

English Ladder

Student Workbook

Understanding the Use of "About" with Verbs

A polished self-study handout designed for print or tablet use. Read the concept, notice the pattern, and then complete the matching practice set on your own.



Grammar Concepts #07

Key Points

Visual anchor

Use the concept poster to spotlight the main language pattern in **Understanding the Use of "About" with Verbs** and keep the explanation visible during practice and discussion.

ENGLISH LADDER

Concept #07 ▶ **Let's talk about about!**

Some verbs carry the meaning of a simple short action such as **talk**, **walk**, and **think**. If we want to show these actions were longer actions, we add **about**.

(Short) The baby **talked**! He said "Mama!"

(Long) The professor **talked about** the French economy.

(Short) The baby **walked**! She took two steps!

(Long) I **walked about** Tokyo and enjoyed the many sights.

(Short) I **think** Tom is 30. That must be his age.

(Long) I'm **thinking about** buying a house. It is so complicated!

However, for many verbs the idea of "long" is built into the verb, so we don't need the word **about**. For example, we never say "We were discussing about it." Instead we say "We were discussing it." It is assumed that a discussion takes a long time.

Don't use **about** after these verbs ▶

- discuss
- consider
- explain
- report
- describe
- ponder
- criticize
- announce
- remember
- decide
- realize
- notice
- imagine

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Core Idea

In English, some verbs naturally imply short, simple actions. When we want to extend these actions or add more detail, we often use the word "about". This small word helps indicate that the action was more involved or lasted longer. Let's break down this concept with detailed explanations and examples.

Quick reference

Short vs. Long Actions with Verbs

Talk Short Action: The baby talked! He said "Mama"! This sentence indicates a brief, specific action (saying "Mama").
Long Action: The professor talked about the French economy. This sentence implies the professor discussed the French economy in detail.

Verbs That Do Not Use "About"

Discuss Incorrect: We were discussing about it. Correct: We were discussing it. Discuss already implies a detailed conversation.

Additional Examples

Imagine Incorrect: He imagined about a world without war.
Correct: He imagined a world without war. Imagine means to create a picture in the mind.

Key Points

Concept #07: Let's Talk About 'About'

Short vs. Long Actions with Verbs

Certain verbs suggest brief actions, such as talk, walk, and think. To show that these actions were more extended or detailed, we add "about" after the verb.

- Talk Short Action: The baby talked! He said "Mama"! This sentence indicates a brief, specific action (saying "Mama"). Long Action: The professor talked about the French economy. This sentence implies the professor discussed the French economy in detail.
- Walk Short Action: The baby walked! She took two steps! This sentence suggests a short, simple action (taking two steps). Long Action: I walked about Tokyo and enjoyed the many sights. This sentence implies a more extended activity, exploring Tokyo.
- Think Short Action: I think Tom is 30. That must be his age. This sentence indicates a brief moment of thought or assumption. Long Action: I'm thinking about buying a house. It is so complicated! This sentence suggests a more prolonged process of considering or planning.

Verbs That Do Not Use "About"



However, not all verbs need "about" to indicate a longer action. Some verbs already imply that the action takes time or involves detail. For these verbs, adding "about" is unnecessary and incorrect. Here are some examples:

- Discuss Incorrect: We were discussing about it. Correct: We were discussing it. Discuss already implies a detailed conversation.
- Consider Incorrect: She is considering about the proposal. Correct: She is considering the proposal. Consider means to think carefully, so "about" is not needed.
- Explain Incorrect: He explained about the problem. Correct: He explained the problem. Explain involves giving detailed information.
- Report Incorrect: They reported about the incident. Correct: They reported the incident. Report means to give a detailed account.
- Describe Incorrect: She described about the scene. Correct: She described the scene. Describe means to give a detailed picture in words.
- Ponder Incorrect: He is pondering about the situation. Correct: He is pondering the situation. Ponder means to think deeply, so "about" is redundant.
- Criticize Incorrect: They criticized about the new policy. Correct: They criticized the new policy. Criticize means to give a detailed analysis of faults.
- Announce Incorrect: She announced about the event. Correct: She announced the event. Announce means to make a public statement.

Additional Examples

Let's see more examples for better understanding:

- Imagine Incorrect: He imagined about a world without war. Correct: He imagined a world without war. Imagine means to create a picture in the mind.
- Decide Incorrect: They decided about their next move. Correct: They decided their next move. Decide means to come to a conclusion.
- Realize Incorrect: She realized about her mistake. Correct: She realized her mistake. Realize means to become aware.
- Notice Incorrect: He noticed about the change. Correct: He noticed the change. Notice means to become aware through the senses.

By understanding which verbs require "about" and which do not, you can make your English more precise and natural. Remember, adding "about" often helps clarify that an action is more detailed or extended, but with certain verbs, it's already implied and unnecessary.

Keep practicing with different verbs to get comfortable with these nuances!



Practice Check

Answer the quiz questions below. Either choose the correct meaning of the sentence or indicate whether the sentence is correct or incorrect.

ITEM 01

The professor talked the French economy.

Answer: _____

ITEM 02

I walked about Tokyo and enjoyed the many sights.

Answer: _____

ITEM 03

I'm thinking about buying a house.

Answer: _____

ITEM 04

We were discussing about it.

Answer: _____

ITEM 05

She is considering the proposal.

Answer: _____

ITEM 06

He explained about the problem.

Answer: _____

ITEM 07

They reported the incident.

Answer: _____

ITEM 08

She described about the scene.

Answer: _____

ITEM 09

He is pondering the situation.

Answer: _____

ITEM 10

They criticized the new policy.

Answer: _____



ITEM 11

She announced the event.

Answer: _____

ITEM 12

He imagined about a world without war.

Answer: _____

ITEM 13

They decided their next move.

Answer: _____

ITEM 14

She realized her mistake.

Answer: _____

ITEM 15

He noticed the change.

Answer: _____

ITEM 16

He is discussing about his project with the team.

Answer: _____

ITEM 17

She is considering a new job opportunity.

Answer: _____

ITEM 18

He explained the solution to the problem.

Answer: _____

ITEM 19

They reported the results of the experiment.

Answer: _____

ITEM 20

She described about the events of the day.

Answer: _____

ITEM 21

He pondered his decision for a long time.

Answer: _____

ITEM 22

They criticized the movie harshly.

Answer: _____



ITEM 23

She announced about the winner of the contest.

Answer: _____

ITEM 24

He imagined a future full of possibilities.

Answer: _____



Self-check Answer Key

Use the key after you have completed every item on your own.

ITEM 01

The correct sentence is "The professor talked about the French economy." A. Correct
B. Incorrect

ITEM 02

I explored Tokyo and saw many things. A. I walked briefly in Tokyo. B. I explored Tokyo
and saw many things. C. I didn't see much in Tokyo.

ITEM 03

I am considering the idea of buying a house. A. I am buying a house right now. B. I am
considering the idea of buying a house. C. I am not interested in buying a house.

ITEM 04

The correct sentence is "We were discussing it." A. Correct B. Incorrect

ITEM 05

She is thinking carefully about the proposal. A. She accepted the proposal. B. She is
thinking carefully about the proposal. C. She rejected the proposal.

ITEM 06

The correct sentence is "He explained the problem." A. Correct B. Incorrect

ITEM 07

They gave a detailed account of the incident. A. They kept the incident a secret. B.
They gave a detailed account of the incident. C. They ignored the incident.

ITEM 08

The correct sentence is "She described the scene." A. Correct B. Incorrect

ITEM 09

He is thinking deeply about the situation. A. He is ignoring the situation. B. He is
thinking deeply about the situation. C. He briefly considered the situation.

ITEM 10

They gave a detailed analysis of the faults in the new policy. A. They praised the new
policy. B. They gave a detailed analysis of the faults in the new policy. C. They ignored
the new policy.

ITEM 11

She made a public statement about the event. A. She ignored the event. B. She kept
the event a secret. C. She made a public statement about the event.

**ITEM 12**

The correct sentence is "He imagined a world without war." A. Correct B. Incorrect

ITEM 13

They came to a conclusion about their next move. A. They ignored their next move. B. They came to a conclusion about their next move. C. They were unsure about their next move.

ITEM 14

She became aware of her mistake. A. She ignored her mistake. B. She became aware of her mistake. C. She repeated her mistake.

ITEM 15

He became aware of the change through his senses. A. He ignored the change. B. He was unaware of the change. C. He became aware of the change through his senses.

ITEM 16

The correct sentence is "He is discussing his project with the team." A. Correct B. Incorrect

ITEM 17

She is thinking carefully about the new job opportunity. A. She rejected the new job opportunity. B. She ignored the new job opportunity. C. She is thinking carefully about the new job opportunity.

ITEM 18

He gave detailed information about the solution to the problem. A. He ignored the solution to the problem. B. He gave detailed information about the solution to the problem. C. He briefly mentioned the solution to the problem.

ITEM 19

They gave a detailed account of the results of the experiment. A. They ignored the results of the experiment. B. They gave a detailed account of the results of the experiment. C. They briefly mentioned the results of the experiment.

ITEM 20

The correct sentence is "She described the events of the day." A. Correct B. Incorrect

ITEM 21

He thought deeply about his decision for a long time. A. He ignored his decision. B. He thought deeply about his decision for a long time. C. He briefly considered his decision.

ITEM 22

They gave a detailed analysis of the faults in the movie. A. They praised the movie. B. They gave a detailed analysis of the faults in the movie. C. They ignored the movie.

**ITEM 23**

The correct sentence is "She announced the winner of the contest." A. Correct B. Incorrect

ITEM 24

He created a picture in his mind of a future full of possibilities. A. He created a picture in his mind of a future full of possibilities. B. He ignored the future full of possibilities. C. He didn't think about a future full of possibilities.