**Unnecessary Shifts in Sentences**

Within a sentence a shift is a change from one subject to another or from one verb to another. Often shifts are acceptable because they are necessary to express the meaning the writer intends. The smoothness of a sentence is sometimes seriously affected, however, by an unnecessary and awkward shift.

**To be consistent, avoid unnecessary shifts**

1. in person 2. in number 3. in verb tense 4. in voice 5. in mood, and 6. in discourse

**Unnecessary Shift: Practice Activities**

**Eliminate shifts in person and number between, as well as within, sentences. Some sentences may not need revision.**

(1) In Agra, India, millions of visitors to the Taj Mahal see a glorious white-marble building that serves as a tribute to undying love, but you also see pollution and serious deterioration of the property.

(2) Huge crowds arrive daily to see the gorgeous Taj Mahal, which is perfect in its architectural proportions and is topped with beautiful minarets.

(3) But he or she also sees terrible neglect, such as huge beehives hanging from archways, litter on the lawns and in the gardens, and canals choked with trash.

(4) The whole place smells of pigeon droppings. Decorative panels are faded and destroyed, and many sections are off limits to sightseers.

(5) Soon visitors will enter through a new, clean tourist center, complete with a café and computerized ticketing, and you will find a tour of the cleansed, restored monument to eternal love a very pleasant experience.

**Revise the following sentences to eliminate unnecessary shifts in tense, mood, voice, or person and number and between direct and indirect discourse. Most of the items can be revised in more than one way.**

1. Firemen rushed to the scene, but only a pile of ashes was found.
2. If the whole committee votes, George will be elected.
3. Young people not only enjoy a few weeks away from home at the summer camp, but many valuable things are learned from the experience.
4. Since every city has its own zoo, supplying wild animals to zoos has become a profitable business.
5. The flour and the butter should be mixed into the paste, and add a small amount of milk.
6. When his father spoke to him about going to college, Walter says that he doesn't want to take so much money from the family at a time when living expenses were high.
7. The experienced yachtsman is aware of danger of fire, and, when filling the gas tank, great precautions are taken to spill gasoline in the bottom of the boat.
8. Many doctors recognize the value of health insurance, but the particular kind we should have is something they could not agree on.
9. All students must assemble on the main quadrangle at ten o'clock, and don't be late.
10. A person who is a nonsmoker can develop lung troubles when he or she lives with smokers.
11. The greed of the 1980s gave way to the occupational insecurity of the 1990s, which in turn gives way to reinforced family ties in the early 2000s.
12. The building inspector suggested that we apply for a construction permit and that we should check with his office again when the plans are complete.
13. She studied the package, wondered what could it be, and tore off the wrapping.
14. Suddenly, we heard an explosion of wings off to our right, and you could see a hundred or more ducks lifting off from the water.
15. In my previous job, I sold the most advertising sports and was given a sales excellence award.
16. A cloud of snow powder rose as skis and poles fly in every direction.
17. The flight attendant said, “Please turn off all electronic devices,” but that we could use them again after takeoff.
18. The freezing weather is threatening the citrus fruits, which are sensitive to the cold.

**Read the following sentences, and eliminate any unnecessary shifts. Some sentences are correct, and some can be revised in more than one way.**

1. Some historians see World War II and women’s work in the factories as the beginning of the push toward equal rights for women.
2. Women went to work in the textile mills in the late 1800s, and her efforts at reforming the workplace are seen by many as the beginning of the equal rights movement.
3. Farm girls from wanted to make money, and they wanted to experience life in the city.
4. The factories promised the girls decent wages, and parents were promised by them that their daughters would live in a safe, wholesome environment.
5. Dormitories were built by the factory owners; they are supposed to ensure a safe environment for the girls.
6. When one visits the working loom room at the factory, you are overcome with a sense of the risks and dangers the girls faced in the mills.
7. For a mill girl, moving to the city meant freedom and an escape from the drudgery of farm life; it also meant they had to face many new social situations for which they were not always prepared.
8. Harriet Robinson wrote *Loom and Spindle*, the story of her life as a mill girl, and then a book of poems was published.
9. When you look at the lives of the loom girls, one can see that their work laid part of the foundation for women’s later demands for equal rights.

**Proofread the following paragraph for consistency, and correct any unnecessary shifts. You may want to omit some words or phrases***.*

Many people think that recycling material is a modern trend. However, during World War II, more than 43 percent of America’s newsprint was recycled, and the average person saved bacon grease and other meat fat, which they returned to local collection centers. What you would do is pour leftover fat and other greasy gunk from frying pans and pots into tin cans. Today, despite the fact that many people are recycling, a little more than half of Americans’ waste is actually recycled. The problem is not to get us to save bottles and cans but to convince industry to use more recycled materials. There is a concern expressed by manufacturers that they would be using materials of uneven quality and will face undependable delivery. If manufacturers would wake up and smell the coffee, they would see the advantages for the country and bigger profits could be made by them.