

B. Over to You

1 Read the original emotionally charged sentence and the corrected sentence. Check (✓) the technique the writer used to make it more objective.

Original Sentence: The professor's ideas about multitasking are ridiculous. Students who believe his theories are crazy.

Corrected Sentence: The professor's ideas about multitasking may not be based on actual research. It is possible that students who believe in his theories do not fully understand the issues.

- a. Emotionally charged words were replaced with more neutral words or phrases.
- b. The writer provided a fact to support the opinion.
- c. The writer indicated a potential area of agreement.

2 Circle the more neutral words.

- 1 Multitasking while trying to learn something new is *unwise* | *stupid*.
- 2 It is *problematic* | *outrageous* to assume that focusing on new information while checking e-mail and writing text messages is possible.
- 3 The ability to absorb new information may be *ruined* | *limited* by multitasking.
- 4 It is *misguided* | *ridiculous* to believe that multitasking is fundamentally better than doing just one task at a time.
- 5 Because they are accustomed to multitasking in all areas of their lives, many students *dislike* | *hate* waiting until after class to check their text messages.
- 6 Concentrating on schoolwork is important; therefore, it is *idiotic* | *risky* to study while watching television and talking on the phone.
- 7 The belief that a student can read a magazine during class and retain the details of the lecture may well be *crazy* | *irrational*.
- 8 Focusing on more than one thing at a time is *stupid* | *ill-advised* when the goal is to absorb new and complex information.
- 9 People who multitask while learning tend to perform *poorly* | *horribly* on analytic test questions.
- 10 Researchers at Toringville University conducted an *exciting* | *informative* experiment to study the effects of multitasking.

C. Practice

1 Read the original sentences and suggested corrections. Check (✓) the best correction.

- 1 Multitasking is a useless technique for completing tasks effectively.
 - a. People may believe they can get more accomplished by doing several things at once, but they are wrong. Multitasking is useless for completing tasks effectively.
 - b. Although people may believe they can get more accomplished by doing several things at once, multitasking is not a very efficient way to complete tasks.
- 2 Researchers have found that multitasking can actually have a terrible effect on the brain's learning processes.
 - a. While it may seem that multitasking is harmless, researchers have found that it can actually have a negative effect on the brain's learning processes.
 - b. While it may seem that multitasking is harmless, researchers have found that it has a disastrous effect on the brain's learning processes.
- 3 The researchers discovered that multitasking kills the brain's normal learning process.
 - a. The researchers discovered that multitasking negatively impacts the brain's normal learning process.
 - b. The researchers discovered that multitasking destroys the brain's normal learning process.
- 4 Relying on the part of the brain that does not store information for long periods of time is crazy.
 - a. Relying on the part of the brain that does not store information for long periods of time is a horrible idea.
 - b. Relying on the part of the brain that does not store information for long periods of time is unwise.

2 Read the sentences and decide which technique the writer included to make the writing objective and impersonal. Write *NL* for Neutral Language, *E* for Example, or *PA* for Partial Agreement.

- 1 Although multitasking may be effective when performing simple tasks such as making photocopies or organizing papers, it is not an ideal way to learn.
- 2 Many mistakenly believe that multitasking means doing several things at once, but it is actually the process of quickly switching from one activity to another.
- 3 The human brain is not capable of doing two tasks at once that require equal focus. A person cannot, for instance, read and understand an article while writing an effective essay about a different topic.
- 4 Many teenagers make the questionable decision to do three or four things simultaneously rather than focus on one activity at a time.
- 5 As a group, teenagers actually make more errors when they attempt to multitask, although they may get things done more quickly.
- 6 Multitasking often introduces errors that could have been avoided by doing one task at a time. One study indicated that a teenager doing homework while talking on a cell phone made more errors than a teenager who performed each activity separately.

D. Skill Quiz

Check (✓) the correct answer for each item.

- 1 The best way to persuade someone to agree with your opinion is to
 - a. use emotionally charged language.
 - b. state your opinion so strongly that it cannot be opposed.
 - c. be impersonal and objective.
- 2 One way to maintain an objective tone is to
 - a. cite sources carefully.
 - b. use neutral language.
 - c. avoid descriptive adjectives.
- 3 Another way to maintain an objective tone is to
 - a. provide facts to support your opinions.
 - b. present strong opinions using subjective language.
 - c. avoid an overabundance of details.
- 4 Another way to maintain an objective tone is to
 - a. explain why the opposite point of view is completely false.
 - b. show that you agree with part of the opposing point of view.
 - c. mention all the points of view that oppose yours.
- 5 Choose the sentence that is the most objective and impersonal.
 - a. People are unwise to believe that multitasking is as efficient as doing one activity at a time.
 - b. People are foolish to believe that multitasking is as efficient as doing one activity at a time.
 - c. People are wrong to believe that multitasking is as efficient as doing one activity at a time.

- 6 Choose the sentence that is the most objective and impersonal.
 - a. Teenagers should not multitask because they tend to make horrible mistakes when they do several things at once.
 - b. Even though teenagers are better at multitasking than older adults, they tend to make horrible mistakes when they do several things at once.
 - c. Teenagers may be better at multitasking than adults, but they tend to make more mistakes when doing several things at once.
- 7 How is the original sentence revised to make it more objective, impersonal, and persuasive?

Original: *The human brain is not capable of doing two complex tasks at the same time.*
Revised: *While it may be manageable to do two simple tasks at the same time, it is considerably more difficult to do two complex tasks simultaneously.*

 - a. made language more neutral
 - b. included an example
 - c. included an area of agreement
- 8 How is the original sentence revised to make it more objective, impersonal, and persuasive?

Original: *For teenagers, multitasking may have negative effects on brain development.*
Revised: *For teenagers, multitasking may have negative effects on brain development. Some studies show that it can lead to poor critical thinking and analytical skills.*

 - a. made language more neutral
 - b. included an example
 - c. included an area of agreement