

## Ellipsis and substitution



### Student A

- 1 Read about two stories and use ellipsis or substitution to make the underlined parts sound more natural.

## The man with a pencil in his head

A man from Afghanistan was suffering from headaches, a runny nose and problems with his eyesight in his right eye. When the man from Afghanistan explained his headaches, a runny nose and problems with his eyesight in his right eye to doctors in Germany, the doctors did a brain scan and the doctors found a 7 cm pencil in his head. When doctors asked the man from Afghanistan if he remembered how the 7 cm pencil had got there, the man from Afghanistan said he didn't think he remembered how the 7 cm pencil had got there, but the man from Afghanistan remembered an accident 15 years earlier where he had fallen and had a nosebleed.

(This story really happened)

## An internet sensation

In 2005, Cornelia and Nonu Dragoman, from Romania, named their new-born son 'Yahoo' to represent the fact that Cornelia and Nonu Dragoman had met through an internet dating site.

Cornelia and Nonu Dragoman met through the internet dating site last year, and after a three-month relationship decided Cornelia was right for Nonu and Nonu was right for Cornelia and they got married. 'Many people name their children after famous people' said Cornelia, 'and we also named our children after something famous, it's just that the famous thing is a search engine rather than a person. If we have another child, we'll call it Google.'

(This is just an urban legend.)

- 2 Read your edited stories to your partner. Can they guess which one really happened and which is just an urban legend?

## Ellipsis and substitution



### Student B

- 1 Read about two stories and use ellipsis or substitution to make the underlined parts sound more natural.

### Message in a bottle

In 2003, teenager Emily Streight wrote a message with her name and address, then Emily Streight put the message in a bottle, and Emily Streight threw the bottle into a river in Oregon, USA. Three years later, Emily Streight received a reply to her message in a bottle from a 16-year-old boy in Hawaii called Keoni. Keoni had written a note in reply to Emily, describing who Keoni was and saying Keoni didn't know if Emily would remember sending the bottle, but Keoni hoped she remembered sending the bottle. 'I actually sent a lot of these messages in bottles when I was younger' said Emily, 'but I never expected to get a message in a bottle back from Hawaii!'

(This is just an urban legend.)

### The unexpected genius

One day in 1939, student George Bernard Dantzig arrived late for a university statistics class, and found two problems written on the board in the university statistics class, which George Bernard Dantzig assumed were the problems being given for homework, so George Bernard Dantzig quickly copied the problems down. A few days later, George Bernard Dantzig apologised to his professor for taking so long to solve the problems given for homework, but he had found the problems given for homework

difficult, and handed the problems given for homework in. Later, George Bernard Dantzig's professor saw George Bernard Dantzig and said, 'It's a good thing you were late the day we had the class and I wrote two problems up on the board' and explained that the problems George Bernard Dantzig had solved were actually two famous unsolved problems that mathematicians had been working on for years.

(This story really happened.)

- 2 Read your edited stories to your partner. Can they guess which one really happened and which is just an urban legend?

## Instructions and Answer Key

*You will need: one copy of the worksheet per pair*

- Explain to students that an *urban legend* is a story which isn't true, but is often repeated, and believed by many people to be real.
- Review the rules for ellipsis and substitution on pages 150–151 of the Students' Book.
- Divide students into pairs, and give one copy of the worksheet to each pair. Make sure students don't show their part of the worksheet to their partner. Students work alone to edit their texts using ellipsis and/or substitution to make the underlined parts sound more natural. Monitor carefully and check that the way they're editing them sounds natural, referring to the examples in the answer key below.
- When they are ready, students read out their edited versions to their partner, who decides if they are stories which really happened. When they have finished, students could discuss any other urban legends they know, and whether they think they're true or false.

### ANSWER KEY

#### The man with a pencil in his head

A man from Afghanistan was suffering from headaches, a runny nose and problems with his eyesight in his right eye. When he explained his symptoms to doctors in Germany, they did a brain scan and found a 7 cm pencil in his head. When asked if he remembered how it had got there, he said he didn't think so, but he remembered an accident 15 years earlier where he had fallen and had a nosebleed.

#### Internet sensation

In 2005, Cornelia and Nonu Dragoman, from Romania, named their new-born son 'Yahoo' to represent the fact that they had met through an internet dating site. The couple met there last year, and after a three-month relationship decided they were right for each other and they got married. 'Many people name their children after famous people' said Cornelia, 'and so did we, it's just that it's a search engine rather than a person. If we have another one, we'll call it Google.'

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