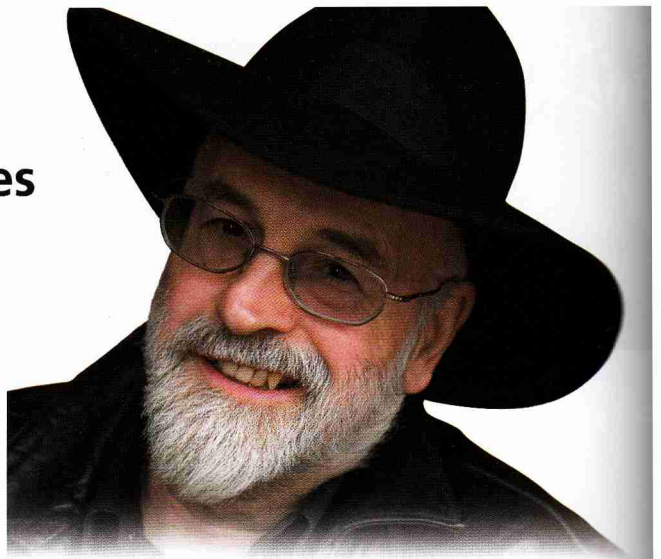


73 Substitution (2) verbs and verb phrases

When Terry Pratchett started writing his Discworld fantasy novels, his intention was to combine the fantasy with fun and engage people in his fantasy world. With sales of over 45 million books, it is very clear that he has done so!



1 Substituting a verb with *do*

If we do not want to repeat a verb, we either substitute the main verb with a form of *do* or omit the main verb and repeat the auxiliary verb only (ellipsis ► Unit 74.2):

The bride wore pink, as did her four bridesmaids. (did = wore pink)

Management has agreed to resume negotiations although the union hasn't yet. (agreed is omitted)

! We do not leave out the verb altogether:

X The bride wore pink, as her four bridesmaids.

We use *do* to avoid repeating a present simple or past simple verb in the second of two clauses joined by *and*, *but* or *or*:

He lived according to his principles and he believed everyone else did, too.

(did = lived according to their principles)

The chef seems to expect all his customers to enjoy raw food, but I certainly don't.

(don't = don't enjoy raw food)

We can also use *so/neither + do/does/did + subject*:

Sara really enjoys the thrill of the open road, and so does her husband.

The younger children in the villages don't learn the official language. Neither do older children, at least not until their last years of school when it is clear they may need it for work.

We also substitute *do* for a main verb in subordinate clauses, e.g. those starting with *that*, *where*, *if*, *whereas*, and in comparison clauses:

At the time, the Farmer family lived very near to where I did.

The young princess and her sister had dark hair, whereas their brother didn't – he had ginger hair.

The average son doesn't help in the home as much as a daughter does.

2 Substituting a verb or verb phrase with *do it/that/so*

We often use *do it/that* to replace a verb phrase which describes a single, specific action:

Margaret had been trying to pluck up the courage to confront her son about the money, and she was just about to do it when the doorbell rang.

We can also use *do it* or *do that* when the subject of the verb changes:

I was unable to contact the barrister about the trial date. Can the clerk do it/that tomorrow?

! We use *that* (and not *it*) to emphasise an action or make a contrast with a preceding statement:

Many people exaggerate the value of items claimed on insurance forms.

X I really couldn't do it. ✓ I really couldn't do that.

In speech, we stress *that*.