

The Prescriptive Show!!!

January 10, 2007



Rules

1. Determine if the sentence is prescriptively correct
2. If the sentence is NOT prescriptively correct, give a reason why!

IT'S JUST THAT SIMPLE!!!

Sentence 1

Since the committee has already made three reports, only one report remains to be reported on.

Answer

Answer: Sentence is awkward.

Rephrase: Since the committee has already made three reports, only one remains to be presented.

Sentence 2

Since every one of the patients seemed discouraged, I told a joke to cheer him up.

Answer

Answer: Pronoun and antecedent (thing referred to) do not agree in number in this informal reading.

Rephrase: Since all patients seemed discouraged, I told a joke to cheer them up.

Sentence 3

To run efficiently, proper oiling is needed.

Answer

Answer: Dangling infinitival phrase.

Rephrase: To run efficiently, the machine must be properly oiled.

Sentence 4

Ed's income is less than his wife.

Answer

Answer: Incomplete comparison.

Rephrase: Ed's income is less than that of his wife. OR Ed's income is less than his wife's.

Sentence 5

Only working really hard can the students finish before the project deadline.

Answer

Answer: GOOD!



Sentence 6

Who did you perform for?

Answer

Answer: Use *whom* for all objects in formal writing.

Rephrase: Whom did you perform for?

Sentence 7

If he would have registered later, he would have had night classes.

Answer

Answer: The first *would have* is incorrect since 'would' refers to customary (habitual) actions.

Rephrase: If he had registered later, he would have had night classes.