



PROBLEMS WITH WORD CHOICE AND COLLOCATION

X My **habits** include playing basketball, jogging, and swimming.

✓ My **hobbies** include playing basketball, jogging, and swimming.

Explanation: A habit is a thing you do often and almost without thinking.

X I would suggest that the boys pin the badge to the **packet** of their school uniform.

✓ I would suggest that the boys pin the badge to the **pocket** of their school uniform.

Explanation: A packet is a small paper or cardboard container.

X People nowadays complain too much. They should not complain without good **case**.

People nowadays complain too much. They should not complain without good **cause**.

Explanation: Without good cause means without a good reason. Here cause is an uncountable noun.

X The Internet allows us to **get assess to** a wealth of information.

✓ The Internet allows us to **get access to** a wealth of information.

Explanation: The correct expression is 'get access to'. Assess means to calculate the amount or value of something.

X This is a good way to **unify** our class.

✓ This is a good way to **unite** our class

Explanation: These two verbs have slightly different meanings. Unify means to join people together so that they form a single unit, while unite means to join together with other people in order to do something as a group.

X The question we should **answer** is whether there is really a wealth gap.



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✓ The question we should **ask** is whether there is really a wealth gap.

Explanation: It is not natural to say The question we should answer...

X We must take measure to **avoid** the deterioration of air quality in Hong Kong.

✓ We must take measures to **prevent** the deterioration of air quality in Hong Kong.

Explanation: This is a problem with collocation

X To me, it is **unuseful** to make plans because I will not follow them anyway.

✓ To me, it is **useless** to make plans because I will not follow them anyway.

Explanation: Note that there is no such word as unuseful

X My **choose** is different from yours.

✓ My **choice** is different from yours.

Explanation: Choose is a verb while choice is a noun.

X It is **health** for us to exercise regularly.

✓ It is **healthy** for us to exercise regularly.

Explanation: Health is a noun while healthy is an adjective.

X The Mid-Autumn Festival is a **tradition** Chinese festival.

✓ The Mid-Autumn Festival is a **traditional** Chinese festival.

Explanation: Tradition is a noun while traditional is an adjective.

X He ought to write **a letter of complain**.

✓ He ought to write **a letter of complaint**.

Explanation: Complain is a verb while complaint is a noun.



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X Education is not the only way to become **success**.

✓ Education is not the only way to become **successful**.

Explanation: Success is a noun while successful is an adjective.

X We should respect and protect **natural**.

✓ We should respect and protect **nature**.

Explanation: Natural is an adjective while nature is a noun.

X I suggest that you **close up** the romantic relationship and focus on studying.

✓ I suggest that you **break up** the romantic relationship and focus on studying.

Explanation: To close up means to come closer together.





PROBLEMS WITH PRONOUNS AND ARTICLES

X **I and my friend** have been to Disneyland once.

✓ **My friend and I** have been to Disneyland once.

Explanation: The correct structure is my friend and I, not the reverse

X Many of **they** go to tutorial schools for extra class.

✓ Many of **them** go to tutorial schools for extra class.

Explanation: Note that they is a subject pronoun and will not go after of.

X I think we should ask Linda what **he** prefers.

✓ I think we should ask Linda what **she** prefers.

Explanation: According to past examination reports, many students confused he and she during the exam.

X I believe that time travelling will soon become **an** reality.

✓ I believe that time travelling will soon become **a** reality.

Explanation: We use and before words that begin with a vowel sound.



PROBLEMS WITH FORMULAIC EXPRESSIONS

X **In my opinion, I think** the government should not rely solely on the tourism industry.

✓ **In my opinion**, the government should not rely solely on the tourism industry.

✓ **I think** the government should not rely solely on the tourism industry.

Explanation: In my opinion and I think should not be used together.

X **I am agree with you** that the aging population has added great pressure to our health care system.

✓ **I agree with you** that the aging population has added great pressure to our health care system.

Explanation: Agree does not need an auxiliary verb before it.

X **In summarize**, students should strike a balance between study and rest.

✓ **In summary**, students should strike a balance between study and rest.

Explanation: The correct expression is in summary, not in summarize.

X Some countries may not be doing very well **in this prospect**.

✓ Some countries may not be doing very well **in this respect**.

Explanation: In prospect means likely to happen, but there is no such expression as in this prospect.

X **As far as know**, Cantonese slang is very popular among teenagers.

✓ **As far as I know**, Cantonese slang is very popular among teenagers.

Explanation: As far as I know is a set expression. The word I should not be left out.

X I think Mr. Cheung's idea is good. What **are** you think?



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✓ I think Mr. Cheung's idea is good. What **do** you think?

Explanation: For questions asked in active voice of the simple present tense, use do instead of are as the auxiliary verb.



PROBLEMS WITH SENTENCE PATTERNS

X **Although** the Internet is a convenient study tool, **but** it has some disadvantages.

- ✓ Although the Internet is a convenient study tool, it has some disadvantages.
- ✓ The Internet is a convenient study tool, **but** it has some disadvantages.

Explanation: Although and but should not be used together.

X I prefer going out for exercise in the morning because **there is many fresh air**.

- ✓ I prefer going out for exercise in the morning because **there is much fresh air**.

Explanation: Air is an uncountable noun. We use many with countable nouns and much with uncountable nouns.

X **There have** other places that could be turned into arts and cultural areas.

- ✓ **There are** other places that could be turned into arts and cultural areas.

Explanation: Many students confuse there has/have and there is/are.

X **There is not** acceptable to spend so much money.

- ✓ **It is not** acceptable to spend so much money.

Explanation: Note that we use there is/are to say that somebody or something exists.



PROBLEMS WITH VERBS AND TENSES

X I think Worried Mun should let her son **to enjoy** some free time.

✓ I think Worried Mun should let her son **enjoy** some free time.

Explanation: Let should be followed by a bare infinitive.

X We should **held** a campaign to encourage students to actively participate in politics.

✓ We should **hold** a campaign to encourage students to actively participate in politics.

Explanation: We use bare infinitive after should.

X I would suggest **to adopt** a quota system.

✓ I would suggest **adopting** a quota system.

Explanation: Suggest should be followed by a gerund.

X In the article, we should tell the reader **don't** write too much about themselves on social networking sites.

✓ In the article, we should tell the reader **not to** write too much about themselves on social networking sites.

Explanation: Note that we tell people to/not to do something.

X A lot of teenagers like **listening music**.

✓ A lot of teenagers like **listening to music**.

Explanation: Listen is an intransitive verb and should not be followed directly by an object.

X I want **to do** a doctor.

✓ I want **to be** a doctor.



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Explanation: The correct structure should be someone wants to be + occupation.

X Have you **gone** to Disneyland in Japan?

✓ Have you **been** to Disneyland in Japan?

Explanation: Notice that you use have been to indicate that you have gone somewhere and come back. When you say have gone, you are not sure whether the person has come back or not, which is not appropriate in this situation.

X **Is** your friend tell you about the advantages of his job?

✓ **Did** your friend tell you about the advantages of his job?

Explanation: The correct auxiliary verb here is did.



PROBLEMS WITH SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

X **Employers is** now more concerned about employees' communication skills.

✓ **Employers are** now more concerned about employees' communication skills.

Explanation: The plural form are should be used after the plural subject employers.

X My father **don't** drink coffee because it is not good for his health.

✓ My father **doesn't** drink coffee because it is not good for his health.

Explanation: The singular form doesn't should be used after the singular subject my father.

X Stress **form** a natural part of our daily lives.

✓ Stress **forms** a natural part of our daily lives.

Explanation: Stress is used as a singular noun in the above sentence.



PROBLEMS WITH PREPOSITIONS

X Let's **discuss about** how we can save energy.

✓ Let's **discuss** how we can save energy.

Explanation: Notice that we share something (with somebody).

X I like sharing photos **to** my friends via social media.

✓ I like sharing photos **with** my friends via social media.

Explanation: Notice that we share something with somebody.

X Many people are shy and introverted and they prefer to stay **in home**.

✓ Many people are shy and introverted and they prefer to stay **at home**.

Explanation: At home is a set expression when home is used as a noun. In American English, you can also say to stay home.

X Some students may not have **a good understanding to** our school.

✓ Some students may not have **a good understanding of** our school.

Explanation: To have a good understanding of something means to know something well.

X Our presentation should **focus to** the wealth gap problem in Hong Kong.

✓ Our presentation should **focus on** the wealth gap problem in Hong Kong.

Explanation: To focus on something means to give attention to something.

X There are too many vehicles on the road **in now**.

✓ There are too many vehicles on the road **now**.

Explanation: Now should not be preceded by in.



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PROBLEMS WITH ADJECTIVES AND ADVERBS

X Some people are addicted to playing online games, but I find it **bored**.

✓ Some people are addicted to playing online games, but I find it **boring**.

Explanation: We use a present participle to describe how we feel about something.

X It would be **more safety** if we asked the hawkers to move their goods to other places.

✓ It would be **safer** if we asked the hawkers to move their goods to other places.

Explanation: Safe is an adjective and its comparative form is safer. Notice that safety is a noun.

X The problem might be much **more bigger** than we have thought.

✓ The problem might be much **bigger** than we have thought.

Explanation: We use more + adjectives with three or more syllables.

X Teenagers are vulnerable and can **easy** be affected by others.

✓ Teenagers are vulnerable and can **easily** be affected by others.

Explanation: We use an adverb to modify a verb.

X Some students might be **interest in** the idea of having a barbecue at school.

✓ Some students might be **interested in** the idea of having a barbecue at school.

Explanation: We say people are interested in somebody or something.



PROBLEMS WITH CHINGLISH

吉他可以用來彈奏廣東歌。

X Guitar can play Cantopop.

✓ We can play Cantopop on the guitar

由我們自己來做比較好。

X We do ourselves is better.

✓ It is better for us to do it ourselves.

他非常喜歡戶外活動。

X He very like outdoor activities.

✓ He likes outdoor activities very much.

不要溫習得太晚。

X Do not study very night.

✓ You should not study late at night.

新建的體育館可以用來進行球類活動。

X A new sports centre can play ball games.

✓ We can play ball games at the new sports centre.

電腦令我做功課更加方便。

X The computer makes me become more convenient to do my homework.

✓ The computer makes it more convenient for me to do my homework.



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有些學生不懂得如何學習。

X Some students are not suitable to learn.

✓ Some students are not good at studying.

