Testing Your Understanding: Parentheses

Place the parentheses where needed in the following sentences. Cross out any misplaced parentheses. If the sentence is correct as written, indicate with a “C.” An answer key follows.

1. A friend of mine believes there are four qualifications for being a good pet owner: a. one must have enough time to give care and companionship to a pet; b. one should be willing to provide proper nutrition and health care for a pet; c. one should be able to offer adequate living space for the pet, which includes a safe exercise and play area; and d. one should consider the life span of the animal and consider the long term commitment involved before taking on a pet.

2. I wish I had room in my garage to park my new car (actually, it’s an SUV) because the trees in the yard tend to drip sap and that ruins the paint.

3. The entire Pep squad yell leaders, dance team, flag team, pep band and mascot received free admission into the games.

4. Sarah struggled a very long time to complete her first novel. (It took her over three years)! Fortunately, the book became a best seller.

5. Last night during the storm (Did you hear that thunder?) all the cats hid under the bed.

6. Are you sure that all the guests (especially the children?) have extra blankets.

7. My cousins and their spouses (They are all over 50 years old.) have each earned several college degrees.

8. Although the wedding guests’ complaints, (the photographer was pushy, the music was bad, there wasn’t enough food), were valid, the reception was still a big success.

9. The entire group was emotionally moved (many parents were crying!) by the speaker’s powerful presentation.

10. Dr. Granger put Joey the fattest cat on a strict diet.

Answers below:
Answer Key:

1. A friend of mine believes there are four qualifications for being a good pet owner:
   (a) one must have enough time to give care and companionship to a pet; (b) one should be willing to provide proper nutrition and health care for a pet; (c) one should be able to offer adequate living space for the pet, which includes a safe exercise and play area; and (d) one should consider the life span of the animal and consider the long term commitment involved before taking on a pet. (see # 3)

2. I wish I had room in my garage to park my new car (actually, it’s an SUV) because the trees in the yard tend to drip sap and that ruins the paint. (see # 2)

3. The entire Pep squad (yell leaders, dance team, flag team, pep band and mascot) received free admission into the games. (see # 1)

4. Sarah struggled a very long time to complete her first novel. (It took her over three years!) Fortunately, the book became a best seller. (see # 4 – stands alone between sentences)

5. Last night during the storm (Did you hear that thunder?) all the cats hid under the bed. (see # 4 – enclosed sentence forms complete question)

6. Are you sure that all the guests (especially the children) have extra blankets? (see # 4 – applies to surrounding sentence)

7. My cousins and their spouses (they are all over 50 years old) have each earned several college degrees. (see # 4 – statement vs. exclamation or question)

8. Although the wedding guests’ complaints (the photographer was pushy, the music was bad, there wasn’t enough food) were valid, the reception was still a big success. (see # 1 – use parentheses vs. parentheses + additional punctuation)

9. The entire group was emotionally moved (Many parents were crying!) by the speaker’s powerful presentation. (see # 4 – punctuate as a complete sentence)

10. Dr. Granger put Joey (the fattest cat) on a strict diet. (see # 1 – clarifies information)