



Ellipsis & Substitution: So & Not — Clausal Substitution & Mixed Practice

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

- 'Is it going to rain this afternoon?' 'I hope ____.'
a) not
b) so
c) don't
d) no
- 'Will the shop be open on Sunday?' 'I think ____.'
a) so
b) yes
c) it
d) that
- 'Do you think we'll get a pay rise this year?' 'I'm afraid ____.'
a) no
b) not
c) so not
d) don't
- 'Has the meeting been cancelled?' 'I don't think ____.'
a) not
b) so
c) it
d) that
- The road may be closed due to flooding. If ____, we'll take the motorway instead.
a) yes
b) not
c) that
d) so
- 'Will the package arrive by Friday?' 'I expect ____.'
a) so
b) it
c) yes
d) that
- 'Are they planning to close the library?' 'I suppose _____. They've been cutting the budget for years.'
a) not
b) that
c) it
d) so
- 'Is the new manager any good?' 'Everyone seems to think _____. They all speak highly of her.'
a) so
b) not
c) that
d) yes
- 'Has James passed his driving test?' 'I believe _____. He posted a photo with his licence.'
a) it
b) not
c) yes
d) so
- 'Is the restaurant fully booked tonight?' 'I'm afraid _____. You should have reserved a table earlier.'
a) yes
b) so
c) of it
d) not
- 'Do you think the train will be delayed?' 'I certainly hope ____.'
a) don't
b) so
c) not
d) no



Answers

1. a) not
2. a) so
3. b) not
4. b) so
5. d) so
6. a) so
7. d) so
8. a) so
9. d) so
10. b) so
11. c) not
12. c) not
13. b) ones
14. d) not
15. b) so
16. c) not
17. b) — (nothing; leave the verb phrase out)
18. a) so
19. c) so
20. d) so



Explanations

1. “not” (a)

'I hope not' = 'I hope it isn't going to rain'. After 'hope', we use 'not' directly (not 'I don't hope so'). The pattern is: hope + so/not. Here the speaker wants dry weather, so 'not' is correct.

2. “so” (a)

'I think so' = 'I think the shop will be open on Sunday'. 'So' replaces the entire clause. This is the most common clausal substitution pattern.

3. “not” (b)

'I'm afraid not' = 'I'm afraid we won't get a pay rise'. After 'be afraid', we use 'not' directly — never 'I'm afraid so not' or 'I don't afraid so'.

4. “so” (b)

'I don't think so' = 'I don't think the meeting has been cancelled'. With 'think', the negative transfers to the main verb: we say 'I don't think so' (not 'I think not' in everyday speech — though 'I think not' exists in very formal English).

5. “so” (d)

'If so' = 'if the road is closed'. 'If so' is a compact way to refer back to a previously mentioned possibility. 'If yes' is not standard English.

6. “so” (a)

'I expect so' = 'I expect the package will arrive by Friday'. After 'expect', we use 'so' to substitute the affirmative clause.

7. “so” (d)

'I suppose so' = 'I suppose they are planning to close the library'. The context clue ('cutting the budget for years') confirms an affirmative answer, so we use 'so'.

8. “so” (a)

'Everyone thinks so' = 'everyone thinks the new manager is good'. The context clue ('They all speak highly of her') confirms the positive view, so we use 'so'. 'Think yes' and 'think that' (without a following clause) are not standard.

9. “so” (d)

'I believe so' = 'I believe James has passed his driving test'. The evidence (the photo) supports the affirmative, so we use 'so'.

10. “so” (b)

'I'm afraid so' = 'I'm afraid the restaurant is fully booked'. The context ('You should have reserved earlier') confirms the unfortunate affirmative — hence 'so', not 'not'. 'I'm afraid yes' is not standard English.

11. “not” (c)

'I hope not' = 'I hope the train won't be delayed'. We naturally hope for the negative outcome (no delay). After 'hope', we use 'not' directly.

12. “not” (c)

'If not' = 'if we don't have enough time'. 'If not' introduces the alternative scenario — the opposite of 'if so'.

13. “ones” (b)

This is nominal substitution: 'ones' replaces the plural noun 'sunglasses'. 'New ones' = 'new sunglasses'. (Mixed practice — revisiting Set 1 patterns.)

14. “not” (d)

'I guess not' = 'I guess nobody is coming to help us'. The context clue ('We're on our own') confirms the negative. After 'guess', we use 'not' for the negative form.

15. “so” (b)

'Hasn't done so' = 'hasn't written every week'. Here 'do so' is verbal substitution (replacing the verb phrase), not clausal substitution. 'Done so' is preferred in formal contexts when referring to a promised or expected action.

16. “not” (c)

'Perhaps not' = 'perhaps the company won't survive'. The context 'Things look very bad' points strongly to the negative answer. 'Perhaps' can be followed by 'so' or 'not' for clausal substitution — here the context demands 'not'.

17. “— (nothing; leave the verb phrase out)” (b)

After 'refused to', we use VP ellipsis: 'refused to' = 'refused to apologise'. The infinitive marker 'to' is retained; the verb phrase is dropped. 'Done so', 'apologising', and 'doing' are all wrong forms after 'to'. (Mixed practice — revisiting Set 2 patterns.)

18. “so” (a)

'Who said so?' = 'who said the CEO is going to resign?' After 'say', we use 'so' to refer back to reported information. This is a common fixed expression.

19. “so” (c)

'I imagine so' = 'I imagine the weather will improve'. After 'imagine', we use 'so' for the affirmative clause. The forecast context supports the positive answer.

20. “so” (d)

'I don't believe so' = 'I don't believe this seat is taken'. Like 'think', the verb 'believe' takes the negative on the main verb: 'I don't believe so' (not 'I believe not' in normal speech).