

Simultaneous Actions & Sentence Synthesis: Combining Clauses

INTERMEDIATE

Focus: Actions happening at the same time, One action during another, While doing vs When doing, Combining two sentences into one, Word order in complex clauses, Using -ing to replace 'because' or 'and'

1. Simultaneous Actions (Two things at the same time)

We use the **-ing form** (present participle) when two actions happen at the same time and are done by the **same subject**. This allows us to combine two short sentences into one fluid sentence.

- **Separate:** She walked out of the room. She was smiling.
- **Combined:** She walked out of the room, **smiling**.
- **Separate:** He looked at the map. He tried to find the hotel.
- **Combined:** **Trying** to find the hotel, he looked at the map.

Note: The **-ing clause** can go at the beginning or the end of the sentence. If it is at the beginning, use a comma.

2. Time Clauses (While / When)

We often use **While** or **When** with the -ing form to set the background for another action.

- **While + -ing:** Focuses on the duration of an action.
 - *Example:* **While waiting** for the bus, I read a book.
- **When + -ing:** Focuses on the moment something happens.
 - *Example:* Be careful **when crossing** the street.

3. Explaining Reasons (Replacing 'Because' or 'As')

We can use an **-ing clause** to explain *why* something happened. This is common when combining sentences where one action is the result of another.

- **Separate:** He was feeling tired. He went to bed early.
- **Combined:** **Feeling** tired, he went to bed early.
- **Separate:** She didn't have any money. She couldn't buy the ticket.
- **Combined:** **Not having** any money, she couldn't buy the ticket.

4. Negatives (Not + -ing)

To make a participle clause negative, simply place **not** before the -ing verb.

- **Structure:** **Not + verb-ing**
- *Example:* **Not wanting** to wake the baby, he walked quietly.

Practice Exercises

Instruction: Complete the sentences using the correct form of the verb in parentheses. Most answers will require the **-ing form** (participle) to combine actions or show reasons. Pay attention to negatives (not/verb) and main clause structures.

1. _____ (feel) hungry, I decided to make a sandwich immediately.
2. He sat in the armchair, _____ (read) a magazine and drinking coffee.
3. _____ (not/know) the answer, did the student leave the question blank?
4. Be careful not to hurt yourself when _____ (fix) that old machine.
5. _____ (you/watch) TV while _____ (eat) dinner last night?
6. _____ (not/want) to be late, she took a taxi instead of the bus.
7. _____ (whistle) a happy tune, the gardener watered the flowers.
8. While _____ (clean) his room, he found his old high school photos.
9. _____ (see) the police car, the thief dropped the bag and ran away.
10. _____ (not/have) a map, how did you find your way back to the hotel?
11. She hurt her knee while _____ (play) tennis with her brother.
12. _____ (listen) to music, he didn't hear the doorbell ring.
13. _____ (not/expect) guests, the house was a complete mess when they arrived.
14. Why did you stand there _____ (laugh) instead of helping me?
15. _____ (look) out the window, she saw it was raining heavily.

Answer Key

1. **Feeling** (Reason: Because I felt hungry...)
2. **reading** (Simultaneous: He sat and read...)
3. **Not knowing** (Negative Reason: Because he didn't know...)
4. **fixing** (Time: When fixing...)
5. **Did you watch / eating** (Question in main clause / Simultaneous action)
6. **Not wanting** (Negative Reason: Because she didn't want...)
7. **Whistling** (Simultaneous: He watered and whistled...)
8. **cleaning** (Time: While cleaning...)
9. **Seeing** (Sequence/Reason: When he saw...)
10. **Not having** (Negative Reason: Because you didn't have...)
11. **playing** (Time: While playing...)
12. **Listening** (Reason/Simultaneous: Because he was listening...)
13. **Not expecting** (Negative Reason: Because we were not expecting...)
14. **laughing** (Simultaneous: Standing and laughing...)
15. **Looking** (Simultaneous: She looked and saw...)