Mixed Constructions

Mixed constructions occur when the subject and the predicate of a sentence do not grammatically fit together.

Mixed constructions occur in three common cases:

1. The subject does not perform the verb’s action.
   a. ✗ Incorrect:
      
      **Subject:** The purpose of the computer  | .Predicate: was designed to calculate long algorithms.

   b. ✓ Correct:
      
      The computer was designed to calculate long algorithms.
      or
      The purpose of the computer is algorithm calculation.

2. Using ‘is when…’ or ‘is where…’.
   a. ✗ Incorrect:
      
      A hiring freeze is when a company stops hiring new employees due to budget constraints.

   b. ✓ Correct:
      
      A hiring freeze occurs when a company stops hiring new employees due to budget constraints.

3. Using ‘the reason…is because…’.
   a. ✗ Incorrect:
      
      The reason whole grain is healthier is because it has more nutrients than processed grains.

   b. ✓ Correct:
      
      Whole grain is healthier because it has more nutrients than processed grains.
Mixed Constructions

Practice

Identify the sentences that contain mixed constructions by labeling them “MC”. Rewrite those that are incorrect.

1. __________ The temperature water freezes at zero degrees Centigrade.

2. __________ The purpose of the advertisement influences how consumers think about the product.

3. __________ Atherosclerosis is a condition in which artery walls thicken as a result of plaque buildup.

4. __________ The reason electric vehicles are environmentally friendly is because they have no emissions.

5. __________ Her hard work helped her earn an A in class.

6. __________ The reason I brought my umbrella is because it is raining.

7. __________ Foreshadowing is when the author suggests the possibility of future events in the plot.

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Find out more. Search the web or a grammar book for mixed construction or faulty predication.

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Answer Key:

1. Correct
2. Correct
3. Correct
4. Correct
5. Correct
6. Correct
7. Correct