

Eliminating “Be” Verbs

Name: _____

Due Date: _____

The “be” verbs, also called the “state of being” verbs, simply tell that someone or something exists. The English language has only 8 “be” verbs. You should memorize them.

am is are was were be being been

Strong writers eliminate “be” verbs from their sentences as often as possible. Sometimes, vague “be” verbs are simply replaced with stronger verbs to communicate more specific meaning to the reader. Here’s an example:

The time that Mary is happiest is when she is with her best friend, Sue.

The time that Mary feels happiest occurs when she visits with her best friend, Sue.

In other cases, however, a sentence will require a bit more rearranging to remove the “be” verb. In this exercise, you will practice five techniques for eliminating “be” verbs.

Directions: Rewrite the sentences to remove all “be” verbs. Carefully capitalize and punctuate each sentence.

Elimination Technique #1: CONVERT Change another word in the sentence into a strong verb.

Example: She *is* the best player in the game.

She plays the game the best.

1. He will *be* the runner at the end of the relay.

2. God, through Jesus Christ, *is* the creator of all things.

3. Van Gogh *is* the painter of “Starry Night” which *is* on display at The Museum of Modern Art.

Elimination Technique #2: DROP -ING Change an -ing verb (participle) to a regular verb (an infinitive).

Example: You *should be wearing* your uniform.

You *should wear* your uniform.

4. This play *is encouraging* me to become an actor.

5. The mockingbird *was* on the peak of the roof *singing*.

6. My pastor will *be speaking* at tonight’s banquet.

Elimination Technique #3: REARRANGE Change the order of the phrases in the sentence.

Examples: He *was* excited to visit the museum.

Visiting the museum excited him.

7. The Bengals *were* devastated to lose the game.

8. Her wedding dress *was* sewn by her mother, and the wedding cake *was* baked by her grandmother.

Elimination Technique #4: REMOVE Drop unnecessary words or phrases to reduce wordiness and simplify the sentence structure.

Example: Instead, what she saw *was* her father landing the airplane.

Instead, she saw her father landing the airplane.

9. Katie whispered, “The thing that I want for Christmas *is* a Dachshund puppy.”

10. Before Stan could write the million dollar check, he needed to know what the date *was*.

Elimination Technique #5: SHOW VS. TELL Write a more descriptive sentence that *shows* what you mean.

Example: Bennett is always right.

Every time Bennett raises his hand, he always states the correct answer for the math problem.

11. My neighbor *is* kind.

12. The movie *was* awesome.

Parent Checklist: *Please evaluate your student’s work for the following items and assist with corrections.*

- The student has eliminated each “be” verb and also not inadvertently added a new one.
- Each rewritten sentence makes sense. It communicates in a clear, logical way.
- The student has used proper grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

Parent Signature: _____

Date _____