

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-60377-5 – Common Mistakes at CAE...and How to Avoid Them

Debra Powell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

1 Perfect tenses: simple or continuous?

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

- 1 a Global weather patterns have changed for many years.
 b Global weather patterns have been changing for many years.
- 2 a I'd stayed at a hotel for six months when I bought my house.
 b I'd been staying at a hotel for six months when I bought my house.

We use the simple aspect of tenses for actions which we think are:

- finished: *I've done my homework.* (the homework is finished)
- permanent: *I've lived in England for 10 years. I've worked for this company for most of that time.* (I think I will remain in England and continue to work for the same company)

We use the continuous aspect of tenses for actions which we think are:

- unfinished or in progress: *I've been doing my homework.* (it isn't finished yet)
- temporary: *I've been living in England for six months. I've been working as an au pair.* (I think I will leave England one day – my job is temporary)

We use past perfect tenses to connect two past actions, and past perfect continuous when one event interrupts another:

I'd been waiting for twenty minutes when the bus arrived.

☆ The simple or continuous aspect applies across the entire tense system.

2 Correct the mistake below.



3 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verb in brackets.

- 1 I (*live*) here all my life and never want to leave.
- 2 I (*attend*) a beginner's class in Spanish for six weeks.
- 3 We (*drive*) for hours when we spotted the hotel.
- 4 I (*take*) the train for a long time. I prefer to drive.
- 5 Mr Georgiou (*work*) for the company for twenty years when he retired.
- 6 The city I grew up in (*changed*) so much, I hardly recognise it any more.
- 7 I (*work*) in an office for the past month, but my profession is acting.
- 8 She (*always / take*) good care of her finances.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-60377-5 – Common Mistakes at CAE...and How to Avoid Them

Debra Powell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

2 Perfect tenses: active or passive?

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

- a Eating habits have changed dramatically in the last decade.

b Eating habits have been changed dramatically in the last decade.
- a Smoking has shown to be a cause of cancer.

b Smoking has been shown to be a cause of cancer.

We use active forms of perfect tenses (*had / has + past participle*) to describe a situation which has changed:

*It's really stormy – the roof **has blown off**!*

We use passive forms of perfect tenses (*has / had been + past participle*) to describe something which happened in the past and has a clear effect on the present:

*The effect of diet on health **has been proved**.*

We use active forms of perfect tenses to describe a situation which has changed by itself. We use passive forms when the situation has been changed by someone or something in particular. Compare:

*Attitudes to religion **have changed**.*

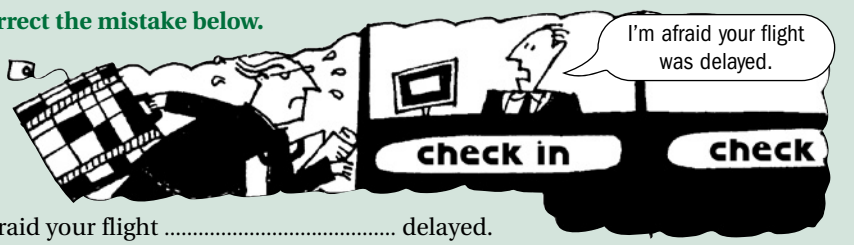
*His attitude to life **has been changed** by the accident.*

We use the present perfect for activities which have a clear effect on the present. For finished activities with no connection to the present, use the past simple. Compare:

*Last week's football match **was cancelled**.* (we are thinking of the past)

*Today's football match **has been cancelled**.* (we are thinking of the present – there is no match today)

2 Correct the mistake below.



3 Underline the most suitable tense.

- The economic situation *has improved / has been improved* considerably.
- The light bulb *was invented / had been invented* by Thomas Edison.
- I *had applied / applied* for the job last week and now I have been invited for interview.
- The house in which he lived *had left / had been left* to him by his mother.
- Since losing his job his lifestyle *has changed / has been changed* considerably.
- It *has proved / has been proved* that caffeine affects heart rate and blood pressure.
- We *have organised / have been organised* a leaving party for Alex.
- He *had handed in / handed in / has handed in* his notice last week.

3 Give or have?

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

- 1 a Madonna gave an excellent performance.
- b Madonna had an excellent performance.
- 2 a Television can give a great effect on the family.
- b Television can have a great effect on the family.

We use *give* to form collocations with certain nouns with an active meaning, i.e. 'to deliver':

- *give a performance / speech / talk: The band gave a great performance.*
- *give information / advice / an example / an explanation: He gave no explanation for his poor performance.*

In more formal speech or writing, we often replace *give* with other verbs:

- *give / deliver a speech; give / express an opinion; give / hold a lecture: The lecture will be held in Room 336.*

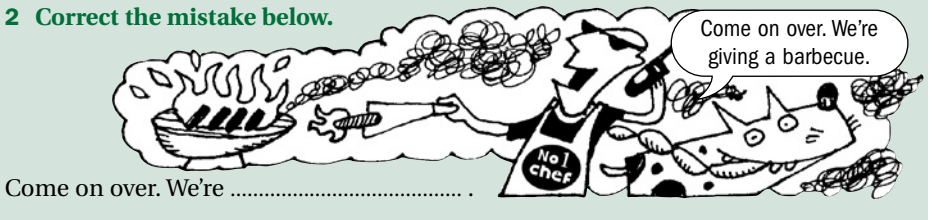
We use *have* with certain nouns to form collocations with the sense of ownership:

- *have a(n) problem / chance / opportunity / experience / career / baby: If I have a chance, I'll travel.*
- *have an idea / impression / opinion: Do you have an opinion on hunting?*
- *have an advantage / effect / impact: You have the advantage, I'm afraid. My comments had no effect on him.*
- *have a meal / break / appointment / trip: I like to have a light breakfast.*

We use *have*, not *spend*, in certain phrases to do with time:

- *have a great time / a pleasant evening: She had a great time in Ibiza.*

2 Correct the mistake below.



3 Correct the sentences with a form of give or have as appropriate.

- 1 Have you taken breakfast yet?
- 2 We spent a great time at the party.
- 3 Maria holds a great party, don't you think?
- 4 The lectures were made by a series of experts.
- 5 The book has made a great impact on public opinion.
- 6 I'm tired. Are we making a break?
- 7 Not everyone can make a good career.
- 8 If you don't understand, I'll show you another example.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-60377-5 – Common Mistakes at CAE...and How to Avoid Them

Debra Powell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

TEST 1

1 Complete each sentence with a form of *give* or *have* and one of the words in the box. Use each word only once.

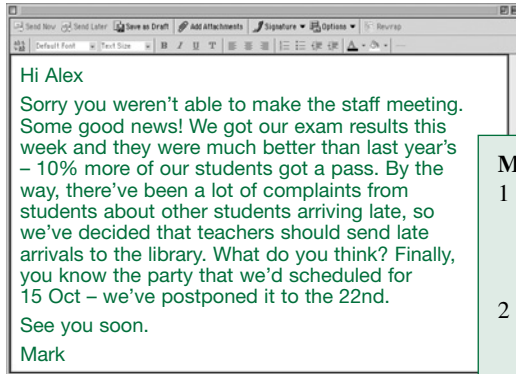
advice	appointment	experience	explanation
idea	problems	speech	

- Traditionally, the best man a(n) at the wedding reception.
- A: Where are you going?
B: I a(n) with the bank manager.
- A: How was your holiday?
B: Not great. We a lot of (s) with the hotel.
- The manager couldn't us any for the lack of facilities advertised in the brochure.
- It's important for you to a(n) of how the firm is organised before you start working here.
- Having no of raising children, I wouldn't like to you on how to deal with your son's problem.

2 Complete the dialogue. Put the verbs in brackets in either the present perfect simple or present perfect continuous tense.

- Mark: Anna, I haven't seen you since College! What (1) (*do*)?
 Anna: Mark! What a surprise! (2) (*work*) in France. And you?
 Mark: Well, (3) (*have*) a few jobs abroad, but I'm in London now and (4) (*teach*) at a school in Hampstead for the past few months.
 Anna: That's great! Do you think you'll stay there?
 Mark: Hard to say. (5) (*always / want*) to live in the Far East, and lately (6) (*think*) about applying for work in Hong Kong.
 Anna: (7) (*hear*) it's a great place to live. Listen, there's a new play showing at the Art Centre. (8) (*see*) it?
 Mark: Not yet. (9) (*not / be*) out much since I started this new job. Hey, you and Sarah were good mates. (10) (*ring*) her yet? Maybe the three of us could go together.
 Anna: Good idea. Give me your number ...

3 Read Mark's email to a colleague, Alex. Use the information in it to complete the minutes. Use an appropriate passive verb for each gap.



Minutes

- The Cambridge examination results, which (1) this week, show a pass result (2) by 10% more students this year than last.
- Complaints (3) by a number of students that their classes are being disturbed by other students who arrive late. It (4) that students who arrive more than 10 minutes late should be sent to the library to work.
- The date for the mid-term party, which (5) for 15 October, (6) to 22 October.

4 In each line of the text put the verb in brackets in an appropriate perfect tense.

THE NEWS TODAY

Fresh outbreaks of violence (*report*) today in the country of Mornavia, where rebel forces (*surround*) the capital city. Continued fighting (*take*) place throughout the day and night. The President (*announce*) that his government may step down in response to the popular support which (*give*) to the rebel forces, though previously he (*deny*) any possibility of surrender. Tensions in the country (*build*), but violence erupted during the elections last year. To date, the cost of the conflict (*be*) high. Countless lives (*be*) lost in the fighting and industry in the country (*virtually* / *come*) to a halt.

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

5 Are these sentences right or wrong? Correct those which are wrong.

- This year's trade figures had been announced yesterday.
- We spent a wonderful time at the beach yesterday.
- Look at the weather! It's rained all day!
- I complained about the service and they agreed to have my money back.
- Going to war had an impact on the government's popularity.
- David Buckingham has announced his retirement from professional sport.
- The announcement has been made a short time ago.

4 How many objects does the verb need?

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

- 1 a I'm writing to give information and advice.
b I'm writing to give you information and advice.
- 2 a I regret to inform that there have been complaints about the service.
b I regret to inform you that there have been complaints about the service.

Transitive verbs require an object. Some verbs need two objects to complete their meaning, an indirect object, which generally comes first, and a direct object:

- *send / give (someone something):*

I gave him the money I owed. / I've sent you an email.

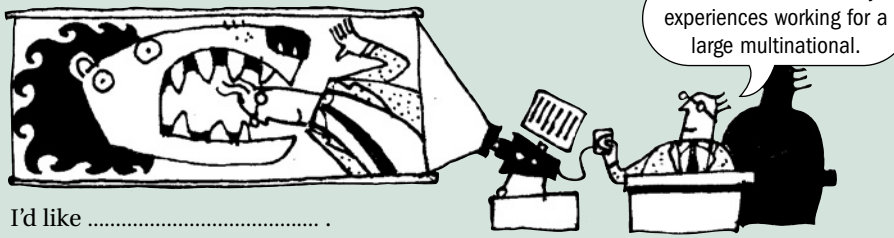
☆ We can often put the direct object (the thing) first, followed by a preposition:

I gave the money to him. / I sent an email to her. (not ~~I gave to him the money / I sent to her an email~~)

Other verbs taking two objects are:

- *assure (someone) that + clause / assure (someone) of (something):*
I assure you that we'll do everything we can to help. / I assure you of our best intentions.
- *inform (someone) that + clause / inform (someone) of / about (something):*
This letter is to inform you that I am not satisfied / inform you of my dissatisfaction.
- *tell (someone) (something) / tell (someone) that + clause / tell (someone) how / why, etc.:*
He told me a lie. / He told me that he wasn't married. / He told me where he lived.

2 Correct the mistake below.



3 Are the sentences right or wrong? Correct those which are wrong.

- 1 I give to you my word that your secret is safe.
- 2 The firm assured Nadia of their complete trust in her ability.
- 3 I sent to her a message last week.
- 4 Let me give some advice.
- 5 Thank you for telling about your stay in Japan.
- 6 James told to the police the truth.
- 7 He told where he spent Friday night.
- 8 The police informed him that he wasn't a suspect.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-60377-5 – Common Mistakes at CAE...and How to Avoid Them

Debra Powell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

5 Do I use the gerund or infinitive with the verb + object?

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

- 1 a Let them know when you're arriving.
b Let them to know when you're arriving.
- 2 a I can't stop you to leave if you want to go.
b I can't stop you leaving if you want to go.

Some verbs need an object followed by an infinitive with *to*:

- *allow / authorise (someone) to do (something):*
*The ticket **authorises / allows you to travel** for one month.*
- *get / force / help (someone) to do (something):*
*I **got the doctor to make** a house call. Poor health **forced him to give up** smoking.*
- *ask / tell (someone) to do (something):* *Can I **ask you to do something** for me?*

Some verbs take an infinitive without *to*:

- *let / make (someone) do (something):*
*We can't **let you leave**. You can't **make me go**.*

Other verbs need an object followed by a gerund:

- *stop / prevent someone (from) doing something in the future:*
*The police put up barriers to **prevent people entering** the house.*
- *see / hear / watch / feel (someone) doing (something):*
*I **watched the children playing** in the park.*

2 Correct the mistake below.



I'm afraid

3 Underline the correct form.

- How can we get them *change / to change / changing* their minds?
- Children are not allowed *travel / to travel / travelling* unaccompanied.
- There's nothing preventing you *take / to take / taking* a holiday.
- I won't let you *make / to make / making* such a stupid mistake.
- I'm asking you *consider / to consider / considering* the consequences.
- It's impossible to make someone *do / to do / doing* something they don't want to do.
- I can hear music *play / to play / playing* in the background.
- I wish I could stop her from *feel / to feel / feeling* sorry for herself.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-60377-5 – Common Mistakes at CAE...and How to Avoid Them

Debra Powell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

6 Give, provide or offer?

1 Tick the correct sentence in each pair.

- 1 a We wish to complain about the service given by your company.
b We wish to complain about the service provided by your company.
- 2 a The service you provided did not match your promises.
b The service you offered did not match your promises.

We use *provide*:

- as a general rule, to talk about services which have already happened:
*The information you requested **is provided** in the brochure we sent you.*
- instead of *give* in more formal contexts:
*They have promised to **provide** us with a friendly service. (not to ~~give us a friendly service~~)*

We use *offer*:

- to talk about possible services which someone might choose in the future:
*We can **offer** (you) an excellent discount (if you choose our service).*

We use *offer* and *provide* with two objects:

- *offer (someone something) / offer (something) to (someone):*
*They **offer people** with financial problems **free legal advice**.*
*They **offer free legal advice to people** with financial problems.*
- *provide (someone) with (something) / provide (something) for (someone):*
*The hotel does not **provide guests with an evening meal**.*
*The hotel does not **provide an evening meal (for its guests)**.*

2 Correct the mistake below.



3 Complete the sentences below with the correct form of *give*, *offer* or *provide*.

- 1 We can the food if you can supply the entertainment.
- 2 If you sign the contract today, we can a 10% discount.
- 3 Morning and evening meals are as part of the service.
- 4 We're you a better deal than you'll find anywhere else.
- 5 It's our policy to clients with the best service possible.
- 6 For a small surcharge, we clients the option of bringing a guest.
- 7 I've you all the information I have available.
- 8 Would you me the name of your manager, please.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-60377-5 – Common Mistakes at CAE...and How to Avoid Them

Debra Powell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

TEST 2

1 Underline the most appropriate word.

- The hotel *gives / provides / offers* evening entertainment for its guests.
- The company promises to *give / provide / offer* meals made from fresh ingredients.
- Have they *given / provided / offered* you a discount if you sign today?
- Would you *give / provide / offer* me your telephone number?
- Catering services aim to *give / provide / offer* good food at low cost.
- They're *offering / providing* cash prizes to winners of the best competition.
- There's no point in further negotiation. These are the best terms I can *give / provide / offer*.
- We are *offering / providing* you the chance to buy the complete set at half price.

2 Complete Suzanne's email by filling in the gaps with an appropriate word where necessary.

Send Now Send Later Save as Draft Add Attachments Signature Options Rewrap

From: Suzanne Wilson

To: International Language School

Cc:

Bcc:

Subject: Catering

Attachments: none

Default Font Text Size B I U T

The International Language School is holding an end-of-term party on the evening of 22 October and I am wondering if you would provide us

(1) information on the catering services your firm offers

(2) There will be 20 to 30 people attending, but I will be able to give (3) a more exact number nearer the time.

Would you be able to provide meals (4) people with special dietary requirements? (One person who may attend is a vegetarian and another is diabetic.) Could you please send (5) sample menus for hot and cold meals and a price list? Finally, a friend who recommended your firm tells (6) that you offer

(7) discounts to larger groups and I am wondering if you would be able to offer (8) a reduction on your set rates?

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-60377-5 – Common Mistakes at CAE...and How to Avoid Them

Debra Powell

Excerpt

[More information](#)

3 Is each line in the letter below right or wrong? Correct those which are wrong. Sometimes there is a word missing, a wrong word or a word which is not needed.

Thank you for your letter inquiring about our catering service. Not only can we provide you a full range of services, we can offer to you a 10% discount on numbers over 20 if you send to us confirmation of your booking within 30 days. We can also provide dishes to meet special dietary requirements if you inform in advance. I enclose a full price list. We will be happy to provide with further information on request. In closing, I'd like to assure to you of our best intentions.

- 1
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8

4 Rewrite the second sentence, using a form of the word in brackets, so that it means the same as the first.

- 1 His doctor made him go on a strict diet. (*force*)
 His doctor
- 2 His company gave him permission to take unpaid leave from work. (*authorise*)
 His company
- 3 Would you do something for me please? (*ask*)
 Could I
- 4 The school decided not to let him take the exam. (*allow*)
 The school decided
- 5 The police didn't allow witnesses to leave the scene of the crime. (*prevent*)
 The police
- 6 They forced me to sign the document. (*make*)
 They
- 7 No matter what I do, my computer won't work. (*get*)
 I can't
- 8 They promised to help me in any way they could. (*assure*)
 They

5 Are the sentences right or wrong? Correct those which are wrong.

- 1 I could hear music playing in the background.
- 2 My parents refused to allow me going out on a school night.
- 3 I could smell food cook when I walked through the door.
- 4 They don't allow their children staying up past nine o'clock.
- 5 You haven't told why you've come to see me.
- 6 I'd like to inform you that I've decided not to attend the course.
- 7 The tour bus stopped for an hour to allow passengers going to the shops.

- 8 His health prevents him to work full time.