

Ellipsis and Substitution – Worksheet 1

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ Score: / 39



Do this worksheet
online and check your
answers instantly

Exercise 1: Choose the substitute

Complete each sentence with a word or phrase from the box. Use each one once. There are two extra options you do not need.

Example: Is the library open late tonight? I think _____. → so

WORD BOX

so not one ones do so neither that to such none

1. Is the museum open on Mondays? I'm afraid _____.
2. Will the results be published this week? I believe _____.
3. These shoes are too tight. Do you have any larger _____?
4. The committee was asked to reconsider its decision, but it refused to _____.
5. I don't usually enjoy crime novels, and _____ does my partner.
6. She told me the deadline had been extended, but I didn't know _____.
7. I haven't been to the new gallery yet, but I'd really like _____.
8. My old laptop is so slow that I'm thinking of buying a new _____.

Exercise 2: Ellipsis with auxiliaries

Complete each sentence with the correct auxiliary or modal verb (positive or negative) instead of repeating the verb in brackets.

Example: I can't drive, but my brother ____ (drive). → can

9. I haven't read the report yet, but Maria _____ (read).
10. Leo said he would phone back, but he _____ (phone).
11. I don't eat meat, but my brother _____ (eat).
12. I can't stand loud music, and neither _____ (stand) my flatmates.
13. Nadia was invited to the conference, and so _____ (invite) I.
14. Did anyone remember to lock the door? I think Tom _____ (remember).
15. They aren't coming to the party, but I suspect their children _____ (come).

Exercise 3: Short responses

Match each remark with the best response from the box. The meaning you want to express is given in brackets. There are two extra responses.

WORD BOX

I hope so. I'm afraid not. So do I. Neither have I. I'd love to. I don't think so. So it seems.
I hope not.

16. Is there any milk left? (Unfortunately, there isn't.) → _____
17. Do you think the weather will be good for the wedding? (You want it to be.) → _____
18. I really enjoy working from home. (You enjoy it too.) → _____
19. I've never been to Asia. (You haven't either.) → _____
20. Would you like to join us for dinner on Friday? (You accept enthusiastically.) → _____
21. Is the manager in today? (You believe she isn't.) → _____

Exercise 4: Avoid the repetition

Rewrite each sentence using the word(s) in capitals to avoid repeating words. Write the whole sentence.

Example: I wanted to stay longer, but I couldn't stay longer. (COULDN'T) → I wanted to stay longer, but I couldn't.

22. Anna likes classical music, and Tom likes classical music too. (SO)

23. Sam wanted to leave early, but his manager didn't allow him to leave early. (TO)

24. The company promised to cut prices, but it has not yet cut prices. (DO SO)

25. We might miss the last bus. If we miss the last bus, we'll take a taxi. (IF SO)

26. I don't like the blue curtains; I prefer the green curtains. (ONES)

27. She can speak Japanese better than I can speak Japanese. (CAN)

Exercise 5: Find the mistake

Each sentence contains one mistake with ellipsis or substitution. Write the corrected sentence.

Example: I'd like to come, but I can't to. → I'd like to come, but I can't.

28. I don't know if it will snow tonight, but I don't hope so.

29. I've never seen the Northern Lights, and neither my sister has.

30. I haven't visited Rome yet, but I'd really like.

31. My parents don't speak French, and so do I.

32. Jo can't swim, but her brother does.

33. Kate had already eaten, but I haven't.

Exercise 6: Put the words in order

Put the words in the correct order to make sentences. Add the necessary punctuation.

Example: so / I / hope → I hope so.

34. never / I've / tried / skiing / but / I'd / love / to

35. not / if / we'll / have / to / cancel / the / trip

36. so / did / most / of / her / friends / my / sister / passed / the / exam / and

37. do / you / want / the / large / box / or / the / small / one

38. he / said / he / would / apologise / but / he / never / did

39. think / I / don't / so / but / I / may / be / wrong

Answer key – Ellipsis and Substitution – Worksheet 1

Exercise 1: Choose the substitute

1. **not**
'I'm afraid not' replaces a negative clause: it isn't open.
2. **so**
'So' replaces a positive clause after verbs like believe, think and expect.
3. **ones**
'Ones' replaces a plural countable noun (shoes).
4. **do so**
'Do so' replaces a whole verb phrase, typically in more formal English.
5. **neither**
'Neither + auxiliary + subject' adds another negative statement.
6. **that**
'That' refers back to the whole previous statement.
7. **to**
The verb after 'to' is left out when it is clear from the context.
8. **one**
'One' replaces a singular countable noun (laptop).

Exercise 2: Ellipsis with auxiliaries

9. **has**
Present perfect 'haven't read' is echoed by the auxiliary 'has'.
10. **didn't**
The past simple negative auxiliary 'didn't' replaces 'phone back'.
11. **does**
Present simple positive with a third-person subject needs 'does'.
12. **can**
After 'neither' we repeat the modal from the first clause in its positive form.
13. **was**
A passive 'was invited' is echoed with 'was' after 'so'.
14. **did**
The past simple auxiliary 'did' replaces 'remembered to lock the door'.
15. **are**
Present continuous 'aren't coming' is echoed by the positive 'are'.

Exercise 3: Short responses

16. **I'm afraid not.**
'I'm afraid not' gives a negative answer politely, expressing regret.
17. **I hope so.**
'I hope so' expresses a wish that something positive is true.
18. **So do I.**
'So + do + I' agrees with a positive present simple statement.
19. **Neither have I.**
'Neither have I' agrees with a negative present perfect statement.
20. **I'd love to.**
The infinitive is dropped after 'to' because 'join you for dinner' is understood.
21. **I don't think so.**
With 'think' we usually make the verb negative: 'I don't think so'.

Exercise 4: Avoid the repetition

22. **Anna likes classical music, and so does Tom.**
'So + auxiliary + subject' replaces the repeated positive clause.
23. **Sam wanted to leave early, but his manager didn't allow him to.**
We keep 'to' and omit the rest of the verb phrase.
24. **The company promised to cut prices, but it has not yet done so.**
'Do so' replaces 'cut prices' and takes the tense of the clause (has done so).
25. **We might miss the last bus. If so, we'll take a taxi.**
'If so' replaces a positive conditional clause.
26. **I don't like the blue curtains; I prefer the green ones.**
'Ones' replaces the plural noun 'curtains' after an adjective.
27. **She can speak Japanese better than I can.**
In comparisons we keep only the subject and auxiliary.

Exercise 5: Find the mistake

28. **I don't know if it will snow tonight, but I hope not.**
With 'hope' we use 'I hope not', not 'I don't hope so'.
29. **I've never seen the Northern Lights, and neither has my sister.**
After 'neither' the auxiliary comes before the subject (inversion).
30. **I haven't visited Rome yet, but I'd really like to.**
'Like' needs 'to' when the following verb is omitted.
31. **My parents don't speak French, and neither do I.**
To agree with a negative statement we use 'neither' or 'nor', not 'so'.
32. **Jo can't swim, but her brother can.**
The auxiliary must match the first clause: 'can't swim' → 'can'.
33. **Kate had already eaten, but I hadn't.**
The auxiliary keeps the same tense as the first clause: past perfect 'had'.

Exercise 6: Put the words in order

34. **I've never tried skiing, but I'd love to.**
The verb 'try skiing' is understood after 'to'.
35. **If not, we'll have to cancel the trip.**
'If not' replaces a negative conditional clause and comes first.
36. **My sister passed the exam, and so did most of her friends.**
'So + did + subject' adds a second positive past statement.
37. **Do you want the large box or the small one?**
'One' replaces the singular noun 'box' to avoid repeating it.
38. **He said he would apologise, but he never did.**
'Did' stands in for 'apologised' after 'never'.
39. **I don't think so, but I may be wrong.**
'I don't think so' replaces a whole clause the speaker disagrees with.

Notes for teachers: Start with the matching exercise as a quick warm-up in pairs, then move on to the controlled gap tasks before the rewriting and ordering exercises. Typical mistakes include 'I don't hope so' instead of 'I hope not', choosing the wrong auxiliary or tense after so/neither, and dropping 'to' in 'I'd like to'. As a follow-up, ask students to write a short dialogue of eight lines that uses at least five of the patterns without repeating any verb phrase.