

Exam Stress

Sigmund, a college student, is taking an exam in his psychology class, and one of his short-essay questions reads:

What are some of the causes of problems between parents and teenagers?

Immediately Sigmund writes down some points he wants to include in his answer:

1. Rules and expectations aren't made clear.
2. Resentment occurs when chores aren't done.
3. Blame is placed on teenagers for anything that goes wrong in the home.
4. The way in which parents discipline is by yelling too much.
5. The complaint is that teenagers aren't listened to.
6. There isn't the recognition that parents are human beings too.
7. Enough respect isn't shown to parents.

Then Sigmund begins to write his answer:

"The causes of problems between parents and teenagers are. . ."

Sigmund gets stuck before he even begins to show what he knows. Why? He has begun by focusing his first sentence on the subject *causes*, an abstract word, and the verb *are*. It looks like he is going to name all of the causes of problems in one sentence.

Now go back and improve the focus of six of the seven sentences in Sigmund's notes. Ask yourself *who does what?* in each sentence, and make your answer the sentence subject. Write your clearly focused sentences in the spaces provided. Sigmund's original sentences appear in parentheses below the spaces.

EXAMPLE 1: Rules and expectations aren't made clear.

SOLUTION: Parents don't make their rules and expectations clear.

2. _____
(Resentment occurs when chores aren't done.)

3. _____
(Blame is placed on teenagers for anything that goes wrong in the home.)

4. _____
(The way in which parents discipline is by yelling too much.)

5. _____
(The complaint is that teenagers aren't listened to.)

6. _____
(There isn't the recognition that parents are human beings too.)

7. _____
(Enough respect isn't shown to parents.)

Now write three well-focused sentences in which you state what you think are the causes of conflict between teenagers and parents:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____
