

**Identifying sentence errors:** Tests your ability to recognize faults in usage, and recognize effective sentences that follow the conventions of Standard Written English.

Directions: Choose which underlined portion has an error. If the sentence is correct, put no error.

1. The students have discovered that they can address issues more effectively through letter-writing campaigns and not through public demonstrations.

2. After hours of futile debate, the committee has decided to postpone further discussion of the resolution until their next meeting.

3. At the music recital, Alexandra enjoyed listening to her friend Mohammed's insightful interpretation, which she thought was more sophisticated than the other performers.

4. Originally a protest on conventional painting, the Pre-Raphaelite movement exerted great influence on the art of its time.

5. The board reviewing the courses offered by the college found that the quality of academic programs were generally good but somewhat uneven.

6. If he had begun earlier, he might have succeeded in finishing the extremely complex project before the deadline.

7. Maude Adams, after her spectacular triumph as the original Peter Pan, went about heavy veiled and was accessible to only a handful of intimate friends.

8. All states impose severe penalties on drivers who do not stop when he or she is involved in accidents.

## Identifying Sentence Errors Answers

1. The students **have discovered** that **they** can address issues more effectively **through** letter-writing campaigns **and not** through public demonstrations.

- The error in this sentence occurs at (D). When a comparison is introduced by the adverb "more," as in "more effectively," the second part of the comparison must be introduced by the conjunction "than" rather than "and not."
- The other options contain no errors. In (A), the plural verb "have discovered" agrees with the plural subject "students." In (B), the plural pronoun "they" correctly refers to the plural noun "students." In (C), the preposition "through" appropriately expresses the means by which issues are addressed.
- The sentence may be corrected as follows: The students have discovered that they can address issues more effectively through letter-writing campaigns **than** through public demonstrations.

2. **After** hours of futile debate, the committee has decided **to postpone** further discussion **of the resolution** until **their** next meeting.

- The error in this sentence occurs at (D). A pronoun must agree in number (singular or plural) with the noun to which it refers. Here, the plural pronoun "**their**" incorrectly refers to the singular noun "**committee**."
- The other options contain no errors. In (A), the preposition "**After**" appropriately introduces a phrase that indicates when the committee made its decision. In (B), "**to postpone**" is the verb form needed to complete the description of the committee's decision. In (C), the prepositional phrase "**of the resolution**" appropriately specifies the subject of the postponed discussion.
- The sentence may be corrected as follows: After hours of futile debate, the committee has decided to postpone further discussion of the resolution until its next meeting.

3. At the music recital, Alexandra **enjoyed listening** to her friend Mohammed's insightful interpretation, **which she** thought was **more sophisticated than the other performers**.

The problem in this sentence is one of illogical comparison. Alexandra is said to consider Mohammed's insightful interpretation more sophisticated than the other performers, improperly comparing his interpretation to other performers, rather than to interpretations of other performers. The correct sentence reads: **At the music recital, Alexandra enjoyed listening to her friend Mohammed's insightful interpretation, which she thought was more sophisticated than the interpretations of the other performers.**

4. Originally a **protest on** **conventional** painting, the Pre-Raphaelite movement **exerted** great influence on the art **of its** time. e **No error**

The error in this sentence is (A): the phrase "protest on" is not idiomatic in standard written English. The verb "protest" takes the preposition "against." The correct sentence reads: **Originally a protest against conventional painting, the Pre-Raphaelite movement exerted great influence on the art of its time.**

5. The board **reviewing** the courses offered by the college **found** that the quality of academic programs **were** generally good but **somewhat** uneven. e **No error**

The error in this sentence is (C): the verb "were" (which is plural) does not agree in number with the noun "quality" (which is singular). The correct sentence reads: **The board reviewing the courses offered by the college found that the quality of academic programs was generally good but somewhat uneven.**

6. If he **had begun** **earlier**, he might have succeeded **in finishing** the **extremely** complex project before the deadline. e **No error**

Each of the parts of the sentence underlined with A, B, C, and D is correct as written. Therefore choice (E): no error is the appropriate answer.

7. Maude Adams, after her spectacular **triumph as** the original Peter Pan, **went about** **heavy veiled** and was accessible to **only a handful** of intimate friends. e **No error**

The error in this sentence is (C): the word "heavy" in the phrase "heavy veiled" should not be in the form of an adjective but in the adverbial form since it is used to modify the participle "veiled." The correct sentence reads: **Maude Adams, after her spectacular triumph as the original Peter Pan, went about heavily veiled and was accessible to only a handful of intimate friends.**

8. All states **impose** severe **penalties on** drivers who do not stop when **he or she is** **involved in** accidents. e **No error**

The error in this sentence is (C): the pronouns "he or she" (which are both singular) do not agree with the noun "drivers" (which is plural). The correct sentence reads: **All states impose severe penalties on drivers who do not stop when they are involved in accidents.** Note that the verb "is" has to be changed to "are" when the subject becomes plural.