

Here are my notes on the construction of sentences in the passage adapted from the article, "Virtually Rebuilt, A Ruin Yields Secrets" by Sam Lubell, which appears on page 750 of *The Real ACT Prep Guide*, 3rd edition.

1. "Everyone knows that the Roman Colosseum is an architectural marvel."

This sentence has two subject-verb pairs in two separate clauses. The first clause "Everyone knows" is independent. "Knows" is a verb that could otherwise be conjugated as "knew" or "had known", for example, and "everyone" is the word that answers the question, "Who or what 'knows'?"

The second clause, "that the Roman Colosseum is an architectural marvel", is a dependent (also called 'subordinate' clause) because - although it has a complete subject-verb pair - it begins with the subordinating conjunction "that". This clause cannot be written on its own. It's important to note that "that" does NOT always function as a subordinating conjunction (one that introduces a clause with a complete subject-verb pair). It can also function as a relative pronoun, which introduces a relative clause (which does not have a subject-verb pair. In either case, commas before 'that' are unnecessary.

2. "Built so that thousands of people could be ushered in and out in minutes, **it is** a testament to the genius of Roman engineering."

The first clause, "Built so that thousands of people could be ushered in and out in minutes," is a modifier. It has the verb-ish word 'built', which is both the simple past form and past participle of 'to build'. Here, in the modifier, it is the lonely past participle with neither a helping verb ('to have', for example) nor a subject in the clause. It is, therefore, dependent.

The second clause, "it is a testament to the genius of Roman engineering." is independent because it contains a subject-verb pair, "is" and the word that answers the question, "Who or what 'is'? - 'it'. 'Is' is the simple present tense of the verb 'to be', which can also appear as 'am, is, are, was, were' depending on the subject.

3. "Or **is it**?"

In this short question, there is a subject and matching verb. They are switched from their usual order (in this case, the verb appears before the subject) because that is how questions are structured differently from declarative statements.

4. "By reconstructing the building with three-dimensional computer modeling and then virtually 'walking through' it, **researchers have discovered** dark, narrow upper hallways that probably hemmed in spectators, slowing their movement to a crawl."

The first clause, "By reconstructing the building with three-dimensional computer modeling and then virtually 'walking through' it," is a modifier. 'Reconstructing' is the present participle (also called the 'gerund') of 'to reconstruct' and on its own cannot function as a verb. It would have to look like 'is reconstructing' in order to be a verb.

In the second clause, “researchers have discovered dark, narrow upper hallways”, we have the meat of the sentence. Here we find a subject-verb pair. The verb phrase ‘have discovered’ is properly constructed with the helping verb ‘have’ followed by the past participle ‘discovered’, and the word ‘researchers’ properly answers the question, “Who or what ‘have discovered’?”

The third clause, introduced by ‘that’, must either be a dependent clause with a complete subject-verb pair or a relative clause, which only offers additional information about the previous word. “that probably hemmed in spectators, slowing their movement to a crawl” does have some words that look like verbs (‘hemmed in’ and ‘slowing’), but the first does not have a subject in the clause and the second is a present participle / gerund without a helping verb. Neither is functioning as a verb in this relative clause.