ELLIPSIS

A Busy Day Ahead

Tomorrow is going to be a busy day for Emma. She is meeting her manager in the morning and **her colleagues in the afternoon**. She wanted to finish the report tonight, but she didn't have enough time **to**.

Her manager asked whether she could prepare a presentation, and she said she **could**. She isn't sure whether she will have enough time to finish everything, but she **might**. If she does, she'll send the presentation to the team before the meeting.

"Are you coming to the office early tomorrow?" her colleague asked.

"I might," Emma replied. "**Sounds like** we'll have a lot to discuss."

Although Emma knows tomorrow will be demanding, she is looking forward to it. She enjoys working with her team, and **so do** her colleagues.

GRAMMAR: ELLIPSIS

Ellipsis means leaving out words because their meaning can be understood from the context.

1. Ellipsis after linking words

After **and, but, or, nor,** we can sometimes omit a repeated subject or verb.

Full form: We went shopping and we had lunch.
With ellipsis: We went shopping and had lunch.

More examples:
• I might go for a run or I might stay home. → I might go for a run or stay home.
• Jack is finishing his homework and he's preparing for his presentation. → Jack is finishing his homework and preparing for his presentation.

We normally cannot **omit the subject if the subject is different.**

For example: "Jack is finishing his homework and Sarah is preparing for the presentation." The subject "Sarah" must remain.

2. Ellipsis after to

When the second part of a sentence contains an infinitive with to, we can sometimes omit the verb after to if it is already clear.

Full form: No, I wanted to go to the gym, but I didn't have time.
With ellipsis: No, I wanted to, but I didn't have time.

Example: I thought about going to the party, but I didn't want to.

3. Ellipsis after auxiliary and modal verbs

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We can avoid repeating the main verb after be, have, do, and modal verbs such as can, could, will, would, should, might, and must.

- He might have missed the bus, but I doubt he has. (= he has missed the bus)
- She promised to call, and she did. (= she called)
- I don't think we can finish today, but we might. (= we might finish today)
- She hasn't completed the report, but I have. (= I have completed the report)

4. Omitting subject pronouns

In informal speech, especially in short comments or conversational language, the subject may sometimes be omitted when it is obvious.

- [That] Looks great!
- [It] Seems like a good idea.
- Sounds interesting.
- Hope you have a good time.
- Wish you were here.

This type of ellipsis is especially common in informal spoken English.

5. Omitting subjects and auxiliary verbs

In informal questions, particularly with want and have got, both the subject and auxiliary can sometimes be omitted when the meaning is obvious.

- [Do you] Want to go for lunch?
- [Have you] Got your tickets for the concert?

These forms are common in conversation but are generally less appropriate in formal writing.

6. Omitting auxiliary verbs in informal questions

In informal speech, speakers can sometimes leave out be, have, and do:

- [Are] You going out tonight?
- [Have] You seen this movie?
- [Does] She live here?
- [Will] You give me a call later?

These are highly conversational forms and should not normally be used in formal writing. Treat them as informal conversational ellipsis rather than a general rule.

IMPORTANT: Ellipsis is only possible when the missing information can be easily recovered from the context. If omitting a word makes the sentence ambiguous or difficult to understand, we should keep it.

Exercise 1 – Identify the Missing Information

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1. I went to the supermarket and bought some vegetables.
→ Missing: _____

2. She said she would help me, and she did.
→ Missing: _____

3. I wanted to apply for the job, but I didn't want to.
→ Missing: _____

4. He might come to the party, but I'm not sure whether she will.
→ Missing: _____

5. Sounds like a good idea!
→ Missing: _____

6. Want another cup of coffee?
→ Missing: _____

Exercise 2 – Rewrite Using Ellipsis

1. Maria works from home and Maria studies online in the evening.
→ _____

2. I wanted to buy the laptop, but I didn't want to buy the laptop because it was too expensive.
→ _____

3. He said he would help us, and he helped us.
→ _____

4. She hasn't finished the assignment, but I have finished the assignment.
→ _____

Exercise 3 – Choose the Most Natural Option

1. "Would you like to come with us?" "Yes, I'd love _____."
a) to b) to come with you c) both are possible

2. "Are you going to apply for the position?" "I might _____."
a) apply b) [nothing] c) both a and b

3. She promised she would call, and she _____.
a) did b) called c) both are possible

4. "Have you seen the new documentary?" "No, but my brother _____."
a) has b) has seen it c) both are possible

5. "Do you want to order pizza?" "Yeah, _____ sounds good."
a) it b) that c) both are possible

6. "Want to grab a coffee?" This is:
a) formal English b) informal conversational English c) incorrect English

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Exercise 4 – Correct the Errors

1. I went shopping and my sister went too, but went home early.
→ _____

2. She doesn't want to attend the meeting, but I think she might to.
→ _____

3. He said he would finish the project, and did.
→ _____

4. I think this is a good idea, but my colleague doesn't.
→ _____

5. Want you to come with us?
→ _____

6. Sounds like a great plan!
→ _____

7. She is working late and her manager preparing the presentation.
→ _____

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