

Extra Practice 5

“Valencia sues opera house architect as white elephants rot”, Fiona Govan

- 1 He is one of a breed of "starchitects" whose spectacular bridges, airports and museums have brought him fame around the world but now Santiago Calatrava is facing legal action from his native city of Valencia.
- 2 The dazzling City of Arts and Sciences, a sprawling space-age complex that transformed the centre of the city of Valencia when it was inaugurated eight years ago, is already falling apart and regional authorities have said they will sue the architect responsible.
- 3 Last week chunks of the mosaic façade of the centerpiece opera house fell off in high winds and authorities were forced to cancel scheduled Christmas performances and to close the building to the public until further notice.
- 4 It is not the first time the architect has faced legal action over faulty design. In the northern Spanish city of Oviedo, Mr Calatrava and his team had to pay 3.3 million euros to settle a dispute over a conference centre he was commissioned to design after it suffered a structural collapse.
- 5 In Valencia, where Mr Calatrava was born 62 years ago, the architect has also faced criticism after it emerged he was paid 15 million euros by local authorities for a project that will never be built. The project for three skyscrapers and eight residential blocks was shelved when Spain's property bubble burst in 2008.
- 6 Regional authorities had hoped **that** Calatrava's City of Arts and Sciences would do for Valencia what Frank Gehry's Guggenheim did for Bilbao but it is widely seen as a white elephant symbol of the vast overspend by regional governments **that** have left them struggling with huge debts.

Answer the following questions:

1. Explain the word-formation process of *starchitects* (par. 1).
2. Comment on the reported/indirect speech in paragraph 2.
3. Explain the meaning of the phrasal verbs *fall apart* (par. 2) and *fall off* (par. 3). Include two more examples of phrasal verbs with the verb *fall*.
4. Indicate the role that the two underlined words in paragraph 4 play in the cohesion of the text.
5. Comment on the verb *burst* (par. 5). Include all information you deem necessary.
6. Comment on the two *that* in paragraph 6.

Suggested answers

1. Explain the word-formation process of *starchitects* (par. 1).

Topic 45

To start with, this word does not really exist in the English language, as the inverted commas used in the original text also suggest. However, it is representative to show the freedom and how playful the English language is when it comes to the formation of new words.

In this case we have a case of blending, one of the so-called minor word-formation processes, together with “back-formation”, “clipping”, and “reduplicatives”.

“Blending” seems to be enjoyed because of its playfulness, and it consists in the addition of (part of) a base lexeme to another (part of) a base lexeme, as in the words *brunch* (*breakfast + lunch*), *smog* (*smoke + fog*), *Brexit* (*Britain + exit*) etc. In this case, we find the addition of *star* + *architects*, with the resulting word *starchitects*. The meaning is also the sum of the two base lexemes: architects who are very famous or well-known.

2. Comment on the reported/indirect speech in paragraph 2.

Topic 9

The sentence we shall analyse in this question is “regional authorities have said they will sue the architect responsible”, the instance of reported speech found in paragraph 2. The direct speech counterpart would be: “We will sue the architect responsible”, regional authorities have said.

To begin with, it is important to note that English distinguishes between direct speech, used when we report what someone has said by quoting the words used verbatim, and indirect/reported speech, in which we express what was said in one’s own words. Now we shall only be concerned with the latter.

Reported speech sentences consist of a reporting clause (“the regional authorities have said”), and a reported clause, which functions as a direct object (“they will sue the architect responsible”).

The verb in the reporting clause (“have said”) appears most commonly in the past simple, which as a consequence provokes a backshift of tenses in the reported clause. To cut a long story short, this backshift of tenses means that we “go back a step in time”, in such a way that if the original sentence uttered was in the present simple, we would report it in the past simple, and so on –this is known as the “sequence of tenses”–. This backshift takes place because the time reference of the original utterance no longer applies at the time that the utterance is reported, and so it needs to be changed.

In this instance, however, the reporting verb is in the present perfect (and it could have been in the present simple as well –“the regional authorities say”–). This is possible for communications in recent past time, which is the case in the example now under study.

Moving on to the reported clause, we find the verb *will*, which, according to the backshift of tenses, should be *would* (“they would sue the architect responsible”). However, this backshift of tenses has not taken place for two reasons:

- 1) Because the reporting verb is in the present perfect instead of the past simple (this is a requirement for backshift to take place)

- 2) Even if the reporting verb had been in the past, backshift is optional when the time-reference of the original utterance is still valid at the time of the reported utterance (e.g. *I heard her say that she's studying French*). This might also be the case here.

Apart from verbs, there are other changes involved in direct speech, which affect the use of pronouns and other deictic elements of time and space, such as *today, tomorrow, here, there*, etc. We do not find instances of these deictic elements in the sentence being analysed, but there is indeed an example of a change of pronoun.

If the identities of the person speaking and the person addressed are not identical in the situations of the original and reported utterances, the personal pronouns need to be changed. That is precisely the reason for the use of *they* referring to “regional authorities”, instead of the *we* originally employed in the direct speech counterpart.

To end with, it is also worth noting that the conjunction *that*, which typically introduces the reported clause, is omitted in this sentence. Indeed, this conjunction is likely to be omitted, especially after the reporting verbs *think* or *say*.

- 3. Explain the meaning of the phrasal verbs *fall apart* (par. 2) and *fall off* (par. 3). Include two more examples of phrasal verbs with the verb *fall*.**

Topic 36

Below I include the meaning of the two phrasal verbs from the text:

Fall apart: “to be in very bad condition so that parts are breaking off”

Fall off: “to decrease in quantity or quality”

Here I include more examples with phrasal verbs that contain the verb *fall*:

- *Fall for somebody*: “to be strongly attracted to somebody; to fall in love with somebody” – *They fell for each other instantly.*
- *Fall for something*: to be tricked into believing something that is not true – *I'm surprised you fell for that trick.*
- *Fall out*: “to have an argument with somebody so that you are no longer friendly with them” – *Have you two fallen out?*
- *Fall to*: “to become the duty or responsibility of somebody” – *With his partner away, all the work now fell to him.*

- 4. Indicate the role that the two underlined words in paragraph 4 play in the cohesion of the text.**

Topic 8

(Optional: Cohesion is a linguistic device used to write well-formed texts in which every idea is inter-related with others by means of different linguistic and semantic resources. It may be defined as the links that hold a text together and give meaning to it. More scientifically speaking, Baker defined it as “the network of lexical, grammatical, and other relations which provide links between various parts of a text” (1992: 80).

The two examples underlined in paragraph 4 are examples of “reference”, one of the mechanisms whereby we can add cohesion to our text, along with ellipsis, substitution,

conjunction and lexical cohesion. “Reference” may be defined as the way in which the speaker introduces participants and keeps track of them by means of “pro-forms”.

The pro-forms *his* and *it* –also called co-referential or phoric units– cannot be interpreted on their own, but rather need to be understood through the semantic connection with their referent. It is precisely this semantic connection between different parts of the text that binds a text together (cohesion). Let us now point out the referent for each of the pro-forms:

His (team): the referent is Mr Calatrava, which appears in the preceding phrase. Since the referent is recoverable from the text itself, it is a case of endophoric reference, which may be divided into anaphoric or cataphoric depending on whether the antecedent precedes or rather follows the pro-form. In this case, it is clearly an instance of anaphoric reference, since the referent appears at an earlier point in the text. It is also a case of personal reference, since we are dealing with a possessive pronoun.

It: in this case, the antecedent is “a conference centre”, which appears in the preceding context. Therefore, we have another instance of endophoric, anaphoric reference. The referenece is also personal, since it is expressed via a personal pronoun.

You may want to finish with a few lines on the importance of cohesion for our students.

5. Comment on the verb *burst* (par. 5). Include all information you deem necessary.

Semantically speaking, *burst* means “to break suddenly because there is too much pressure inside it or against it”. In the text, the verb is clearly used metaphorically to explain when the property bubble “exploded” in Spain.

Morphologically speaking, *burst* is an irregular verb which presents the same form for the infinitive, the *-ed₁* (past simple) and *-ed₂* (past participle), as happens with other verbs such as *cost*, *hit*, or *hurt*. Indeed, the verb is used in the past in the text, and the form is still *burst*.

From the point of view of phonology, the verb might be difficult to pronounce for our students, since the vowel sound is /ɜ:/, which is not present in the Spanish phonetic alphabet. However, we might help our students by telling them that it is the same sound present in *girl*, *world* or *bird*, words they are familiar with.

6. Comment on the two *that* in paragraph 6.

“Regional authorities had hoped that Calatrava’s City [...]”

In this case, *that* is a conjunction which introduces a subordinate nominal clause functioning as direct object of the verb *hope*. Since it is a conjunction, it does not have any function inside the sentence; its only function is that of connecting/linking. This conjunction may always be omitted (ellipsis), in which case we would be talking of “structural recoverability”, since the element omitted is recoverable from our knowledge of grammatical structure: “regional authorities had hoped Calatrava’s City [...]”. In formal writing, however, it is advisable to maintain the conjunction.

“Regional governments that have left [...]”

In this case, *that* is a relative pronoun which introduces a defining relative clause functioning as a postmodifier of “regional governments”. Since it is a pronoun, it does have a function inside its subordinate sentence. In this case, it functions as the subject and, therefore, cannot be omitted

(it could be omitted in the case that it performed a function other than the subject, as the following example shows: “could I have a ride in the car (that) you’ve just bought?”).

This *that* could be replaced by the relative pronoun *which*, since (i) it is a defining relative clause, and (ii) the antecedent is a not a person, but rather “regional governments”.