preventive medicine. Detection of an illness in its early stages permits some medical intervention, to keep it from becoming more disruptive and expensive. Keeping an illness from developing at all, through vaccination, genetic counselling, and water purification. In the undeveloped nations, a ritual ceremony, observance of taboo, wearing of amulets work this way as well.

....

....

....

....

TEXT 2

As reported by the Henderson Poverty Report there is a high level of unemployment withinmigrant groups and an overrepresentation of unskilled workers. Davis (in a review of the "Ethnic Health Worker Program") suggests that there is generally inadequate information about ethnic health (Saunders, 1990: 48). Although programs such as the Interpreter Service, the Ethnic Health Workers' Program and the Health Translation Services have been significantly strengthened.

....

....

....

....

✪ ✪ You can now check the answers in the Answer Key at the back of the unit.

Unit 3B: Answer Key to Exercises

✪ ✪ Exercise 1: Answer

1.   The country town of Harden is four hundred kilometres from Sydney.

2.   These people do not know the rules.

3.   The parents ought to be responsible.

4.   I see addiction as a psycho-social disease.

5.   Deprived children are not born with the problem.

✪ ✪ Exercise 2: Answer

1.   Exercise-induced asthma is particularly troublesome in children // [I]
        because of their high level of physical activity. [D]

2.   When people stand in the water // [D]
        the flatworms can penetrate the skin. [I]

3.   The temperature is reduced // [I]
        so that heat is lost. [D]

4.   When a febrile patient receives a tepid sponge // [D]
        their temperature is reduced. [I]

5.   If people identify too strongly with their ethnic groups, // [D]
        they may not wish to integrate. [I]

✪ ✪ Exercise 3: Answer

1.   Factory 'outwork' exploited female workers but during the Depression it was the
        only work available.
        Co-ordination [✓]

2.   When girls undertook domestic employment prior to marriage // they were
        considered well trained for their major roles in life as a wife and mother.
        Subordination [✓]

3.   The finding of the Report disapproved of married women working at all // and only

grudgingly gave single women the option to work in factories.
Co-ordination   [✓]

4.   Because people are identifying more strongly with their ethnic groups // they are now more effective politically.
Subordinating   [✓]

⭐ ⭐ Exercise 4: Answer

1.   (D)

2.   (I)

3.   (I)

4.   (D)

5.   (D)

6.   (I)

⭐ ⭐ Exercise 5: Answer

1.   *Girls who like to play with boys' toys should be allowed to.*

2.   *Adult literacy, which is a relatively new area, is concerned in part with the mastery of language in the workplace.*

3.   *Native speakers of English who need help with language skills can go to the Learning Centre.*

4.   *Cambodia, which has suffered from continuous warfare since the 1970's, has been inundated with aid agencies.*

5.   *Men whose wives are dead are known as widowers.*

⭐ ⭐ Exercise 6: Answer

1.   *relative clause (non-defining)*

2.   *subordinating conjunction*

3.   *subordinating conjunction*

4.   *subordinating conjunction*

5.   *relative clause ('wh-')*

6.   *subordinating conjunction*

7.   *non-finite participle*

8.   *relative 'that' clause (defining)*

9.   *relative clause (non-defining)*

10.   *non-finite participle, non-finite participle*

⭐ ⭐ Exercise 7: Answer

1.   S

2.   D.C.   The study completed last year failed to produce any significant findings.

3.   D.C.   Assuming that the analysis is correct, more research is needed.

4.   S

5.   D.C.   The criteria, which can be used for establishing a set of guidelines, have already been published.

6.   D.C.   Whereas previous users experienced difficulties, this person had no problem at all.

7.   S

8.   S

9.   D.C.   To fund this project adequately, more government participation will be necessary.

10.   S

⭐ ⭐ Exercise 8: Answer

TEXT 1

Popular western health systems often put emphasis on curative, rather than preventive measures. Early recognition of illness, or potential illness in the absence of sickness, is a major goal of preventive medicine. Detection of an illness in its early stages permits some medical intervention, to keep it from becoming more disruptive and expensive. ***Keeping an illness from developing at all, through vaccination, genetic counselling, and water purification.*** *In the undeveloped nations, a ritual ceremony, observance of taboo and wearing of amulets work this way as well.*

RE-WRITE

*Popular western health systems often put emphasis on curative, rather than preventive measures. Early recognition of illness, or potential illness in the absence of sickness, is a major goal of preventive medicine. Detection of an illness in its early stages permits some medical intervention, to keep it from becoming more disruptive and expensive. **Keeping an illness from developing at all can be done through vaccination, genetic counselling, and water purification**. In the undeveloped nations, a ritual ceremony, observance of taboo and wearing of amulets work this way as well.*

TEXT 2

*As reported by the Henderson Poverty Report there is a high level of unemployment within migrant groups and an overrepresentation of unskilled workers. Davis (in a review of the "Ethnic Health Worker Program") suggests that there is generally inadequate information about ethnic health (Saunders, 1990: 48). **Although** programs such as the Interpreter Service, the Ethnic Health Workers' Program and the Health Translation Services have been significantly strengthened.*

RE-WRITE

*As reported by the Henderson Poverty Report there is a high level of unemployment within migrant groups and an overrepresentation of unskilled workers. Davis (in a review of the "Ethnic Health Worker Program") suggests that there is generally inadequate information about ethnic **health (Saunders, 1990: 48, although programs** such as the Interpreter Service, the Ethnic Health Workers' Program and the Health Translation Services have been significantly strengthened.*