

## Ellipsis and Substitution: Overview

**USE:** **Ellipsis** is the removal of parts of a sentence to avoid repetition. In the first type of ellipsis, the context makes it clear which words have been left out.

A: *When are you leaving?*

B: **10 o'clock.** (*I'm leaving at 10:00*)

A: *Are you coming to the party?*

B: **Possibly.** (*I am possibly coming to the party.*)

In the second type of ellipsis, words that form part of a grammatically predictable construction can be left out.

**You have to do the laundry and** (*you have to*) **clean the bathroom.**

**Betty needs a large shirt and Barbara** (*needs*) **a small** (*shirt*).

**Substitution** is when part of a sentence is left out and replaced by a word/words to show what has been omitted.

A: *Did you take out the garbage last night?*

B: **Yes.** (“**Yes**” replaces “*I took out the garbage last night*”.)

**Yes, I did.** (“**did**” replaces “*took the garbage out last night*”).

*He invited me to a party on Saturday but I had to work **then.*** (“**then**” replaces “*Saturday night*”)

**Ellipsis and substitution** are closely related and sometimes considered together. In this example, the auxiliary verb is used alone but nothing is added to indicate what is missing.

*I will take the test on Friday, and John **will** (*take the test*) too.*

### FORM:

With **modals** (will, would, can, could, etc.) the main verb can be left out.

*They **can't** sing very well, but she **can** (*sing well*).*

When **have** or **be** are used as **auxiliaries**, the main verb can be left out.

*I **hadn't** heard about it, but they **had** (*heard about it*).*

*He **isn't** living here anymore, but Carol still **is** (*living here*).*

If there is no auxiliary verb, “**DO**” is substituted for the main verb.

*Victor loves pasta, and Barbara **does** too.* (“**does**” replaces “*loves pasta*”)

*They liked the movie, and Steven **did** too.* (“**did**” replaces “*liked the movie*”)

Other parts of speech (nouns, pronouns, etc.) can also be left out if the context makes it clear what is missing. (see **Ellipsis** and **Substitution** examples above)

*Use the correct AUXILIARY to complete the sentence. Example: He likes liver with onions but I don't.*

1. Bill won't drive a car with standard transmission but I \_\_\_\_\_.
2. She can speak German and so \_\_\_\_\_ I.
3. I have never been to Europe but my brother \_\_\_\_\_.
4. They have spoken to him but Mary \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Mr. Smith didn't dance at the party but his wife \_\_\_\_\_.
6. She knows how to bake but her friend \_\_\_\_\_.
7. We would like to go to the beach but he \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Bruce's car isn't new but mine \_\_\_\_\_.
9. He doesn't know the answer but she \_\_\_\_\_.
10. They love to dance and so \_\_\_\_\_ I.

*Rewrite the following sentences, or answer the questions, leaving out or replacing unnecessary words.*

1. A: Have you ever tried scuba diving?  
B: \_\_\_\_\_.
2. You should eat healthy food and you should exercise regularly.  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. (A: When is Todd going to start his new job?)  
B: He is going to start his new job next Tuesday.  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Lance likes rock music but Sally doesn't like rock music.  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. I can run faster than Sally can run.  
\_\_\_\_\_.
6. I ordered three cups of coffee, but you only gave me two cups of coffee.  
\_\_\_\_\_.