

How to use words appropriately

Before you begin

What you need:

Related text: **"Powder" by Tobias Wolff**

Exit with Success and *The Bare Essentials Plus* (optional)

An English dictionary

Approximate time this exercise should take you: **15 minutes**

Reminder

Many writers encounter problems with the correct use of idiom. Expressions such as "open the light" or "make the good choice" are examples of inappropriate idiom. Idiom errors often happen when the writer is translating from another language into English. This can create awkward word choices that confuse meaning. Many writers also have problems choosing the correct preposition. If this is a problem you experience, practise the many preposition exercises you will find in *The Bare Essentials Plus*.

Instructions

The following exercise, based on Tobias Wolff's "Powder," will test and reinforce your understanding of the "appropriate use of words" objective. The exercise focuses on problems with idioms, prepositions, and word forms.

Exercise

In the sample sentences below, select the appropriate choice of word(s) from the proposed choices.

Here is an example: The young boy wanted to return at/to his house.

The young boy wanted to return to his house

1. The father makes the good/correct choice and drives around the barriers.
2. It's not fair that the father must fight on/for the chance to spend time with his own son.
3. The author makes the reader feel that driving down a highway on fresh powder is as wonderful as skiing down/in a mountain.
4. The informal dialogue is supposed to reflect/reflecting the closeness of the father and son relationship.
5. Wolff's use of sentence fragments is affective/effective in suggesting informal tone.
6. At the beginning of the story, the boy wanted to go home at/to his mother's home regardless of the wonderful skiing.
7. The son is not as good a skier as his/is father to the point where he thought he might even ski over the cliff!
8. Today, the expression "Criminy" is not a word that we often ear/hear.
9. The short story "Powder" describes a significant incident that enables the son to form/from a personal relation/relationship with his father.
10. In trying to please his son, the father could have/could of left the ski hill before the snow storm to get the boy home on time for Christmas supper.

Answer key

The correct answer is underlined and in bold print.

1. The father makes the **correct** choice and drives around the barriers.
2. It's not fair that the father must fight **for** the chance to spend time with his own son.
3. The author makes the reader feel that driving **down** a highway on fresh powder is as wonderful as skiing down a mountain.
4. The informal dialogue is **supposed** to reflect the closeness of the father and son relationship.
5. Wolff's use of sentence fragments is **effective** in suggesting informal tone.
6. At the beginning of the story, the boy wanted to go home **to** his mother's home regardless of the wonderful skiing.
7. The son is not as good a skier as **his** father to the point where he thought he might even ski over the cliff!
8. Today, the expression "Criminy" is not a word that we often **hear**.
9. The short story, Powder describes a significant incident which enables the son to **form** a personal **relationship** with his father.
10. In trying to please his son, the father **could have** left the ski hill before the snow storm to get the boy home in time for Christmas supper.