

5

Leaving out and replacing words

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I've seen the film. ~ So have I.

We were hoping to finish the job, but we didn't manage to do so.

Have you seen the film? ~ Yes, I think so.

You're in this photo, look. ~ Oh, so I am.

The economy is healthy now, but will it remain so?

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We need some matches. Have we got any?

I saw the film, but I didn't like it.

Special styles • 45

Words can be left out in special styles: in labels, newspaper headlines, instructions and postcards, and in note style.

NOTE For patterns with a predicative adjective, e.g. *although tired*, • 199(5c).

37 Avoiding repetition

- 1 We sometimes leave out a word or phrase, or we replace it by another word such as a pronoun. Here is part of a real conversation in a shop.

CHOOSING A JACKET

Assistant: *There's this rather nice rose pink, or two or three nice blues, burgundy, and here is one that's a very nice colour. I can show it to you in the daylight. And this one runs at sixty-nine ninety-five.*

Customer: *Are they all the same price?*

Assistant: *Yes. These are cotton, the best cotton one can get. The best quality. And also a very nice green - I'm afraid I haven't the size fourteen.*

Customer: *It's a nice colour though.*

(from M. Underwood and P. Barr *Listeners*)

When the customer went into the shop, she asked to look at jackets. While she and the assistant are looking at the jackets, there is no need to repeat the word *jacket*. It is clear from the situation what the topic of the conversation is.

... and here is one that's a very nice colour. (= here is a jacket...)

I can show it to you in the daylight. (= ... show the jacket...)

These are cotton. (= These jackets are ...)

- 2 But we sometimes repeat things for emphasis.

There's this rather nice rose pink, or two or three nice blues, burgundy, and here is one that's a very nice colour.

These are cotton, the best cotton one can get.

The assistant wants to emphasize that the colours are all *nice* and that the material is *cotton*.

Repeating words in conversation can sometimes make things easier to express and to understand. • 53(1a)

- 3 Sometimes the words that are left out or replaced come later, not earlier.

If you want to, you can pay by credit card.

(= If you want to pay by credit card,...)

After she had had a cup of tea, Phyllis felt much better.

(= After Phyllis had had...)

Here *she* refers forward to *Phyllis*, which comes later in the sentence.

38 Leaving out words after the auxiliary

- 1 A sentence can end with an auxiliary if the meaning is clear from the context.

I'm getting old. ~ Yes, I'm afraid you are.

Kate hadn't brought an umbrella. She was pleased to see that Sue had.

I don't want to answer this letter, but perhaps I should.

Can you get satellite TV? We can.

If the verb is in a simple tense, we use a form of *do*.

I don't enjoy parties as much as my wife does.

We can also end a sentence with the ordinary verb *be*.

It's a nice colour. At least, I think it is.

The stress can be on the auxiliary or the subject, whichever is the new information.

Yes, I'm afraid you 'are. (emphasis on the fact)

She was pleased to see that 'Sue had. (emphasis on the person)

NOTE The auxiliary cannot be a short form or weak form.

NOT *She was pleased to see that Sue'd.*

2 Usually everything after the auxiliary is left out.

I'm getting old. ~ Yes, I'm afraid you are.

After *are* we leave out *getting old*. But there are some exceptions to this.

a We do not leave out *not/n't*.

What did you have for breakfast? ~ I didn't. I'm not eating today.

b Sometimes we have to use two auxiliary verbs. When the first is a new word, we cannot leave out the second.

Have the team won? ~ Well, everyone's smiling, so they must have.

I don't know if Tom is still waiting. He might be.

When will the room be cleaned? ~ It just has been.

Here *must*, *might* and *has* are not in the previous sentence.

But when the two auxiliaries are both in the previous sentence, then we can leave out the second.

The corridor hasn't been cleaned, but the room has (been).

You could have hurt yourself. ~ Yes, I could (have).

c In British English *do* is sometimes used after an auxiliary.

I don't want to answer this letter, but perhaps I should (do).

Have the team won? ~ Well, everyone's smiling, so they must have (done).

Here *do* = answer the letter, and *done* = won.

d There can be an adverbial or a tag.

It's a nice colour though. ~ Yes, it is, isn't it?

Is there a market today? ~ I don't know. There was yesterday.

Here *a market is* left out of the answer, but *yesterday's* new information.

3 A short question consists of an auxiliary + subject.

I've seen the film before. Have you? ~ No, I haven't.

I wanted Helen to pass her test. ~ And did she? ~ Yes.

Here it is clear from the context that *And did she?* = And did she pass her test?

39 Leaving out an infinitive clause

1 When there is no need to repeat a to-infinitive clause, we can leave it out.

To stands for the whole clause.

Would you like to join us for lunch? ~ Yes, I'd love to.

Jane got the job, although she didn't expect to.

You've switched the machine off. I told you not to, didn't I?

I haven't washed up yet, but I'm going to.

But we repeat an auxiliary after *to*.

I haven't done as much work today as I'd like to have.

Jane was chosen for the job, although she didn't expect to be.

- 2 Sometimes we can also leave out *to*.
I don't work as hard as I ought (to).
Take one of these brochures if you want (to).

We usually leave out *to* after an adjective.
We need people to serve refreshments. Are you willing?

NOTE

We usually leave out *to* after *like* but not after *would like*.
Take one of these brochures if you like.
Take one of these brochures if you'd like to.

- 3 We can also leave out a bare infinitive (without *to*).
I wanted to borrow Tim's cassettes, but he wouldn't let me.
(= ... let me borrow his cassettes.)
We can go somewhere else if you'd rather.
(= ... if you'd rather go somewhere else.)

40 Leaving out words after a question word

We can leave out the words after a question word or phrase rather than repeat them.

The road is closed to traffic. No one knows why.
I'm going to the dentist this afternoon. ~ Oh, what time?
I put the certificate somewhere, and now I can't remember where.

When the question word is the subject, the auxiliary can come after it.
Something rather strange has happened. ~ What (has)?

41 Leaving out the verb

When there are two sentences with the same pattern and the same verb, then we do not need to repeat the verb.

The new warehouse contains furniture and the old one electrical goods.
(= ... and the old one **contains** electrical goods.)
Everton have played ten games but Liverpool only eight.
(= ... but Liverpool **have only played** eight games.)

This happens only in rather formal English.

42 Leaving out words at the beginning of a sentence

In informal English we can leave out some kinds of words from the beginning of a sentence if the meaning is clear without them.

Ready? ~ Sorry, no. Can't find my car keys. ~ Doesn't matter. We can go in my car.
~ OK. ~ Better get going, or we'll be late.

Ready? means 'Are you ready?', and it is clear that the question refers to the person spoken to. *Doesn't matter* means 'It doesn't matter', and the meaning is clear without *it*. The same thing happens in informal writing, for example in postcards.

1 Statements

We can leave out the subjects *I* and *it*.

Can't find my keys. (~ I can't find ...)

Hope you have a good time. (= I hope ...)

Feels colder today. (= It feels colder today.)

2 Yes/no questions

We can leave out the auxiliary or the ordinary verb *be* from a yes/no question.

Your problem been sorted out? (= **Has** your problem ... ?)

Everything all right? (= **Is** everything... ?)

We can sometimes leave out both the subject and the auxiliary or the subject and the ordinary verb *be*, especially if the subject is *you* or *there*.

Tired? (= **Are you** tired?)

Need to borrow money? Just give us a ring. (= **Do you** need ... ?)

Any free seats in here? (= **Are there** any free seats ... ?)

3 Leaving out *a/an* and *the*

We can sometimes leave out these words before the subject.

Cup of tea is what I need. (= **A** cup of tea...)

Television's broken down. (= **The** television...)

4 Leaving out an imperative verb

We can sometimes leave out an imperative verb. The verb is usually *be* or expresses movement.

Careful. (= **Be** careful.)

This way, please. (= **Come** this way, please.)

43 Patterns with *so*, *neither* etc

1 *Too*, *either*, *so* and *neither/nor*

- a After a clause there can be a short addition with *too* or *either*. The positive pattern is subject + auxiliary + *too*. The negative is subject + auxiliary + *n't* + *either*.

You're cheating. ~ *You are, too.*

Barbara can't drive, and her husband can't either.

In simple tenses we use the auxiliary verb *do*.

I like chocolate. ~ *I do, too.*

That torch doesn't work. ~ *This one doesn't either.*

We can also use *be* on its own as an ordinary verb.

I'm tired. ~ *I am, too.*

- b An addition to a positive statement can also have this pattern with *so*.

I like chocolate. ~ So do I. You're beautiful. ~ So are you.

Children should behave themselves, and so should adults.

So here means the same as *too*.

There is inversion.

NOT I like chocolate. ~ So I do.

For *So I do*, • (4).

- c An addition to a negative statement can also have this pattern with *neither* or *nor*.

Barbara can't drive, and neither/nor can her husband.

We haven't got a dishwasher. ~ Neither/Nor have we.

The ham didn't taste very nice. ~ Neither/Nor did the eggs.

Neither and *nor* mean the same as *not... either*.

NOTE

a There is no difference in meaning between *neither* and *nor*, but *nor* is a little more formal.

b The first sound in *either/neither* is /i:/ in the USA and usually /ai/ in Britain.

- d In these examples a negative addition follows a positive statement, and vice versa.

I'm hungry now. ~ Well, I'm not.

We haven't got a dishwasher. ~ We have.

2 *Do so, do it* and *do that*

Do so and *do it* refer to an action which is clear from the context. *Do so* is a little formal.

Anna had often thought of murdering her husband, but she hesitated to actually do so/do it.

I wanted to jump, but I just couldn't do it.

Here the stress is on *do*, not on *so/it*. We are interested in whether or not someone does the action.

When *do that* refers to an action, the stress is usually on *that*.

I might murder my husband. ~ Oh, I wouldn't do that if I were you.

Here we are interested in or surprised at what kind of action it is.

3 *So* and *not* replacing a clause

- a *So* can stand for a whole clause.

Will you be going out? ~ Yes, I expect so.

I'm not sure if the shop stays open late, but I think so.

Can the machine be repaired? ~ I hope so.

Has the committee reached a decision? ~ Well, it seems so.

I'm travelling round the world. ~ Is that so?

Here *I expect so* means 'I expect I'll be going out.' We cannot leave out *so* or use *it*.

NOT *Yes, I expect.* and NOT *Yes, I expect it.*

- b We can use these verbs and expressions in this pattern with *so*: *be afraid, it appears/appeared, assume, be, believe, do* • (2), *expect, guess, hope, imagine, presume, say, it seems/seemed, suppose, suspect, tell (someone), think.*

We do not use *know* or *be sure* in this pattern.

The shop stays open late. ~ Yes, I know. NOT *Yes, I know so.*

~ Are you sure? NOT *Are you sure so?*

- c There are two ways of forming a negative pattern.

Negative verb + *so*: *Will you be going out? ~ I don't expect so.*

Positive verb + *not*: *Is this watch broken? ~ I hope not.*

Some verbs can form the negative with either pattern, e.g. *I don't suppose so* or *I suppose not*. They are *appear, believe, say, seem* and *suppose*.

Expect, imagine and *think* usually form the negative with *so*. *I don't think so* is more usual than *I think not*, which is rather formal.

Assume, be afraid, guess, hope, presume and *suspect* form the negative with *not*.

Is this picture worth a lot of money? ~ I'm afraid not.

There's no use waiting any longer. ~ I guess not.

NOTE

Compare the different meanings with *say*.

Is the illness serious? ~ I don't know. The doctor didn't say so.

~ No, it isn't. The doctor said not.

- d With a few verbs, *so* can come at the beginning of the sentence.

Mark and Susan are good friends. ~ So it seems./So it appears.

They're giving away free tickets. Or so they say, anyway.

- e *So* and *not* can replace a clause after *if*.

Do you want your money to work for you? If so, you'll be interested in our Super Savers account.

Have you got transport? If not, I can give you a lift.

We can also use *not* after the adverbs *certainly, of course, probably, perhaps, maybe* and *possibly*.

Did you open my letter? ~ Certainly not.

4 *So* in short answers

A short answer with *so* can express agreement. The pattern is *so* + pronoun + auxiliary or *be*.

You've made a mistake here. ~ Oh, so I have. Thank you.

This pattern has a different meaning to a yes/no short answer.

This glass is cracked. ~ So it is. I hadn't noticed.

~ Yes, it is. I meant to throw it away.

So it is means here that the speaker notices the crack for the first time.

5 *So, that way* and *the same*

- a *So* can replace an adjective after *become* and *remain*.

The situation is not yet serious, but it may become so. (= become serious)

So is rather formal here. In informal English we use *get/stay that way*.

The situation isn't serious yet, but it might get that way.

We can use *so* with *more* or *less*.

It's generally pretty busy here - more so in summer, of course.

- b *The same* can replace a phrase or clause already mentioned.
Happy New Year! ~ Thank you. (The) same to you.
Monday was beautiful, and Tuesday was the same.
The others think we should give up the idea, and I think the same.

Do the same can refer to an action already mentioned.
When the mayor lifted his glass to drink, everyone else did the same.
 (= everyone else lifted their glasses, too)

NOTE

We can use *the same way* after *feel*.

The others think we should give up the idea, and I feel the same (way).

6 Overview: uses of so

	Use	Example	Meaning
• 43(1)	expressing addition	<i>I'm hungry. ~ So am I.</i>	'too, also'
• 43(2)	after do <i>If you</i>	<i>wish to look round, you may do so.</i>	(<i>do so</i> = look round)
• 43(3)	replacing a clause	<i>Have we got time?~ I think so.</i>	(<i>think so</i> = think we've got time)
• 43(4)	expressing agreement	<i>The coach has arrived. ~ So it has.</i>	'I see/remember that...'
• 43(5a)	replacing an adjective	<i>Things have been difficult, but they should become lessso.</i>	(<i>less so</i> = less difficult)
• 212	expressing degree	<i>The view was so nice. He does talk so.</i>	'very' 'a lot'
• 247	expressing reason	<i>I was tired, so I went to bed.</i>	'therefore'
• 252	expressing purpose	<i>I got up early so (that) I wouldn't be late.</i>	'in order that'

44 Some other ways of avoiding repetition

- 1 If the meaning is clear from the context, we can leave out a noun after a number or other quantifier, a demonstrative, or a superlative adjective.

It's got one pocket. ~ No, it's got two, look.

I've got some chocolate here. Would you like some?

How do you like the photos? ~ I think this is the nicest.

We cannot leave out the whole noun phrase.

NOT *I've got some chocolate here. Would you like?*

- 2 In some contexts we can use *one/ones*. • 188

I wanted a big packet, not a small one.

- 3 We can use a personal pronoun or possessive pronoun instead of a noun phrase.

When Monica got the invitation, she felt pleased.

I forgot my invitation, but Monica remembered hers.

- 4 *It, this or that* can replace a clause.
Terry can't get a job, but it doesn't seem to bother him.
 (it = that Terry can't get a job)
I hear the shop is closing down. ~ Who told you that?
 (that = that the shop is closing down)
- 5 The adverbs *here, there, now* and *then* can replace an expression of place or time.
I left the bag on the seat, and when I got back, it wasn't there. (= on the seat)
When I was young, we didn't have a television. Things were different then.
 (= when I was young)

45 Special styles

In some special styles of English, words are left out to save space.

1 Signs and labels

A sign or label identifies the thing it is written on or tells us something about it.

		Meaning
On a building	<i>Town Hall</i>	'This is the town hall.'
On a door	<i>Office</i>	'This room is the office.'
On a packet	<i>Automatic dishwasher powder</i>	'This packet contains automatic dishwasher powder.'
On a car	<i>For sale</i>	'This car is for sale.'

2 Newspaper headlines

Alan and the, auxiliary verbs and *be* are often left out of headlines.

Actor dies (= **An** actor has died.)

PM angry (= **The** Prime Minister is angry.)

Six arrested in raid (= **Six** people have been arrested in a raid.)

3 Instructions

The is sometimes left out of instructions. Here is an example from a camera instruction booklet.

Open battery compartment cover by pushing in direction of arrow.

(= Open **the** battery compartment cover by pushing in **the** direction of **the** arrow.)

When an instruction is written on the thing it refers to, then there is often no need to use the noun.

Handle with care. (on a parcel)

Do not cover. (on a heater)

4 Postcards and diaries

Some kinds of words can be left out from a postcard or diary to avoid repetition or to save space. They include *I* and *we*, *a/an* and *the*, auxiliary verbs, the verb *be*, and *there is/are*.

Arrived safely Saturday. Hotel OK, weather marvellous, sun shining. Been sunbathing. Lots to do here. Going on excursion tomorrow.

5 Note style

English can be written in note style when information must be given as briefly as possible. This information is about Edinburgh University.

WHAT IT'S LIKE

Large and diverse university set in heart of historic city. Separate science campus with regular (free) minibus service. Buildings range from historic to high-tech. Main accommodation in central Halls with wide range of renovated houses and student flats. Accommodation situation improving.

(from K. Boehm and J. Lees-Spalding *The Student Book*)

The words left out here are *a/an* and *the*, the verb *be* and *there is/are*.

We can also use note style when writing down the important parts of what is said, for example at a lecture or meeting.