Grammar Worksheets:  Establishing a Strong Authorial Voice, Answers and Tips

<http://www.grammar-worksheets.com>

1.  ~~I think that~~ what this mother is trying to explain makes perfect sense.

**Answer 1:** What this mother is trying to explain makes perfect sense.

**Answer 2:** What this mother tries to explain makes perfect sense.

**Teaching Tip:** This is a fairly simple concept, but many students are reluctant to embrace it. Impress upon them that **it is their essay, their ideas**. If the idea or opinion belongs to someone else, then they must attribute (cite) that idea within the text of their essay.

I prefer Answer 2 because it uses the simple present tense, not the present progressive. It is tighter and cleaner than Answer 1.

2.   ~~It is my understanding that~~ most men feel a bit emasculated when asked or forced to help complete tasks other than those classified acceptable by other men.

**Answer:** Most men feel a bit emasculated when asked or forced to help complete tasks other than those classified acceptable by other men.

**Teaching Tip:** I like to tell students that through the “magic” of syntax (the order of words in a sentence, the word that can turn a sentence into a noun clause.

Example: Joe threw the ball. (simple sentence)

Add the word that: that Joe threw the ball. (dependent clause – can function as a noun)

Complete idea: Mary said that Joe threw the ball.

Proof: Mary said **it**. (The word it is a pronoun. A pronoun takes the place of

a noun.

3. ~~I strongly believe that~~ high schools should do something about the harassment of students who are different from most other students.

**Answer 1:** High schools should do something about the harassment of students who are different from

most other students.

**Answer 2:** High schools should do something about the harassment of students who are different from

others.

**Teaching Tip:** Answer 2 is better because it cuts down the number of words. I like to tell students that “in writing, as in life, less is more.”

4.  ~~I think (that)~~ Blomfield is incorrect in implying that people are judgmental if a man is unable to support his family due to unemployment.

**Answer 1:** Blomfield is incorrect in implying that people are judgmental if a man is unable to support his family due to unemployment.

**Answer 2:** Blomfield implies incorrectly that people are judgmental if a man is unable to support his family due to unemployment.

**Teaching Tip:** I like this sentence because it allows me to teach students how to incorporate their opinion of that others write seamlessly, without using “I believe that” or some other similar construction. Students can use adverbs together with a verb of attribution to show their agreement or disagreement with someone.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Agree | Disagree |
| rightly | wrongly |
| correctly | incorrectly |

Answer 2 uses the adverb form and the simple present tense. It sounds more academic than Answer 1. Both, however, are acceptable.

5. ~~In my opinion~~ as I read Paturel’s article, it seemed as if Paturel was the one who really needed to make peace with Brandon’s first marriage.

**Answer 1:** As I read Paturel’s article, it seemed as if Paturel was the one who really needed to make peace with Brandon’s first marriage.

**Answer 2:** It seemed as if Paturel was the one who really needed to make peace with Brandon’s first marriage.

**Answer 3:** Paturel was the one who really needed to make peace with Brandon’s first marriage.

**Answer 4:** Paturel needs to make peace with Brandon’s first marriage.

**Teaching Tip:** Again, Answer 3 captures the essence of the original sentence with fewer words than 1 or 2. Answer 4, however, is terse and powerful, with no excess verbiage. It makes the point in nine words, whereas the original version has 26 words.

6. Although people tend to feel they have to measure up to someone else’s level to be accepted, ~~I think~~ people should just be themselves if they really want to be accepted.

**Answer 1:** Although people tend to feel they have to measure up to someone else’s level to be accepted, people should just be themselves if they really want to be accepted.

**Answer 2:** Although people believe they must measure up to someone else’s level to be accepted, they should just be themselves to be accepted.

**Teaching Tip:** Answer 1 gets the job done by eliminating “I think”; answer 2 improves the sentence by cutting unnecessary words.

7. ~~I think that~~ in our day and age that unemployment is a very common theme in America.

**Answer 1:** In our day and age unemployment is a very common theme in America.

**Answer 2:** Unemployment is a very common theme in America.

**Answer 3:** Unemployment is common in America.

**Answer 4:** Unemployment abounds in America. (Extreme, but still good!)

**Teaching Tip:** Admittedly, answer 4 may be extreme, but it gets the job done using four words, versus 13 words in answer 1.

8. ~~I can see why~~ many homosexuals, like Roberts, tend to hide their sexuality from their family.

**Answer 1:** Many homosexuals, like Roberts, tend to hide their sexuality from their family.

**Answer 2:** Homosexuals tend to hide their sexuality from their family.

**Teaching Tip:** Use your discretion.

**Note:**  The original sentences were actually used by my students in essays.