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# Sentences



### The Simple Sentence

A **sentence** is a group of words that makes a complete idea. Every sentence needs a **subject** and a **verb**.

There are **four types** of simple sentences (the **S** stands for *subject*, and the **V** stands for *verb*):

1 An SV sentence has one subject and one verb. **SV = 1 subject + 1 verb**

Jane loves playing tennis. (The subject is *Jane*. The verb is *loves*.)

2 An SSV sentence has two subjects and one verb. **SSV = 2 subjects + 1 verb**

Tom and Laura like sports. (The two subjects are *Tom* and *Laura*. The verb is *like*.)

3 An SVV sentence has one subject and two verbs. **SVV = 1 subject + 2 verbs**

Bob always gets up early in the morning and does sport.

(The subject is *Bob*. The two verbs are *gets up* and *does*.)

4 An SSVV sentence has two subjects and two verbs. **SSVV = 2 subjects + 2 verbs**

Sue and Paula watched TV and slept.

(The two subjects are *Sue* and *Paula*. The two verbs are *watched* and *slept*.)

2 Read each sentence in the chart. Write the subjects and verbs in the correct column.



1. A recent study looked at the most popular websites for young people.
2. Ten-year-old children usually watch TV shows and play online games.
3. Preteens and teens like social networking sites.
4. Clara and Nubia chat online and send messages to their friends.
5. Many Americans spend a lot of time on e-mail.
6. I looked at your new marketing site last night and posted a comment.

3- Read each sentence and decide what type of simple sentence it is. Write **SV**, **SSV**, **SVV**, or **SSVV**.

- 1 The average American spends 32.7 hours online every week. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Technology and Sociology are my two classes this semester. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Sandra and her mother shopped online. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Most people talk to friends and share photos online. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 Maria and Juan usually study in the library and eat lunch in the park. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 The Internet affects our lives. \_\_\_\_\_



A sentence created by combining an independent clause (a complete sentence) and a dependent clause (not a complete sentence) is called a **complex sentence**. Good writing includes a mix of simple, compound, and complex sentences. If you include complex sentences in your writing, people will find your writing more interesting and more enjoyable to read.

In a complex sentence, a dependent clause often begins with a **subordinating conjunction**. For example, in this sentence, *because* is the subordinating conjunction.

\_\_\_\_\_ **INDEPENDENT CLAUSE** \_\_\_\_\_ **DEPENDENT CLAUSE** \_\_\_\_\_  
Visual learners often like charts because they learn best by looking at things.

Commonly Used Subordinating Conjunctions:

after, if, when, although, since, whenever, as, though, wherever, because, unless, whether, before, until, while

The independent clause does not always come first. The dependent clause can also come first. For example, look at these two sentences:

\_\_\_\_\_ **IC** \_\_\_\_\_ **DC** \_\_\_\_\_  
He learns new words more easily when he hears them in sentences.

\_\_\_\_\_ **DC** \_\_\_\_\_ **IC** \_\_\_\_\_  
When he hears new words in sentences, he learns them more easily.

### Exercises

#### A. Circle the subordinating conjunctions.

- 1 You will understand better after you read the book.
- 2 The students will do well on the test if they study hard.
- 3 He learns more easily when he hears them in sentences.
- 4 I am very tired today because I stayed up late studying last night.

#### B. Read each sentence in the chart and decide if it is simple or complex. Check (✓) the box in the correct column.

SIMPLE SENTENCE	COMPLEX SENTENCE
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1. I am a kinesthetic learner.
2. When he does actual activities, he learns the material better.
3. You will not pass the test if you do not study.
4. My father is going to meet me at 7:00.
5. He is not going to meet me earlier.
6. We'll think more clearly after we get a good night's sleep.
7. When auditory learners hear words, they remember them better.
8. Some people speak very quickly.
9. The test was easy for me because it included a lot of charts and graphs.
10. Some students listen quietly in class and learn a lot.
11. I'd rather not come to the lecture today if I can watch it online.
12. I like to read and listen to a text at the same time.

C. In the following sentences, underline the independent clause once, the dependent clause twice, and circle the subordinating conjunction.

Example: The crowd raced for their cars after the football game was over.

1. Gas prices increase during the summer because many people drive on their vacations.
2. Although the Congress consists of the House and Senate, they are distinctly different legislative bodies.
3. Golfers can play all day and night in Finland since the sun never sets.
4. The teenagers partied each day while their parents were away.
5. Before an earthquake sends tremors through the ground, some scientists believe animals can somehow sense it is going to happen.
6. The amateur hoopsters loved to travel first class as if they were a professional team.
7. Until their economy failed, the Russians were considered a world power.
8. Whether she spoke with royalty or peasants, Mother Teresa was always humble.
9. The students had a study session every Sunday evening unless there was a good concert at the student center.
10. Whenever the cartoonist finished a week's worth of strips, she rewarded herself with four cookies and a cold glass of milk.

D. Read each of the following sentences for its meaning. Then fill in the blank space with the subordinating conjunction that best expresses the relationship between the two ideas.

1. The butcher sliced fifty pounds of roast beef each morning \_\_\_\_\_ the deli down the street sold it all during lunch.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ the blackjack player had a good hand, he pulled on his left earlobe.
3. The cruise ship passengers stayed out on deck \_\_\_\_\_ the breeze became too strong and too chilly.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ the United States purchased Alaska from the Soviet Union, it became known as "Seward's Folly."
5. His parents have to have the cracked windshield fixed \_\_\_\_\_ he can take the driver's test tomorrow.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ the ozone layer is protected, harmful radiation will cause more skin cancer.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ the bullet train gained speed, the passengers became more nervous.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ some workers sliced the lettuce from their stalks, others placed the heads into cardboard boxes.
9. The table had to be cleaned \_\_\_\_\_ the waiter let the guests sit down.
10. The pear tree lost a limb \_\_\_\_\_ the wind blew over 40 miles per hour.

E. Correctly punctuate the dependent clauses in the following paragraph. Remove inappropriate punctuation.

Because the building was so huge the hallways seemed like highways. It was another year and another new school occupied by strange faces. Although I knew there was much to look forward to getting past the blank stares and unfamiliar buildings was always the hard part. I was expected to act and perform normally, after my world had just been through months of turmoil, Believe me, climbing in and out of a U-Haul every few years is about as stressful an activity as any seventeen-year-old ever confronts. It's not something I'll be looking forward to a few years from now.

## Complex Sentences

A **complex sentence** contains one independent clause and one (or more) dependent clause(s). In a complex sentence, one idea is generally more important than the other. We place the more important idea in the independent clause and the less important idea in the dependent clause.

There are three kinds of dependent clauses: adverb, adjective, and noun. You will study all of these kinds of clauses in greater detail in Chapters 12, 13, and 14.

### Complex Sentences with Adverb Clauses

An adverb clause acts like an adverb; that is, it tells where, when, why, and how. An adverb clause begins with a subordinator, such as *when*, *while*, *because*, *although*, *if*, *so*, or *that*. It can come before or after an independent clause.

DEPENDENT ADVERB CLAUSE      INDEPENDENT CLAUSE  
Although women in the United States could own property, they could not vote until 1920.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE      DEPENDENT ADVERB CLAUSE  
A citizen can vote in the United States when he or she is 18 years old.

### Complex Sentences with Adjective Clauses

An adjective clause acts like an adjective; that is, it describes a noun or pronoun. An adjective clause begins with a relative pronoun, such as *who*, *whom*, *which*, *whose*, or *that*, or with a relative adverb, such as *where* or *when*. It follows the noun or pronoun it describes.

DEPENDENT ADJECTIVE CLAUSE  
Men who are not married are called bachelors.

DEPENDENT ADJECTIVE CLAUSE  
Last year we vacationed in Cozumel, which features excellent scuba diving.

### Complex Sentences with Noun Clauses

A noun clause begins with a *wh-* question word, *that*, *whether*, and sometimes *if*. A noun clause acts like a noun; it can be either the subject or an object of the independent clause.

DEPENDENT NOUN CLAUSE  
That there is a hole in the ozone layer of Earth's atmosphere is well known.

DEPENDENT NOUN CLAUSE  
Scientists know what caused it.

In the first example, *That there is a hole in the ozone layer of Earth's atmosphere* is the subject of the verb *is*. In the second example, *what caused it* is the object of the verb *know*.

## PRACTICE 8

### Complex Sentences

- A. **Step 1** Underline the independent clause of each sentence with a solid line.  
**Step 2** Underline the dependent clause with a broken line. One sentence has two dependent clauses.  
**Step 3** Write *Sub.* above the subordinator. Refer to the list of subordinators on page 163.

The first one has been done for you as an example.

Sub.

1. Because the cost of education is rising, many students must work part-time.
2. When students from other countries come to the United States, they often suffer from culture shock.
3. Because financial aid is difficult to obtain, many students have to work part-time.
4. Please tell me where the student union is.
5. Engineers, who have an aptitude for drafting and mechanics, must also be artistic and imaginative.
6. While the contractor follows the blueprint, the engineer checks the construction in progress.
7. Since the blueprint presents the details of the engineer's plans, it must be interpreted accurately by the contractor.
8. Students should declare a major by their junior year unless they have not made up their minds.
9. Even though students declare a major now, they can change it later.
10. The government says that inflation is holding steady.
11. Economists are concerned that the rate of inflation will double if the government does not take immediate steps to control it.

- B. **Step 1** Add a logical independent clause to each of the dependent clauses.  
**Step 2** Punctuate each sentence correctly.

The first one has been done for you as an example.

1. I cannot register for classes until I pay my tuition.
2. Unless I take 12 units each term \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ that computer engineering is a popular major.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ who taught this course last term?
5. Because I had to look for a part-time job \_\_\_\_\_.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ if I want to get to school on time.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ whether I should take advanced calculus.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ whom I met at the math club meeting last week.
9. When I left my country \_\_\_\_\_.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ that my college adviser recommends.



## Compound Sentence

\*A compound sentence is two or more independent clauses joined together. There are three ways to join the clauses.

### 1. With a coordinator

Jacob *walked* to the store, but he *got* a ride home. Independent clause, + coordinator + independent clause

There are seven coordinators, which are also called coordinating conjunctions. You can remember them by the phrase FAN BOYS (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So). The following sentences illustrate the meanings of the seven FAN BOYS coordinators.

(Punctuation note: There is a comma after the first independent clause.)

### 2. With a conjunctive adverb

Jacob *walked* to the store; however, he *got* a ride home. Independent clause; + conjunctive adverb, + independent clause

### 3. With a semicolon

Jacob *walked* to the store; he *got* a ride home. Independent clause; + semicolon + independent clause

**A- Read each item in the chart and decide if the sentence is correct or if it has an error.**

**Check (✓) the box in the correct column.**



1. I work with dangerous materials, or I get special training.
2. The employees are from many countries, but there is no discrimination.
3. My coworker feels humiliated, and my company offers computer training.
4. I like the company, but I am not going to leave.
5. Workers use dangerous machines, so they take training classes.
6. I like my boss, and certain chemicals can be dangerous.
7. Marie makes the same amount of money as Deniz, but they receive different treatment.
8. Juan understands workers' rights, and smoking is unhealthy.



for CHAPTER 4: THE PHRASE AND THE CLAUSE pages 96-97

## Simple and Compound Sentences

**4j.** A *simple sentence* has one independent clause and no subordinate clauses.

A simple sentence may have a compound subject or a compound verb or both.

EXAMPLES  $\begin{matrix} S & V \\ \text{Jamyce} & \text{has} \end{matrix}$  no brothers or sisters. $\begin{matrix} S & & S & V \\ \text{The tacos} & \text{and burritos} & \text{are} & \text{ready.} \end{matrix}$  [compound subject] $\begin{matrix} S & & V & & V \\ \text{Damon} & \text{auditioned} & \text{for the play} & \text{and} & \text{got} \end{matrix}$  the lead role. [compound verb]**4k.** A *compound sentence* consists of two or more independent clauses, usually joined by a comma and a connecting word.EXAMPLE I like hot-and-sour soup, **but** won-ton soup is my favorite.**EXERCISE A** Decide whether each of the following sentences is simple or compound. On the line provided, write *S* for *simple* or *C* for *compound*.Example   S   1. Japan took control of the Marshall Islands during World War I.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The Marshall Islands consist of thirty-four small islands in the Pacific Ocean.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The area is called Micronesia, and the people are known as Micronesians.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Farming is vital to the economy, but many islanders work at a military base.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The Republic of the Marshall Islands and the United States signed an agreement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The agreement allows for self-government, but the United States provides for defense.

**EXERCISE B** Combine each pair of simple sentences to create one compound sentence. Write your new sentence on the lines provided.Example 1. I will draw the map. Ed will color it. I will draw the map and Ed will color it.

6. Keeshawn worked on the puzzle for hours. He did not finish it. \_\_\_\_\_
7. My brother practices the drums every day. He is improving. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Frozen orange juice is good. I prefer fresh-squeezed. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Please proofread your essay. Then, turn it in. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Nari held the kitten. Kevin checked its paws for thorns. \_\_\_\_\_

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Notice that the coordinating conjunctions not only combine the shorter sentences into longer, more rhythmical ones, but they also help connect two different ideas, making them easier for the reader to understand.

### PRACTICE 1 Using Coordinating Conjunctions

Practice *coordinating* using *conjunctions*. Combine the following pairs of simple sentences by using a comma and the BOYFANS in the parentheses ( ).

1. (but) Jawan hit the ball. Christie caught the ball.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. (or) Christie could throw the ball to first base. She could throw the ball to third.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. (yet) Pang ran quickly to third base. Chinua tagged him out.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. (for) Jefferson struck out three times. The pitcher threw a wicked curveball.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. (and) Tom singled four times. Angie hit two home runs.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. (nor) Yoshi did not have a base on balls. Sarita did not bunt during the game.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. (so) Joe caused three errors. The other team scored five runs.  
\_\_\_\_\_

### PRACTICE 2 Using Coordinating Conjunctions

Combine some more simple sentences, but this time you choose which BOYFANS you think works the best. Try not to use the same coordinating conjunction twice. Choose from the list:

But Or Yet For And Nor So

Examples: Mel wanted to go hiking. Shonda wanted to read a book.

Mel wanted to go hiking, but Shonda wanted to read a book.

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The list below explains the meaning of each of the coordinating conjunctions in BOYFANS. They are not interchangeable. Note that the comma is placed before each coordinating conjunction to signal the start of the second complete sentence.

### Using Coordinating Conjunctions

**But**—Use to connect two simple sentences that have contrasting meanings:

*Jawan hit the ball, but Christie caught the ball.*

**Or**—Use to combine two simple sentences that involve a choice:

*Christie could have thrown the ball to Jose, or she could have thrown it to home plate.*

**Yet**—Use to combine two simple sentences that have contrasting meanings:

*Jawan hit the ball, yet Christie caught the ball.*

**For**—Use to combine two simple sentences that involve a reason:

*Malik tried to score from second base, for there were already two outs.*

**And**—Use to combine two simple sentences that involve adding one idea to another:

*Jason hit the ball, and Latoya caught the ball.*

**Nor**—Use when the first simple sentence is in the negative and you want to combine it with another simple sentence:

*Mark does not like striking out, nor does Hakeem like sliding into a base.*

**So**—Use to combine two simple sentences that show a result:

*Isabel scored a run, so her team won the game.*

Instead of expressing ideas using all simple sentences, like this:

Jawan hit the ball. Christie caught the ball. Christie could throw the ball to first base. She could throw the ball to third. Pang ran quickly to third base. Chinua tagged him out.

We can add variety and connect ideas, like this:

Jawan hit the ball, **but** Christie caught the ball. Christie could throw the ball to first base, **or** she could throw the ball to third. Pang ran quickly to third base, **yet** Chinua tagged him out.

1. Some friends wanted to go to the park. \_\_\_\_\_ Others wanted to go to the zoo.
2. Bicycling is good exercise. \_\_\_\_\_ Try to ride at least three times each week.
3. Salads are not only great tasting. \_\_\_\_\_ They are also healthy.
4. Morning is the best time to exercise. \_\_\_\_\_ There is less heat and humidity.
5. Genetics does not guarantee good health. \_\_\_\_\_ Eating only fruit is not the solution.
6. Fish is very tasty. \_\_\_\_\_ Too much sauce can mask its taste.
7. Broccoli is a tasty and nutritious choice. \_\_\_\_\_ Asparagus also is a good choice.

### PRACTICE 6 Using Coordinating Conjunctions

Try some more. Choose a different BOYFANS for each sentence, and remember to place a comma before each coordinating conjunction.

**Examples:** Flowers are very beautiful. Buying them can be expensive.

Flowers are very beautiful, but buying them can be expensive.

1. Jets travel to Chicago. Trains travel there, as well.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Reading a book can be exciting. Listening to music can be soothing.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Good grades are important. Study hard and do all homework.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The car did not get good gas mileage. It did not ride smoothly either.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. John did not like the restaurant. He continued eating there.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Jenny enjoyed hiking. The woods were both beautiful and quiet.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Snakes can make interesting pets. They can be dangerous.  
\_\_\_\_\_

Adverbial Conjunction	Meaning	Adverbial Conjunction	Meaning
<i>hence</i>	for this reason, from now	<i>now</i>	at present, immediately
<i>otherwise</i>	under other circumstances	<i>thereafter</i>	from then on
<i>similarly</i>	as, as if, like	<i>therefore</i>	as a result, on account of
<i>still</i>	as before, now, yet	<i>thus</i>	as a result, in this way
<i>then</i>	at that time, next in time	<i>undoubtedly</i>	certainly, indeed, truly

Notice that some, but not all, adverbial conjunctions have similar meanings and can be used interchangeably. Also, notice that when using adverbial conjunctions, you must precede them with a semicolon and follow them with a comma.

#### Examples

The team practiced in the morning; furthermore, they practiced again in the evening.

Aunt Louisa stopped at the bakery; meanwhile, her niece waited in the car.

### PRACTICE 1 Using Adverbial Conjunctions

Add the adverbial conjunction that best expresses the appropriate relationship between the pairs of independent clauses that follow. Also, be sure to use correct punctuation. Do not use the same adverbial conjunction twice.

Examples: Sheila hit the ball; however, she was thrown out at first base.

1. The CAT scan discovered a tumor \_\_\_\_\_ it turned out to be benign.
2. Wrestling at the high school or college level is physically demanding \_\_\_\_\_ staying in shape is a necessity.
3. Jackie did not like writing essays \_\_\_\_\_ she worked hard and received an "A" in the class.
4. The dentist warned my children to floss after every meal \_\_\_\_\_ cavities and gum disease would surely develop over the next few years.



**Compound Sentences with Semicolons**

A third way to form a compound sentence is to connect the two independent clauses with a semicolon alone:

Poland was the first Eastern European country to turn away from communism;  
others soon followed.

This kind of compound sentence is possible only when the two independent clauses are closely related in meaning. If they are not closely related, they should be written as two simple sentences, each ending with a period.

**PRACTICE 6****Compound Sentences with Semicolons**

- A. Place a semicolon between the two independent clauses in the following compound sentences.
1. The practice of yoga strengthens the body and promotes flexibility it also strengthens the mind and refreshes the soul.
  2. Motherhood causes some women to quit their jobs others continue working despite having young children to care for.
  3. Three hundred guests attended his wedding two attended his funeral.
- B. On a separate sheet of paper, write three compound sentences of your own, using a semicolon to join the independent clauses.

**PRACTICE 7****Editing Practice**

Use what you have learned about forming compound sentences to improve the following mini-essay, which contains many short, simple sentences. Combine sentences wherever possible. Try to use each of the three methods at least once. There are many possible ways to combine sentences.

**Robots**

<sup>1</sup>A robot is a mechanical device that can perform boring, dangerous, and difficult tasks. <sup>2</sup>First of all, robots can perform repetitive tasks without becoming tired or bored. <sup>3</sup>They are used in automobile factories to weld and paint. <sup>4</sup>Robots can also function in hostile environments. <sup>5</sup>They are useful for exploring the ocean bottom as well as deep outer space. <sup>6</sup>Finally, robots can perform tasks requiring pinpoint accuracy. <sup>7</sup>In the operating room, robotic equipment can assist the surgeon. <sup>8</sup>For instance, a robot can kill a brain tumor. <sup>9</sup>It can operate on a fetus with great precision.

<sup>10</sup>The field of artificial intelligence is giving robots a limited ability to think and to make decisions. <sup>11</sup>However, robots cannot think conceptually. <sup>12</sup>Robots cannot function independently. <sup>13</sup>Humans have to program them. <sup>14</sup>They are useless. [Use *otherwise* to combine sentences 13 and 14.] <sup>15</sup>Therefore, humans should not worry that robots will take over the world—at least not yet.



### Compound-Complex Sentences

A Compound-complex sentence has at least three clauses, at least two of which are independent. You can use almost any combination of dependent and independent clauses. Just be sure that there is at least one independent clause. In the following examples, independent clauses are underlined with a solid line and dependent clauses with a dotted line.

1. I wanted to travel after I graduated from college; however, I had to go to work immediately.
2. After I graduated from college, I wanted to travel, but I had to go to work immediately.
3. I wanted to travel after I graduated from college, but I had to go to work immediately because I had to support my family.
4. I could not decide where I should work or what I should do, so at first I did nothing.

Punctuate the compound part of a compound-complex sentence like a compound sentence; that is, use a semicolon/comma combination (sentence 1), or put a comma before a coordinator joining two independent clauses (sentences 2, 3, and 4).

Punctuate the complex part like a complex sentence. With adverb clauses, put a comma after a dependent adverb clause (sentence 2) but not before it (sentence 3). With noun clauses (sentence 4), use no commas.

Punctuate the following sentences.

#### PRACTICE 9 Punctuation

**Step 1** Underline the independent clauses with a solid line and the dependent clauses with a broken line.

**Step 2** Add commas and/or semicolons as necessary.

1. Information and communication technology is reaching out to help people in the poorest countries improve their lives for example fishermen on the Bay of Bengal can now receive online weather reports that tell them when it is safe to go out.
2. Furthermore, when the fishermen bring in a boatload of fish they can find out the current market prices for their fish, which will help them bargain with the middlemen to whom they sell their catch.
3. The cost of the cheapest computer is at least \$200 and since this is more than an individual fisherman can afford several fishing villages together can pool their money and buy one to share.
4. The worldwide reach of the Internet is also providing employment opportunities in developing countries and as greater numbers of people learn the technology these opportunities will expand.
5. When you call your U.S. bank you may find yourself speaking to a customer service representative who is sitting in the Philippines or Puerto Rico and when you need technical support for your home computer you will probably get help from a programmer in New Delhi.

## Sentence Types and Writing Style

Now that you know the basic kinds of sentences in English, you can develop a good writing style. Writing that uses only one kind of sentence is boring and may not convey the message that you intend.

As you read the model essay, notice the kinds of sentences.

- Paragraphs 1 and 4 have too many compound sentences. This style is boring because so many sentences use *and* as the connector.
- Paragraph 2 has too many simple sentences. This style sounds choppy.
- Paragraph 3 uses a good mixture of sentence types.

### MODEL

#### Problems with Style

#### Rosa Parks

1 Rosa Parks is a famous African-American woman, **and** she is often called "the mother of the civil rights movement." She was born into a poor but hardworking African-American family in Alabama, **and** no one suspected that she would become the spark that ignited the civil rights movement in the United States. This movement changed U.S. society forever, **and** it helped African-Americans attain equal rights under the law.

2 Parks became famous quite by accident. One day in 1955, she was on her way home from her job in a Montgomery, Alabama, department store. She boarded a city bus with three other African-Americans. They sat in the fifth row. The fifth row was the first row African-Americans were allowed to sit in. A few stops later, the front four rows filled up. A white man was left standing.

3 According to the laws of that time, African-Americans had to give up their seats to whites, so the bus driver asked Parks and the three other African-Americans to get up and move. Although the others complied, Parks refused. She later said she was not tired from work, but tired of being treated like a second-class citizen. The bus driver called the police, who arrested Parks and took her away in handcuffs.

4 Over the weekend, a protest was organized, **and** on the following Monday, African-American people in Montgomery began a boycott of the public buses, **and** the boycott was tremendously successful, **and** it lasted more than a year. The Supreme Court of the United States finally ruled that segregation on public transportation was unconstitutional. African-Americans had won a huge victory, **and** they realized their power to change the system.

Now read the same essay with the sentence structure revised.

- B. Use what you know about the different kinds of sentences to improve this short essay, which contains too many simple sentences. Use different methods of combining the sentences. Rewrite the essay on a separate sheet of paper.

### Nonverbal Communication

- 1 Nonverbal communication, or body language, is used everywhere in the world. It is a very powerful means of communication. It communicates much more than spoken words.
- 2 One example of nonverbal communication is what occurs between parents and child. Parents smile at their child. They communicate love, acceptance, and reassurance. The child feels comfortable and safe. The smile signifies approval. The child is happy and well adjusted.
- 3 Another example of nonverbal communication is the image a person shows in public. A woman is walking alone on an unfamiliar and possibly dangerous street. She wants to appear confident. She walks quickly. She may be tired. She walks with her shoulders straight and her head held high. Her eyes are focused straight ahead. Someone is looking at her. She returns the glance without hesitation. In contrast, a nervous woman appears afraid. She walks slowly with her shoulders and eyes down.
- 4 Indeed, body language can express more than spoken language. Merely by raising an eyebrow, clenching a jaw, or softening the eyes, a person can express disapproval, anger, or love. It is a very strong method of communication.

## Review

These are the important points covered in this chapter.

1. **Clauses** are the main building blocks of sentences. There are two kinds of clauses: independent and dependent.

- a. **An independent clause**

- expresses a complete thought.
- can be a sentence by itself.

English grammar is easy.

- b. **A dependent clause**

- begins with a subordinator.
- cannot be a sentence by itself.
- is one of three types: adverb, adjective, or noun.

ADVERB

... because grammar is easy ...

ADJECTIVE

... which is in Spanish ...

NOUN

... that grammar is easy ...

2. We build **different kinds of sentences** in English by combining clauses in different patterns.

a. A **simple sentence** is one independent clause.

English grammar is easy.

b. A **compound sentence** is two independent clauses joined by

- a coordinator,
- a conjunctive adverb, or
- a semicolon.

Grammar is easy, so I learned it quickly.

Grammar is easy; therefore, I learned it quickly.

Grammar is easy; I learned it quickly.

c. A **complex sentence** is one independent and one (or more) dependent clauses.

**WITH AN ADVERB CLAUSE**

Because grammar is easy, I learned it quickly. I learned grammar quickly because it is easy.

**WITH AN ADJECTIVE CLAUSE**

One of my favorite films is *Like Water for Chocolate*, which is in Spanish.

**WITH A NOUN CLAUSE**

She does not agree that grammar is easy.

d. A **compound-complex sentence** has two independent clauses and one (or more) dependent clauses.

Because grammar is easy, I learned it quickly, but it took me several years to master writing.

3. The type of sentence you write depends on your message. When you want to show that ideas are equal, use more coordinated structures, such as compound sentences. When ideas are not equal, use more subordinated structures, such as complex sentences. Develop a good writing style by mixing sentence types.



## Sentence Fragments

A sentence has a **subject** and a **verb**, and it expresses a complete idea.

Example: The Internet **has** a lot of advantages. The subject of this sentence is *the internet*. The verb in this sentence is *has*. Therefore, *the Internet has a lot of advantages* is a sentence that expresses a complete idea.

A sentence that is missing a subject or a verb is called a **sentence fragment**.

❖ A sentence fragment can be the result of:

- \* a sentence missing either a subject or a verb: **watches TV - Peter a good student.**
- \* a sentence that does not express a complete thought: **The book which I bought yesterday.**
- \* a dependent clause without an independent clause: **If I have time.**

❖ Study the following examples:

\* Incorrect: Tina bad marks at Maths. (This is also an incomplete sentence. The verb is missing).

➤ **Correction technique (1):** Add a verb

\* Correct: Tina gets bad marks at Maths ( This is a complete sentence as *Tina* is the subject and *gets* is the verb).

\* Incorrect: Because they work every day. *This is a dependent clause. It begins with a subordinator (because). It does not express a complete thought because there is no independent clause.*

➤ **Correction technique (1)** Add an independent clause.

\* Correct: Because they work every day, *they have very little free time.*

➤ **Correction technique (2)** Delete the subordinator (*because*)

\* Some students work part-time while taking a full load of classes.

\* Incorrect: The boy who has won the race. (This is a noun *boy*) + an adjective clause (*who won the race*). The noun is the beginning of an independent clause that was never finished).

**Correction technique (1):** Finish the independent clause.

\* Correct: The boy who has won the race **is Andrew.**

**Correction technique (2):** Delete the relative pronoun (*who*)

\* Correct: The boy has won the race.

**A. Read each sentence in the chart. Decide if they are complete sentences or sentence fragments. Check (✓) the box in the correct column.**

COMPLETE SENTENCE	SENTENCE FRAGMENT
-------------------	-------------------

1. Many people need eight hours of sleep.
2. Is important to get enough sleep.
3. Some students study all night.
4. That a bad habit.
5. Often have memory problems.
6. The brain works more slowly.
7. Students poor grades.
8. They make more mistakes.
9. The students did well on the test.
10. A regular schedule.

B. Read each item. Decide if it needs a subject or a verb or if it is a complete sentence. Check (✓) the correct answer.

1 Likes to study all night.

- ☐ a. needs a subject  
☐ b. needs a verb  
☐ c. complete sentence

2 I good grades on my exams.

- ☐ a. needs a subject  
☐ b. needs a verb  
☐ c. complete sentence

3 Lisa keeps a regular schedule.

- ☐ a. needs a subject  
☐ b. needs a verb  
☐ c. complete sentence

4 Sleeps all day.

- ☐ a. needs a subject  
☐ b. needs a verb  
☐ c. complete sentence

5 I agree with the study.

- ☐ a. needs a subject  
☐ b. needs a verb  
☐ c. complete sentence

6 Has memory problems.

- ☐ a. needs a subject  
☐ b. needs a verb  
☐ c. complete sentence

C. Read the following sentences. Mark them *Frag.* if they are sentence fragments, or *Comp* if they are complete sentences.

1. The desire of all humankind to live in peace and freedom, for example.
2. Second, a fact that men are physically stronger than women.
3. The best movie I saw last year.
4. *Titanic* was the most financially successful movie ever made, worldwide.
5. For example, many students have part-time jobs.
6. Although people want to believe that all men are created equal.
7. Finding a suitable marriage partner is a challenging task.
8. Many of my friends who did not have the opportunity to go to college.
9. Working during the morning and attending classes during the afternoon.
10. Because I do not feel that grades in college have any value.

D. On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite each fragment to make a complete sentence using the techniques above.

E. Read the following paragraph. Put brackets [ ] around any sentence fragments you find and mark them *Frag*. Then correct the fragments on a separate sheet of paper.

Sexism extends even into the area of automobile driving, it seems. Believing that they are far better drivers than women. Men consider women drivers incompetent, inattentive, and even dangerous behind the wheel. However, statistics prove that women are, in fact, safer drivers than men. For example, insurance rates. Insurance rates for women are 20 percent lower than they are for men. Another proof is that more accidents are caused by male drivers between the ages of 18 and 25 than by any other group. Also, the greater percentage of accidents involving deaths caused by men. Although women are criticized for being too cautious. They are really just being safe drivers.



# 18

## Parallel Structure

In this chapter, you will review and practice using grammatical structures to make your writing balanced. Balancing the grammatical structures of words, phrases, clauses, or sentences in your writing is called parallel structure. It gives coherence to your writing, and you can use it to link ideas. Structures that are connected with coordinating conjunctions or correlative (paired) conjunctions are written in parallel form, and writers often emphasize parallel structure through comparisons and repetition. This chapter offers practice that will improve your writing through the use of parallelism.



### CHECK YOUR GRAMMAR

Two of the five underlined phrases contain an error related to parallel structure. Can you explain why each of these underlined areas is (or is not) wrong? Discuss with a partner.

#### Left-Hemisphere Dominance

Generally speaking, the left hemisphere in most people appears to be dominant for language abilities: speaking, reading, and written. The hemisphere of the left also appears to be dominant for tasks requiring logical analysis, problem solving, and mathematical computations.

From: Jeffrey S. Nevid (2007). *Psychology Concepts and Applications*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, p. 71.

### 18.1 Parallel Words

Good English writers make the following elements parallel:

- Words that are paired (*tall* and *slim*: both are adjectives)
- Items of equal rank (*animal, vegetable, and mineral*: all three are nouns)
- Items in a series (*bike, swim, and run*: all three are verbs)



Using multiple items that are grammatically parallel makes writing sound better by providing a better balance for the sentence. Consider the difference that one extra adjective makes in the following two sentences:

Students returning to school on Monday were greeted by **clogged streets and garages** as the roughly 8,000 parking spaces quickly filled up.

Students returning to school on Monday were greeted by **clogged streets and packed garages** as the roughly 8,000 parking spaces quickly filled up.

In the second example the adjectives *clogged* and *packed* are synonyms, but they are not redundant. Together, they are balanced. Each adds a special "flavor" to the sentence that makes the writing sound better. We see the parallel structure in the prepositional phrase: preposition + adjective + object + *and* + adjective + object.

In parallel structure, you balance nouns with nouns, verbs with verbs, adjectives with adjectives, and so forth. Here are some examples.

1. Words connected with coordinating conjunctions: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*. (See Appendix 4, p. 299.)

My favorite subjects are **history, psychology, and math**. (3 nouns)

The dentist did not let me **eat or drink** anything for at least an hour. (2 verbs)

Their wedding day was **beautiful, bright, and festive**. (3 adjectives)

The ambassador spoke **quietly yet forcefully**. (2 adverbs)

2. Words connected with correlative conjunctions. (These conjunctions work only in pairs, such as *both/and, neither/nor*.)

I like **neither Vivaldi nor Mozart**. (2 nouns)

To succeed in this job, you must **both learn fast and work hard**. (2 verb phrases)

The morning dawned **not foggy but clear, not humid but dry**. (4 adjectives)

Two subjects connected by *both ... and* take a plural verb.

**Both my plane ticket and my passport** were lost. (2 subjects)

**Exercise 1** As you read the paragraph, circle and identify the seven examples of parallel structure: adjectives (3), adverbs (1), noun/pronoun (1), and verbs (2). The first one has been done for you.

1. adjectives
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_

### Choosing a Career

Choosing a career is at the same time both exciting and frightening. On one hand, it is exciting because there are so many professions and fields from which you can choose. On the other hand, it is frightening because if you make a mistake, decide on the wrong career, and find yourself with a lousy job, you may be unhappy or frustrated for your entire working life. Clearly, it is important to consider your options

(continued)

completely and thoroughly before making the final decision. To find the perfect job, you should both research your field of interest and talk to a career counselor to help make the correct choice. However, your ultimate career choice must be based on personal, professional, and financial reasons that make sense to you. This life-altering decision matters so much because it will affect not only you but also your family.

## 18.2 Parallel Phrases

Phrases, as well as words, must be balanced in your writing. Be sure to balance like elements: prepositional phrases with prepositional phrases, infinitive phrases with infinitive phrases, and gerund phrases with gerund phrases. Phrases may be joined with coordinating conjunctions or correlative conjunctions. Here are some examples.

1. Phrases connected with coordinating conjunctions:

The cat climbed **over the fence**, **up the tree**, **and onto the roof** of the house next door. (3 prepositional phrases)

The judge told her to **take the stand** **and to tell the truth**. (2 infinitive phrases)

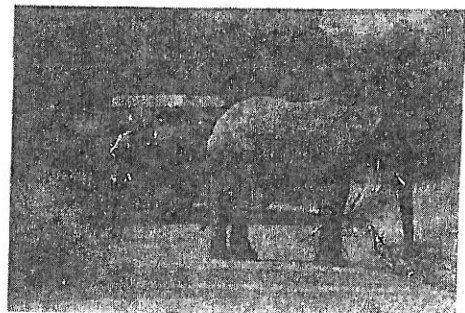
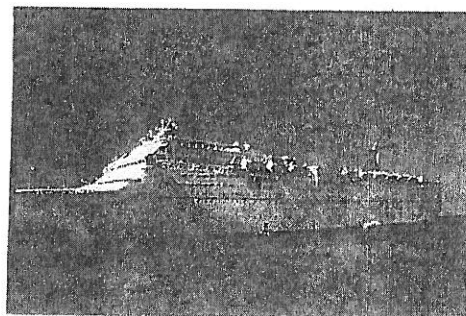
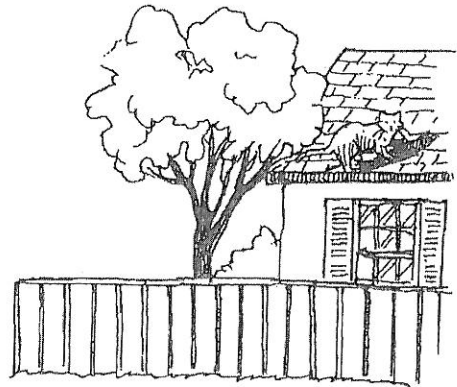
They usually spend their weekends **entertaining their friends** **or fixing up their house**. (2 gerund phrases)

2. Phrases connected with correlative conjunctions:

His satisfaction lies **not in his title** **but in his daily work**. (2 prepositional phrases)

They can't decide **whether to take a cruise** **or to go on a safari**. (2 infinitive phrases)

His idea of a relaxing evening is **either biking around the island** **or watching the sun set over the lake**. (2 gerund phrases)



**Exercise 2**

As you read the paragraph, underline the seven parallel words and phrases. Then locate and correct the three errors.

**Cloud Types**

How much do you know about the clouds you see in the sky every day? Clouds are defined by their general appearance and by their altitude in the atmosphere. Cloud types include cirrus, stratus, and cumulus. There are three basic cloud levels: under 10,000 feet, between 10,000 and 20,000 feet, and higher than 20,000 feet. Nimbus clouds produce precipitation and can tower up to 60,000 feet. Learning these few terms and to gaze at the sky are all that you will need to begin impressing your friends and family. Once you have learned the cloud classification system and the weather associated with specific cloud types, you can begin to predict the weather and matching skills with your local TV meteorologist!

**18.3 Parallel Clauses**

In your writing, be sure to balance noun, adjective, and adverb clauses to give them equal weight. Use coordinating and correlative conjunctions to join your clauses. Study the examples below.

## 1. Clauses connected with coordinating conjunctions:

Unfortunately for all of us, what she says *and* what she does are very often two different things! (2 noun clauses)

I am a person who works hard *and* who gets along well with others. (2 adjective clauses)

Are you staying home because you are tired *or* because it is a school night? (2 adverb clauses)

## 2. Clauses connected with correlative conjunctions:

He appreciated *neither* what she said *nor* how she said it. (2 noun clauses)

She's asking *not* where he went *but* when he went. (2 noun clauses)

They won the contract *either* because they bid low *or* because they knew someone on the committee. (2 adverb clauses)



For the following paired correlative conjunctions, the subject closer to the verb determines whether the verb is singular or plural.

6. Both the type of test and how long it is are important considerations when studying for an exam.

---

## 18.5 Parallel Comparisons

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When you make comparisons using parallel structures, use these expressions:

*er / more / less ... than    as ... as    the same as    similar to*

Remember that the items you are comparing must have the same grammatical structure.

*Incorrect:*    Going to a movie is more expensive than ~~to rent~~ a video.

*Correct:*    **Going to a movie is *more* expensive *than* renting a video.**

*Incorrect:*    Investing in his company is the same as ~~to throw~~ your money away.

*Correct:*    **Investing in his company is *the same as* throwing your money away.**

When you use parallelism in comparisons, the comparisons must follow these rules.

1. Comparisons should be complete. Repeat the whole parallel structure in each item and include all the comparison words.

*Incorrect:*    I am happier at my new job.

*Correct:*    I am happier **at my new job *than* at my old one.**

*Correct:*    **I am happier at my new job *than* I was at my old one.**

*Incorrect:*    I can't believe you lost. You played as well, if not better than your opponent.

*Correct:*    I can't believe you lost. You played ***as well as*, if not better *than* your opponent.**

*Incorrect:*    Stan Johnson is taller than anyone on the team. (He is on the team, so he can't be taller than anyone on the team.)

*Correct:*    **Stan Johnson is taller *than anyone else* on the team.**

*Correct:*    **Stan Johnson is taller *than any other player* on the team.**

2. Comparisons should be clear. Make sure the meaning of your comparison is obvious.

*Incorrect:*    I think your boss likes Angela more than you. (Does this mean more than you like Angela or more than your boss likes you? The meaning is unclear.)

*Correct:*    I think your boss likes Angela ***more than you like Angela.***

*Correct:*    I think your boss likes Angela ***more than your boss likes you.***

3. Comparisons should be between similar items. The comparison must make sense.

*Incorrect:*    The cost of a house in Mississippi is less than Texas. (*House and Texas* are not similar.)

*Correct:*    The cost of **a house** in Mississippi is ***less than one*** in Texas.

*Incorrect:* Popular music in the United States is similar to your country. (*Music and your country are not similar.*)

*Correct:* Popular music in the United States is *similar to music in your country.*

Editing



### Exercise 7

Edit and then rewrite the comparisons in the following sentences to make each sentence parallel. The first one has been done for you.

1. Some students are better at learning languages.

Some students are better at learning languages than are other students.

2. Writing in a second language is usually more difficult than to speak.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The book that you used in your grammar class is similar to my class.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. The writing homework was as difficult today as yesterday.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. I think I prefer listening to language CDs more than you.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. The rules for using semicolons in English are almost the same as Spanish.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 8** Use the phrases below to write sentences containing comparisons. Have a partner check your sentences for parallel form. The first one has been done for you.

1. my strengths / my weaknesses

I think my public speaking strengths are more obvious to people than my weaknesses are.

2. feeling calm / feeling nervous

---

---

3. informative speeches / persuasive speeches

---

---

4. community college speech courses / community college writing courses

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---

5. planning a speech / presenting a speech

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---

6. good public speakers / poor public speakers

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---

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## 18.6 Parallel Repetition

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Parallel repetition means repeating articles, prepositions, *to* before a verb, or other words to emphasize parallel structure. This repetition can help make the parallel items clear and eliminate omissions or potential awkwardness from your writing. When you repeat articles or prepositions, you add clarity to a series of items. The repeated word must appear with each item, not just with two of three items.

At the same time, parallel structure makes repeating some words unnecessary. In general, avoid repetition when it makes your writing too wordy. Compare the examples below.

### Articles

*Possible:* For the first time in his life he had *a good job, a home, and a family.*

*Possible:* For the first time in his life he had *a good job, home, and family.*

*Incorrect:* For the first time in his life he had *a good job, a home, and family.*

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### to before a verb

*Possible:* Now is the time *to organize, to plan, and to act.*

*Possible:* Now is the time *to organize, plan, and act.*

*Incorrect:* Now is the time *to organize, plan, and to act.*

### Prepositions

*Possible:* She told her son to play ball not *in the living room* but *in the yard.*

### Relative Pronouns

*Possible:* The candidate believes *that this country is ready for change, that the people are willing to sacrifice, and that there can be no change without sacrifice.* (Repeated *that* makes the grammar clear.)

*Weak:* The candidate believes *that this country is ready for change, the people are willing to sacrifice, and there can be no change without sacrifice.* (Long sentence may increase confusion.)

### Subjects

*Possible:* In her mind, *life was an adventure or simply wasn't worth living.*

*Better:* In her mind, *life was an adventure or life simply wasn't worth living.* (Repeated subject improves clarity.)

### Wordiness

*Weak:* My editor is good at *researching* background facts, *researching* hard-to-find material, and *researching* information just published. (Repeating *researching* causes wordiness.)

*Better:* My editor is good at *researching* background facts, hard-to-find material, and information just published. (Statement is more concise and still clear.)

When you write a paragraph, especially one of comparison/contrast, repeating parallel structures can help you develop the main idea. You may use parallel structure in all or in only some sentences of your paragraph. Study the examples of parallel structure in the following paragraph.

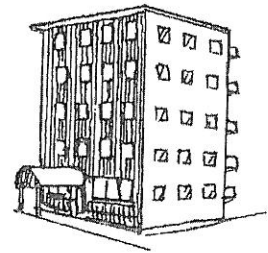
There are several differences between living in an apartment *and* living in a house. One difference is privacy. Living in a house offers a person more privacy than living in an apartment does. Another difference is maintenance. Living in a house



(continued)



requires the tenant to make all repairs and upkeep, *but living in an apartment* puts responsibility for upkeep on the landlord. A third difference is cost. *Not only is living in a house* usually more expensive than *living in an apartment* in terms of rent, *but it also* costs more to furnish *and to keep up* a house than it does an apartment.



Editing

### Exercise 9

Edit the following sentences, adding or eliminating repetition, to improve the parallel structure.

1. The lawyers were relieved to learn that Mr. Owens, the former executive director, had come, that he had signed the agreement, and had left without incident.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. They had presented a list of issues, possible resolution, and deadline which were all acceptable to their client.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Mr. Owens went to his attorney's office, and Mr. Owens made an appointment for both himself and his wife.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. His wife is amazing—look at the way she handles the responsibility of home, the responsibility of work, and the responsibility of volunteering amid all this turmoil.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Mr. Owens told us that he couldn't come to next week's board meeting and he had reasons he couldn't come to next week's board meeting.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Mr. Owens lost the respect of the board, not because he wasn't working hard but his employees weren't.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Exercise 10

Read the following excerpts from famous speeches, noting the underlined structures. Locate the nine errors in parallelism and correct them by rewriting the structures, adding or deleting words as necessary.

1. Patrick Henry to the Second Virginia Convention on March 23, 1775:

"... Sir, we have done everything that could be done to avert the storm that is now coming on. We have petitioned; we remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the Ministry and Parliament.

... The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. I know not what course others may take, but as for me—give me liberty or you can give me death!"

2. Abraham Lincoln at the dedication of a cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on November 19, 1863:

"... We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live.... But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, this ground cannot be hallowed by us... It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us ... that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God will have a new birth of freedom, and government of the people, by the people, and for people shall not perish from the earth."

3. John F. Kennedy at his inauguration in Washington, D.C., on January 20, 1961:

"We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom.... Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate.

Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us. Let both sides seek to invoke the wonders of science instead of its terrors.... The energy, the faith, devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it, and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you are able to do for the country."

4. Robert F. Kennedy at a rally informing the audience that Martin Luther King, Jr., had been assassinated on April 4, 1968:

"... What we need in the United States is not division; what we need in the United States is not hatred; what the United States needs is not violence or lawlessness; but love and wisdom, and compassion toward one another, and a feeling of justice toward those who still suffer within our country, whether they be white or they are black."

However, overuse of short sentences is considered poor style in academic writing.

Choppy sentences are easy to correct. Just combine two or three short sentences to make one compound or complex sentence. Your decision to make a compound or a complex sentence should be based on whether the ideas in the short sentences are equal or whether one idea is dependent on the other.

1. If the sentences express equal ideas, use coordination to combine them.

CHOPPY SENTENCES

Wind is an enduring source of power. Water is also an unlimited energy source. Dams produce hydraulic power. They have existed for a long time. Windmills are relatively new.

CORRECTED

Both wind and water are enduring sources of power. Dams have produced hydraulic power for a long time, but windmills are relatively new.

2. If the sentences express unequal ideas, that is, if one sentence expresses a less important idea than the other, use subordination to combine them.

CHOPPY SENTENCES

We must find new sources of energy. Natural sources of energy are decreasing. Solar energy is a promising new source of energy. Solar energy is energy from the sun.

CORRECTED

We must find new sources of energy because natural sources of energy are dwindling. Solar energy, which is energy from the sun, is a promising new source.

### PRACTICE 3

#### Rewriting Choppy Sentences

Improve the following choppy sentences by combining them.

- Step 1** Decide what the relationship between the sentences is.

- Do they express equal ideas? If yes, write a compound sentence. Both sentences present the main idea.

Similar or equal idea	and
Negative equal idea	nor
Opposite idea	but
Alternative possibility	or
Surprising continuation	yet
Expected result	so
Reason	for

- Is one idea more important than another idea? If yes, go on to Steps 2 and 3 and write a complex sentence.

- Step 2** Decide which sentence expresses the most important idea. This will be the independent clause.

- Step 3** Then decide what the relationship of other sentences to the main idea is and choose a subordinator that expresses that relationship.

Time	when, after, as soon as, and so on
Reason	because, since, or as
Contrast	although, whereas, and so on
Descriptive information	who, which, that, and so on

The first one has been done for you as an example. As you can see from the example, there may be more than one way to combine the sentences.

1. (a) Gasoline became expensive. (b) Automobile manufacturers began to produce smaller cars. (c) Smaller cars use less gasoline.

Equal / Not equal?

Main idea?

Sentence (b)

Relationships:

Sentence (a) could be time (when) or reason (because). Sentence (c) could be reason (because) or descriptive information (which).

Combined sentence:

When gasoline became more expensive, automobile manufacturers began to produce smaller cars because they use less gasoline.

OR

Because gasoline became more expensive, automobile manufacturers began to produce smaller cars, which use less gasoline.

2. (a) Electric cars are powered solely by batteries. (b) The new hybrid vehicles switch between electricity and gasoline.

Equal / Not equal?

Main idea?

Relationship:

Combined sentence:

3. (a) Government and private agencies have spent billions of dollars advertising the dangers of smoking. (b) The number of smokers is still increasing.

Equal / Not equal?

Main idea?

Relationship:

Combined sentence:

4. (a) Some students go to a vocational school to learn a trade. (b) Some students go to college to earn a degree.

Equal / Not equal?

Main idea?

Relationship:

Combined sentence:

STRINGY SENTENCE

Many students attend classes all morning, and then they work all afternoon, and they also have to study at night, so they are usually exhausted by the weekend.

CORRECTED

Many students attend classes all morning and work all afternoon. Since they also have to study at night, they are usually exhausted by the weekend.

OR

Because many students attend classes all morning, work all afternoon, and study at night, they are usually exhausted by the weekend.

### PRACTICE 5

#### Stringy Sentences

Improve these stringy sentences.

1. He enrolled in an intermediate calculus class, but he found it too easy, so he dropped it, and he signed up for the advanced class.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. First-born children in a family often have more responsibility than their younger siblings, and they feel pressure to set a good example, so they often become superachievers.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Last-born children, on the other hand, often have little responsibility, and they may be pampered as the "baby" of the family, but they are the smallest, and they have to get people to like them, so they often develop superior social skills.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The students in my engineering class could not do the homework, so we got together and worked for several hours, and we finally solved all the problems.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The lack of rainfall has caused a severe water shortage, so people have to conserve water every day, and they also have to think of new ways to reuse water, but the situation is improving.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Review

These are the important points covered in this chapter.

### 1. Parallelism

Two or more items joined by coordinating conjunctions and paired conjunctions must be parallel in structure. The same is true of contrasts and comparisons of items. If the first item is a noun, make all others nouns; if it is a phrase, make all the others phrases; if it is a clause, make all the others clauses.

**Not Parallel**

Taking a class on a pass/fail basis is sometimes better than to get a grade of C.

My grandmother not only speaks four languages but also she understands six others.

**Parallel**

Taking a class on a pass/fail basis is sometimes better than getting a grade of C.

My grandmother not only speaks four languages but also understands six others.

**2. Sentence Problems**

The main kinds of problem sentences that students may write are fragments, run-ons, comma splices, choppy, and stringy sentences.

**Fragments** are incomplete sentences.

**Fragment**

The subject I enjoyed the most in high school.

**Corrected**

The subject I enjoyed the most in high school was physics.

**Run-ons and comma splices** are incorrectly joined independent clauses.

**Run-On**

Getting married is easy staying married is another matter.

**Corrected**

Getting married is easy, but staying married is another matter.

OR

**Comma Splice**

Getting married is easy, staying married is another matter.

Although getting married is easy, staying married is another matter.

**Choppy sentences** are sentences that are too short.

**Choppy**

My family left our homeland. Then we lived in a refugee camp. We lived there for several months. Then we got our documents. We traveled to Canada. We live there now.

**Corrected**

After my family left our homeland, we lived in a refugee camp for several months. As soon as we got our documents, we traveled to Canada, where we live now.

**Stringy sentences** are sentences with too many independent clauses.

**Stringy**

My family left our homeland, and we lived in a refugee camp for several months, but finally we got our documents, so we traveled to Canada, and we live there now.

**Corrected**

After my family left our homeland, we lived in a refugee camp for several months. As soon as we got our documents, we traveled to Canada, where we live now.



## Punctuation Rules

Using correct punctuation is important because punctuation conveys meaning just as words do. Consider these two sentences:

Eat children.

Eat, children.

Both sentences are commands, but the first sentence would be correct only in a society of cannibals!<sup>1</sup> Learn and practice the rules of punctuation until you are confident about using them correctly.

### Commas<sup>2</sup>

**Commas** are sometimes troublesome to learners of English because they are used differently in other languages. There are many comma rules in English, but you may remember them more easily if you realize that they can be organized into just four main groups: **introducers**, **coordinators**, **inserters**, and **tags**. Each group of commas relates to independent clauses in a particular way, except the coordinator group. Coordinator commas link not just independent clauses but *any* coordinate (equal) elements in a sentence.

Study the examples for each comma group, and notice the kinds of elements that can be introducers, coordinators, inserters, and tags.

#### Introducer Commas

An introducer comma follows any element that comes in front of the first independent clause in a sentence.

WORDS	Therefore, I plan to quit smoking. Nervously, I threw away my cigarettes.
PHRASES	As a result, I feel terrible right now. After 16 years of smoking, it is not easy to quit. Having smoked for 16 years, I find it difficult to quit.
DEPENDENT CLAUSES	Because I have a chronic cough, my doctor recommended that I quit immediately.
DIRECT QUOTATIONS	"Stop smoking today," she advised.

<sup>1</sup>cannibals: people who eat human flesh

<sup>2</sup>Thanks to Anne Katz of ARC Associates, Oakland, California, for permission to adapt her presentation of comma rules.

**Coordinator Commas**

Together with a coordinating conjunction, a comma links coordinate (equal) elements in a sentence.

COMPOUND SENTENCE WITH  
2 INDEPENDENT CLAUSES:

She has a good job, yet she is always broke.  
They were tired, so they went home early.

SERIES OF 3 OR MORE  
WORDS

He does not enjoy skiing, ice-skating, or sledding.  
Cecille speaks English, Spanish, French, and Creole.  
(No comma with only two items: Chen speaks Mandarin and Taiwanese.)

SERIES OF 3 OR MORE  
PHRASES

A nurse has to work at night, on weekends, and on holidays.  
We ran into the airport, checked our luggage, raced to the boarding gate,  
gave the attendant our boarding passes, and collapsed in our seats.

**Insertor Commas**

An insertor comma is used before and after any element that is inserted into the middle of an independent clause.

WORDS

My uncle, however, refuses to quit smoking.

PHRASES

My father, on the other hand, has never smoked.  
There is no point in living, according to my uncle, if you do not do what  
you enjoy.

NONRESTRICTIVE PHRASES  
AND CLAUSES

My aunt, his wife, died of lung cancer.  
My cousins, grieving over their mother's death, resolved never to smoke.  
My mother, who just celebrated her fiftieth birthday, enjoys an occasional  
cigarette.

REPORTING VERBS IN  
DIRECT QUOTATIONS:

"I have tried to quit dozens of times," she says, "but I can't."

**Tag Commas**

A tag comma is used when adding certain elements to the end of a sentence.

WORDS

My uncle believes in drinking a daily glass of wine, too.<sup>3</sup>  
He appears to be in good health, however.

PHRASES

He swims for an hour every day, for example.  
He also plays tennis, beating me most of the time.

TAG QUESTIONS

It is not logical, is it?

DIRECT QUOTATIONS

He laughs as he says, "I will outlive all of you."

**PRACTICE 1****Using Commas**

**Step 1** Add commas wherever they are necessary. (Not all sentences need them, and some sentences need more than one.)

**Step 2** Name the function of each comma (introducer, coordinator, insertor, or tag) on the line.

<sup>3</sup>Many writers do not use a comma before *too*.



The first one has been done for you as an example.

Insert

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The advertising industry, which is one of the largest industries in the United States, employs millions of people and spends billions of dollars.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. A company that wants to be successful must spend a great deal of money to advertise its products.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Advertising is essential to the free enterprise system yet it can sometimes be very annoying.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Every minute of the day and night people are exposed to ads on television on billboards in the newspapers and in magazines.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. You cannot even avoid advertising in the privacy of your own car or your own home for advertisers have begun selling their products in those places too.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. In the last few years advertising agencies have started to hire young people to hand out circulars on street corners and in parking lots.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. You can often find these circulars stuck on your windshield thrust through the open windows of your car stuffed in your mailbox or simply scattered on your front doorstep.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Because Americans are exposed to so much advertising they have become immune to it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. As a result advertisers have to make louder commercials use brighter colors and hire sexier models to catch the public's attention.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Many people object to commercials that use sex as a sales strategy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Sexy commercials that sell everything from toothpaste to automobiles seem to imply that you will become sexier if you buy the product.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Sex is used in many cigarette and liquor ads for example.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. The women in such ads are often dressed in revealing clothes and are surrounded by handsome men and the men in such ads are always extremely handsome and virile.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. As everyone knows smoking and drinking do not make you sexy or virile.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. On the contrary drinking makes you fat and smoking makes you sick.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Recently smoking was banned in most public places in the United States.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Many people opposed the law but it finally passed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Smoking is now prohibited in hospitals airports stores  
offices and restaurants.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. In many other countries however smoking is still allowed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Antismoking groups want to ban smoking in those  
countries too.

## Semicolons

Using **semicolons** is not difficult if you remember that a semicolon (;) is more like a period than a comma. It is a very strong punctuation mark. Semicolons are used in three places:

1. Between two sentences that are closely connected in idea
2. Before conjunctive adverbs and some transition phrases when they are followed by an independent clause
3. Between items in a series when the items themselves contain commas

### Between Sentences

Use a semicolon at the end of a sentence when the following sentence is closely connected in meaning. You could also use a period, but when the sentences are connected in meaning, a semicolon indicates the connection.

#### Independent clause; independent clause.

Andrew did not accept the job offer; he wants to go to graduate school.  
Computer use is increasing; computer crime is, too.  
The meeting ended at dawn; nothing had been decided.

### Before Connectors

Use a semicolon before conjunctive adverbs such as *however, therefore, nevertheless, moreover, and furthermore*. Also use a semicolon before transition phrases such as *for example, as a result, that is, or in fact* when they are followed by an independent clause.

	conjunctive adverb,	
Independent clause;	OR	independent clause.
	transition phrase,	

Skiing is dangerous; nevertheless, millions of people ski.  
I have never been to Asia; in fact, I have never been outside the country.

**Between Items in a Series**

Semicolons are used to separate items in a series when some of the items already contain commas.

I cannot decide which car I like best: the Ferrari, with its quick acceleration and sporty look; the midsize Ford Taurus, with its comfortable seats and ease of handling; or the compact Geo, with its economical fuel consumption.

**PRACTICE 2****Using Semicolons and Commas**

**A. Step 1** The following sentences need semicolons; some also need commas. Add the correct punctuation in the appropriate places.

**Step 2** On the line at the left, indicate whether the semicolon is

1. before two closely connected sentences.
2. before a conjunctive adverb or a transition phrase.
3. between items in a series if the items already contain commas.

The first one is done for you as an example.

- 2   1. Professor Smith is at a conference; however, Dr. Jones, who is the department chairman, will be glad to see you.
2. Grace works for a prestigious law firm she is their top criminal lawyer.
3. My favorite leisure-time activities are going to movies especially musicals reading novels especially stories of love and adventure listening to music both rock and classical and participating in sports particularly tennis and volleyball.
4. The future of our wild animals is uncertain for example illegal shooting and chemical poisoning threaten many birds.
5. Homework is boring therefore I never do it.
6. The freeways are always crowded during the busy rush hours nevertheless people refuse to take public transportation.
7. The Smiths' marriage should succeed they share the same interests.
8. Hoping that he would pass the course he stayed up all night studying for the final exam unfortunately he overslept and missed the test.
9. In general I enjoy my English class the amount of homework our teacher assigns is definitely not enjoyable however.
10. If you are a college student, an average day is filled with challenges: you have to avoid running into Professor Jones whose class you missed because you overslept you have to race across the campus at high speed to reach your next class which is always at the other side of the campus and you have to secretly prepare your homework assignment during class hoping all the time that the teacher will not catch you.

B. Punctuate the following sentences by adding semicolons and commas. Use semicolons wherever possible.

1. My bus was late therefore I missed my first class.
2. The politician was discovered accepting bribes as a result his political career was ruined.
3. My father never cries in fact he never shows any emotion at all,
4. The restaurant was closed consequently we went home to eat.
5. Some people feel that grades are unnecessary on the other hand some people feel that grades motivate students.
6. Technology is changing our lives in harmful ways for example the computer is replacing human contact.
7. The computer dehumanizes business nevertheless it has some real advantages,
8. Writing essays is easy it just takes a little practice.
9. North Americans love pets every family seems to have at least one dog or cat.
10. The life expectancy of North Americans is increasing for example the life expectancy of a person born in 2000 was 77.2 years which is an increase of almost 30 years since 1900.
11. Your proposal is a good one however I do not completely agree with your final suggestion.
12. Efficiency is a highly prized quality among North Americans it has almost attained the status of a moral attribute.

C. Write one original sentence for each of the three rules for using semicolons.

1. Between closely connected sentences  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Before conjunctive adverbs and some transition phrases  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Between items in a series  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Colons

Using a colon at the end of an independent clause focuses attention on the words following the colon. After a colon, we often write lists, appositives, and direct quotations.

### Before Lists

Use a colon to introduce a list.

Libraries have two kinds of periodicals: bound periodicals and current periodicals.

I need the following groceries: eggs, milk, and coffee.

The causes of the U.S. Civil War were as follows: the economic domination of the North, the slavery issue, and the issue of states' rights versus federal intervention.

**Caution**

1. Do not use a colon to introduce a list after the verb *to be* unless you add *the following* or *as follows*.

INCORRECT

To me, the most important things in life are: good health, a happy home life, and a satisfying occupation.

CORRECT

To me, the most important things in life **are** good health, a happy home life, and a satisfying occupation.

CORRECT

To me, the most important things in life **are the following**: good health, a happy home life, and a satisfying occupation.

2. Do not use a colon after a preposition. Use a colon only at the end of an independent clause.

INCORRECT

After a long day at work, I look forward to: enjoying a quiet dinner at home, playing with my children, and watching a little TV.

CORRECT

After a long day at work, I look forward to enjoying a quiet dinner at home, playing with my children, and watching a little TV.

**Before Appositives**

Use a colon after an independent clause to direct attention to an appositive (a word or word group that renames another word or word group).

He had one great love in his life: himself.

A doctor has two important abilities: the ability to listen and the ability to analyze.

**Before Long Quotations**

Use a colon to introduce a quotation longer than three lines. This type of quote is indented on both sides, and no quotation marks are used.

As Albert C. Baugh and Thomas Cable state in their book *The History of the English Language*:

There is no such thing as uniformity in language. Not only does the speech of one community differ from that of another, but the speech of different individuals of a single community, even different members of the same family, is marked by individual peculiarities.

**Before Subtitles**

Use a colon between the main title and the subtitle of a book, article, or play.

A popular book on nonverbal communication is Samovar and Porter's *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*.

The title of an article from the *New York Times* is "Man on Mars: Dream or Reality?"

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**In Expressions of Time or Day**

Use a colon between the numbers for hours and minutes when indicating the time of day.

Helen left the class at 12:30.

Their plane arrived at 1:40 a.m., six hours late.

**After Formal Salutations**

Use a colon after the salutation of a formal letter.

Dear Professor Einstein:

Dear Customer Relations:

Dear Ms. Smith:

To Whom It May Concern:

In informal letters, use a comma.

Dear Mom,

Dear Mark,

**PRACTICE 3****Using  
Punctuation  
Marks**

A. Add commas, semicolons, and colons to the following.

1. The library offers many special services the Student Learning Center where students can receive individual tutoring special classes where they can improve their math reading writing and computer skills and group study rooms where they can meet with classmates to discuss assignments.
2. Dear Dr. Patterson  
Dear Jacob  
Dear Mr. Carter
3. To check a book out of the library you should follow this procedure Write down the call number of the book find the book take it to the circulation desk fill out the card and show your student I.D.
4. The principal sources of air pollution in our cities are factories airplanes and automobiles.
5. I have a dental appointment at 330 today. Please pick me up at 300.

B. Write a sentence in which you list two pieces of advice that you have received from someone older, such as your parents or a teacher. Use a colon to direct attention to them.

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C. Write the title and subtitle of the following book correctly. Remember to underline the full title.

TITLE	SUBTITLE
Paris	A Visitor's Guide to Restaurants



## Quotation Marks

Quotation marks (" . ") have three basic uses: to enclose direct quotations, to enclose unusual words, and to enclose titles of short works.

### Around Direct Quotations

Use quotation marks around a direct quotation that is shorter than three lines. A direct quotation states the *exact* words of a speaker and is usually introduced by a reporting phrase such as *he said* or *as the report stated*.

Punctuation with quotation marks can be a little tricky. Here are some rules to follow:

1. Separate a quoted sentence from a reporting phrase with a comma.

The receptionist said, "The doctor is unavailable right now. Please wait."

"We have already been waiting for an hour," we answered.

2. Periods and commas go inside the second quotation mark of a pair.

"I thought he was responsible," he said, "but he isn't."

3. Colons and semicolons go outside quotation marks.

"Give me liberty or give me death": these are famous words.

4. Exclamation points (!) and question marks (?) go inside quotation marks if they are a part of the quotation; otherwise, they go outside.

"Is it eight o'clock?" she asked.

Did she say, "It is eight o'clock"?

5. Begin each quoted sentence with a capital letter. When a quoted sentence is divided into two parts, the second part begins with a lowercase letter unless it is a new sentence.

"I thought he was responsible," he said, "but he isn't."

"I think he is responsible," he said. "Look at his fine work."

6. Use single quotation marks ( ' . ' ) to enclose a quotation within a quotation.

As John F. Kennedy reminded us, "We should never forget the words of Martin Luther King, Jr., who said, 'I have a dream.'"

### Around Unusual Words

Use quotation marks around words with an unusual, especially ironic, meanings.

The "banquet" consisted of hot dogs and soft drinks.

The little girl proudly showed her "masterpiece": a crayon drawing of a flower.

**Around Titles of Short Works**

Use quotation marks around the titles of articles from periodical journals, magazines, and newspapers; chapters of books; short stories; poems; and songs.

In the article "The Future of Manned Space Travel," published in the July 19, 2004, issue of *Space*, the authors explore the problems of a manned flight to Mars.

The *Times* of London recently published an article entitled "Who Needs the Monarchy?" in which the relevancy of the English monarchy was discussed.

*Note:* Underline or *italicize* titles of books, journals, magazines, newspapers, and movies.

**PRACTICE 4****Using Quotation Marks**

Write five sentences about any article in a newspaper or magazine that you enjoy reading. Include a quotation, the name of the newspaper or magazine, and the title of the article in each sentence. (For practice in using quotation marks, see Chapter 3, Practice 2, page 46.)

**Editing Practice**

Add punctuation to the following paragraphs.

**Aging**

- <sup>1</sup> People are more likely to live long enough to get old in wealthy countries than in poor countries.<sup>2</sup> In rich countries people have nutritious food modern medical care good sanitation and clean drinking water but poor countries lack these things.<sup>3</sup> As a result the mortality rate especially infant mortality is very high.
- <sup>4</sup> Citizens of Ethiopia and Yemen which are two of the world's poorest countries have an average life expectancy of 35–39 years.<sup>5</sup> Citizens of Japan Hong Kong Singapore Australia Iceland and Sweden in contrast have an average life span of more than 80 years.<sup>6</sup> Japan has the highest Yemen has the lowest.<sup>7</sup> One exception is Saudi Arabia one of the world's wealthiest nations.<sup>8</sup> Having an average life expectancy of 45–49 years Saudi Arabians live about as long as Bangladeshis and Cambodians.<sup>9</sup> Surprisingly the United States is not among the highest rated nations having an average life expectancy of only 77 years.
- <sup>2</sup> <sup>10</sup> Compared to other mammals humans have a relatively long life span.
- <sup>11</sup> The average life span of elephants is 70 years of dogs 18 years of cats 14 years and of horses 20 years.<sup>12</sup> The life spans of other species are as follows eagles parrots and owls 60 years parakeets 12 years guppies 5 years and box tortoises 100 years.<sup>13</sup> Some plants such as trees live much longer than animals.
- <sup>14</sup> Redwood trees for example live more than 3,000 years and bristlecone pine trees can live over 4,000 years.



3     <sup>15</sup>The life expectancy of people who live in industrialized societies is increasing rapidly in fact it has doubled in the past hundred years. <sup>16</sup>When comparing males and females one finds that women generally live longer than men. <sup>17</sup>The oldest person in the world until recently was a French woman Jeanne Calment. <sup>18</sup>At her death Madame Calment was both blind and deaf but had not lost her sharp wit for which she had become quite famous. <sup>19</sup>Asked what kind of future she expected she replied A very short one. <sup>20</sup>Bragging about her smooth skin she said I've only had one wrinkle in my life and I'm sitting on it.



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## 17.3 Common Sentence Problems and Challenges

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If your writing contains errors in sentence structure, it is difficult for readers to understand your ideas clearly. This section addresses the most common types of sentence-structure errors: run-on sentences, comma splices, fragments, and punctuation.

### 17.3.1 Run-on (Fused) Sentences and Comma Splices

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#### Run-on Sentence

It is easy to mistakenly connect two sentences when you add sentence variety to your paragraphs, especially in the form of compound and complex sentences. If you don't add a connector or punctuation correctly, the result can be a run-on, or fused, sentence. Here are two simple ways to fix run-ons:

1. Separate the two independent clauses with a period. Do this if the sentence is too long or if the clauses are not closely related.

*Incorrect:* We need to make a decision soon our choices are to either refinance our mortgage or take out a home equity loan. (sentence too long)

*Correction:* We need to make a decision soon. Our choices are to either refinance our mortgage or take out a home equity loan.

*Incorrect:* We need to make a decision soon the Stones have decided to refinance their mortgage. (clauses unrelated)

*Correction:* We need to make a decision soon. The Stones have decided to refinance their mortgage.

2. Separate the two independent clauses with a semicolon. Do this if the sentences are not too long or if they are closely related.

*Incorrect:* A fifteen-year mortgage will mean high monthly rates a thirty-year mortgage will lower the monthly mortgage payment.

*Correction:* A fifteen-year mortgage will mean high monthly rates; a thirty-year mortgage will lower the monthly mortgage payment.

3. Connect the two independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction.

*Incorrect:* A fifteen-year mortgage will mean high monthly rates a thirty-year mortgage will lower the monthly mortgage payment

*Correction:* A fifteen-year mortgage will mean high monthly rates, **but** a thirty-year mortgage will lower the monthly mortgage payment.

### Comma Splice

Another problem is connecting two sentences with only a comma. This type of error is called a comma splice.

*Incorrect:* An adjustable rate mortgage is one option, a fixed rate mortgage is another.

To fix a comma splice, connect the two sentences with some type of connector. Common connectors include coordinating conjunctions (such as *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*), subordinating conjunctions (such as *because*, *although*, *when*), and adverbial conjunctions, or transitions, (such as *however*, *therefore*, *consequently*). (See Appendix 4, p. 299.)

An adjustable rate mortgage is one option, **and** a fixed rate mortgage is another.  
(coordinating conjunction)

An adjustable rate mortgage is one option while a fixed rate mortgage is another.  
(subordinating conjunction)

An adjustable rate mortgage is one option; **however**, a fixed rate mortgage is another. (adverbial conjunction/transition)



The punctuation in the examples changes, depending on the kind of connector.

Editing

### Exercise 4

Read each sentence. Put a C in the blank if the sentence is correct and an X if it is incorrect. On a separate sheet of paper, correct each sentence that is incorrect.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Taking a course online has some disadvantages, for example if you have a question, you can't get an immediate answer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Discussion boards are forums for posting thoughts and opinions; however, as in a classroom, you must monitor what you say in order not to offend your classmates.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Students in some online courses participate from countries all over the world and it's interesting to exchange ideas and information with them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Online courses require students to be self-disciplined it's easy to put off doing assignments.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. In some respects, online classes are similar to those held in a classroom in other respects they are very dissimilar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Assignments are graded in an online course; therefore, it is important to allow yourself enough time to do them well.


**Exercise 5** Correct run-on sentences and comma splices in the following paragraphs.

### Benefits of Baking

There are many ways to reduce stress in your life one of the best ways I have found is through baking, it takes your mind off your everyday problems and redirects your energy and you become creative and productive.

The benefits of baking include the pleasure you derive from being creative and the gratitude you receive from the people who are the recipients of your efforts. Like cookies, praise is never hard to swallow.

Baking also has a down side it often happens that once people discover that stress for you equals baked goods for them they begin to find ways to increase your stress, for example you are assigned to many committees suddenly. The solution? I have not had time to figure it out yet, I am too busy baking.

## 17.3.2 Fragments

Have you ever tried to be concise and put end punctuation after a phrase or dependent clause, creating an incomplete sentence? These incomplete sentences, known as fragments, may have a subject and a verb, but they cannot stand alone as complete thoughts or sentences.



**Important:** Fragments are considered one of the worst writing errors. Learn what fragments are and how to avoid them.

You can correct sentence fragments in two ways:

1. Connect the fragment to an independent clause.

*Incorrect:* I had a hard time getting up this morning. ~~Although I slept well last night.~~

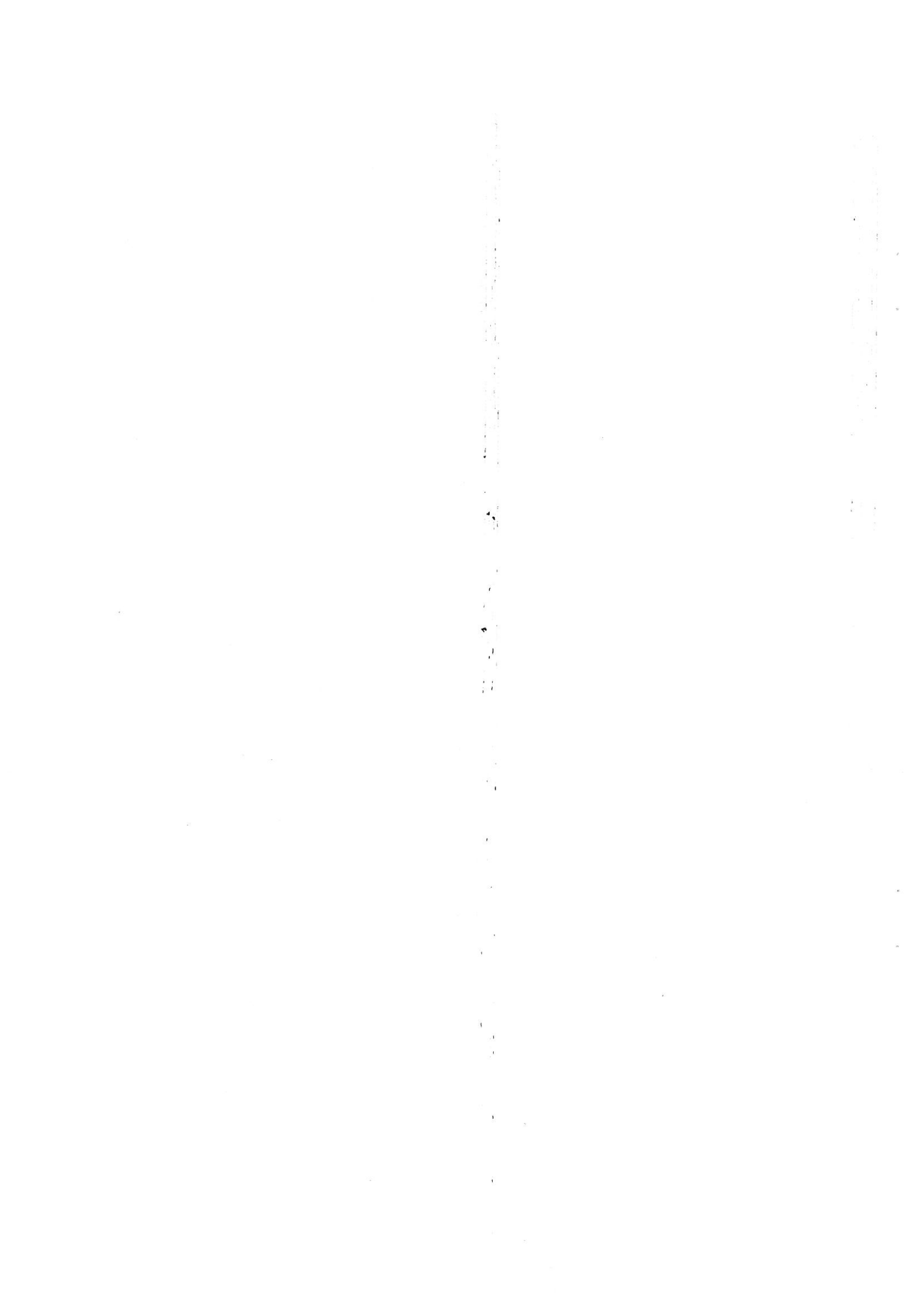
*Correction:* I had a hard time getting up this morning **although I slept well last night.**

2. Change the fragment to an independent clause.

*Incorrect:* She was born in Northwoods. ~~A small town with no stoplights on Main Street.~~

*Correction:* She was born in Northwoods. **It is a small town with no stoplights on Main Street.**





**Exercise 6**

Read the following short essay and underline the nine fragments. The first one has been done for you.

### My "To Do" List

I start off every weekend with a long "To Do" list. And lots of energy. On Friday night, I reward myself by relaxing. I might watch a movie or go out with my friends. Or even stay home and read a book.

When Saturday morning rolls around, I take advantage of the opportunity to sleep in. By noon I'm up and ready to tackle the items on my list. I do a load of laundry and then head for the grocery store. Where I spend time looking at all the luscious tropical fruits and choosing some for my Sunday breakfast.

During the late afternoon, I finish the laundry and usually discover my energy level has dropped. I'm going out later, so I take a quick nap. Although I haven't finished my chores. Suddenly, it's Sunday. Before I know it, I read the paper and enjoy a leisurely breakfast. I check my "To Do" list to see what else I can accomplish. But I'm always shocked. Here it is, mid-afternoon on a Sunday. Too late to start a new project. I might as well finish reading the paper. And think about writing a new list again next week. Where does weekend time go?

## 17.3.3 Sentence Punctuation

Sentence punctuation helps you create the meaning you want. It also tells readers how to read a sentence, so learning how to use punctuation correctly is essential. Listed here are six of the major punctuation marks that you will need to write correct sentences—period, comma, semicolon, colon, apostrophe, and quotation marks. If you want more detailed information than you find here, it is a good idea to consult an in-depth style and writing guide or grammar reference.

### 1. Period

- Indicates a full stop at the end of a sentence  
I am thinking about going to graduate school next year.
- Used at the end of an abbreviation  
Dr. Ballard has a Ph.D. in linguistics.

### 2. Comma

- Separates items in a series  
We have meat, cheese, and bread for lunch.
- Separates independent clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction  
The car needs gas, but it does not need any windshield wiper fluid.

- Separates phrases or dependent clauses before independent clauses  
Even though they have two biological daughters, they are adopting another daughter.
- Sets off non-restrictive elements  
Mr. Lantern, owner of the corner bakery, just sold his shop and retired.
- Sets off direct quotations  
"Dan," she said, "please don't forget to mail these letters."

### 3. Semicolon

- Separates two independent clauses with related information  
Joey came on Saturday; Bobby will come tomorrow.
- Separates two independent clauses connected by an adverbial conjunction or transition  
Last week they bought a plane ticket to Los Angeles; however, today they changed their minds and decided to drive there instead.
- Separates items in a list whose items contain commas  
Please be sure to bring your passport, if it is current; your inoculation card, which must be certified; and your admission letter, which needs to be stamped and signed by the school official.

### 4. Colon

- Introduces information in a list  
The cost of the trip includes the following: round trip airfare, hotel accommodations, transportation charges, and all meals.
- Introduces an explanation of the first clause  
Most of the students share a common goal: they want to improve their writing.

### 5. Apostrophe

- Indicates omissions in contracted forms  
He's coming, but we've heard that before, haven't we?
- Shows possession  
Would you please return Juan's book to him?

### 6. Quotation Marks

- Indicate the beginning and end of a direct quote  
An important leader in the American Revolution, Patrick Henry said, "Give me liberty or give me death."
- Indicate the title of a short work  
Have you ever read Franz Kafka's short story "Metamorphosis"?



**Exercise 7**

Insert correct punctuation in the sentences below and change the incorrect punctuation. When you insert a period, be sure to capitalize the first word of the next sentence. There may be more than one way to punctuate some sentences.

**Dream Analysis**

I have just finished reading an article called Living in a Dream World by Dr. Carl Young in *Psychology: It's All in Your Mind* magazine. This article explains a great deal about dreams for example it explains that all dreams are not equal in importance. Dreams that have importance will remain in a persons memory for years dreams that have little or no importance are easily forgotten.

In order to analyze one's dreams, it helps to recall the following the people, animals, or objects in the dream, the mood; the atmosphere; and any color in the dream it was surprising to discover that not all people dream in color.

Dreams and their meanings differ from person to person however, there are common themes. A dream about a bird may represent freedom a dream about insects may represent the dreamers hard work; a dream about floating down a river may refer to the passage of time in the dreamer's life.

After I finished reading the article I realized that a person's dreams are an emotional barometer of sorts that should be explored in order to learn what messages the unconscious mind is sending the conscious one.

## CHAPTER QUIZ

**Exercise 8** For each item, read the first sentence and determine whether it contains any errors. Then read the three choices and circle the letters of all the correct revisions. Be prepared to explain your answers.

1. Whenever I see an ATM, I am tempted to withdraw funds.
  - A. I see an ATM, I am tempted to withdraw funds.
  - B. Whenever I see an ATM; I am tempted to withdraw funds.
  - C. No changes
2. Harrison Loechler is a felon, he is also an identity theft specialist.
  - A. Harrison Loechler, a felon, is also an identity theft specialist.
  - B. Harrison Loechler is a felon and an identify theft specialist.
  - C. No changes
3. People need to safeguard their ATM cards and Social Security numbers. Because identity theft is becoming more widespread.
  - A. Because identity theft is becoming more widespread, people need to safeguard their ATM cards and Social Security numbers.
  - B. Because identity theft is becoming more widespread people need to safeguard their ATM cards and Social Security numbers.
  - C. No changes
4. I get nervous. Every time I buy something online.
  - A. I get nervous every time I buy something online.
  - B. Every time I buy something online; I get nervous.
  - C. No changes
5. You are the perfect person for this security job you have all the qualifications.
  - A. You are the perfect person for this security job; you have all the qualifications.
  - B. You are the perfect person for this security job, you have all the qualifications.
  - C. No changes
6. The U.S. government publishes a pamphlet to help consumers learn about the crime of identity theft. It provides detailed information to help deter, detect, and defend against identify theft.
  - A. The U.S. government publishes a pamphlet to help consumers learn about the crime of identity theft, it provides detailed information to help deter, detect, and defend against identify theft.

This chapter will help you familiarize yourself with common sentence errors so that you will know what to watch for when editing your writing. Remember, sentence errors can derail the meaning of your writing, so be careful to avoid them.

## 274 SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

The subject and verb of any clause must agree in both *person* and *number*. *Person* indicates whether the subject of the verb is *first*, *second*, or *third* person. *Number* indicates whether the subject and verb are *singular* or *plural*.

	Singular	Plural
First Person	I think	we think
Second Person	you think	you think
Third Person	he/she/it thinks	they think

- **Agreement in Number** — A verb must agree in number (singular or plural) with its subject.

The **student** was rewarded for her hard work. (Both the subject *student* and the verb *was* are singular; they agree in number.)

**Note:** Do not be confused by phrases that come between the subject and the verb. Such phrases may begin with words like *in addition to*, *as well as*, or *together with*.

The **instructor**, as well as the students, is expected to attend the orientation. (*Instructor*, not *students*, is the subject.)

- **Compound Subjects** — Compound subjects connected with *and* usually require a plural verb.

**Dedication and creativity** are trademarks of successful students.

**Note:** If a compound subject joined by *and* is thought of as a unit, use a singular verb.

**Macaroni and cheese** is always available in the cafeteria.

- **Delayed Subjects** — Delayed subjects occur when the verb comes *before* the subject in a sen-

tence. In these inverted sentences, the true (delayed) subject must still agree with the verb.

There **are** many nontraditional **students** on our campus. Here **is** the **syllabus** you need. (*Students* and *syllabus* are the subjects of these sentences, not the expletives *there* and *here*.)

**Note:** Using an inverted sentence, on occasion, will lend variety to your writing style. Simply remember to make the delayed subjects agree with the verbs.

However, included among the list's topmost items **was** "**revise research paper**." (Because the true subject here is singular—one item—the singular verb *was* is correct.)

- **Titles as Subjects** — When the subject of a sentence is the title of a work of art, literature, or music, the verb should be singular. This is also true of a word (or phrase) being used as a word (or phrase).

**Lyrical Ballads** was published in 1798 by two of England's greatest poets, Wordsworth and Coleridge. (Even though the title of the book, *Lyrical Ballads*, is plural in form, it is still a single title being used as the subject, correctly taking the singular verb *was*.)

"Over-the-counter drugs" is a phrase that means nonprescription medications. (Even though the phrase is plural in form, it is still a single phrase being used as the subject, correctly taking the singular verb *is*.)

- **Singular Subjects with Or or Nor** — Singular subjects joined by *or* or *nor* take a singular verb.

Neither a **textbook** nor a **notebook** is required for this class.

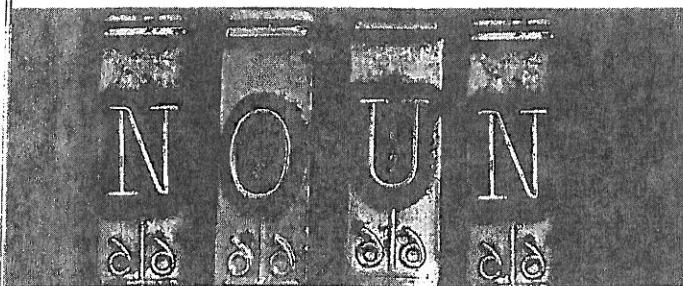
**Note:** When the subject nearer a present-tense verb is the singular pronoun *I* or *you*, the correct singular verb does not end in *s*.

Neither **Marcus** nor **I** feel (not *feels*) right about this.

Either **Rosa** or **you** have (not *has*) to take notes for me.

Either **you** or **Rosa** has to take notes for me.

- **Singular/Plural Subjects** — When one of the subjects joined by *or* or *nor* is singular and one is plural, the verb must agree with the subject nearer the verb.



Neither the **professor** nor her **students** **were** in the lab. (The plural subject *students* is nearer the verb; therefore, the plural verb *were* agrees with *students*.)

Neither the **students** nor the **professor** **was** in the lab. (The singular subject *professor* is nearer the verb; therefore, the singular verb *was* is used to agree with *professor*.)

- ▶ **Collective Nouns** — Generally, **collective nouns** (*faculty, pair, crew, assembly, congress, species, crowd, army, team, committee*, and so on) take a singular verb. However, if you want to emphasize differences among individuals in the group or are referring to the group as individuals, you can use a plural verb.

My lab **team** **takes** its work very seriously. (*Team* refers to the group as a unit; it requires a singular verb, *takes*.)

The **team** **assume** separate responsibilities for each study they undertake. (In this example, *team* refers to individuals within the group; it requires a plural verb, *assume*.)

**Note:** Collective nouns such as (the) *police, poor, elderly*, and *young* use plural verbs.

The **police** direct traffic here between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m.

- ▶ **Plural Nouns with Singular Meaning** — Some nouns that are plural in form but singular in meaning take a singular verb: *mumps, measles, news, mathematics, economics, robotics*, and so on.

**Economics** **is** sometimes called "the dismal science."

The economic **news** **is** not very good.

**Note:** The most common exceptions are *scissors, trousers, tidings*, and *pliers*.

The **scissors** **are** missing again.

**Are** these **trousers** prewashed?

- ▶ **With Linking Verbs** — When a sentence contains a linking verb (usually a form of *be*)—and a noun or pronoun comes before and after that verb—the verb must agree with the subject, not the predicate nominative (the noun or pronoun coming after the verb).

The cause of his problem **was** poor study habits. (*Cause* requires a singular verb, even though the predicate nominative, *habits*, is plural.)

His poor study habits **were** the cause of his problem. (*Habits* requires a plural verb, even though the predicate nominative, *cause*, is singular.)

- ▶ **Nouns Showing Measurement, Time, and Money** — Mathematical phrases and phrases that name a period of time, a unit of measurement, or an amount of money take a singular verb.

Three and three **is** six.

Eight pages **is** a long paper on this topic.

In my opinion, two dollars **is** a high price for a cup of coffee.

- ▶ **Relative Pronouns** — When a **relative pronoun** (*who, which, that*) is used as the subject of a dependent clause, the number of the verb is determined by that pronoun's antecedent. (The *antecedent* is the word to which the pronoun refers.)

This is one of the **books** **that are** required for English class. (The relative pronoun *that* requires the plural verb *are* because its antecedent is *books*, not the word *one*. To test this type of sentence for agreement, read the *of* phrase first: *Of the books that are . . .*)

**Note:** Generally, the antecedent is the nearest noun or pronoun to the relative pronoun and is often the object of a preposition. Sometimes, however, the antecedent is not the nearest noun or pronoun, especially in sentences with the phrase "the only one of."

Dr. Graciosa wondered why Claire was the only **one** of her students **who was** not attending lectures regularly. (In this case, the addition of the modifiers *the only* changes the meaning of the sentence. The antecedent of *who* is *one*, not *students*. Only one student was not attending.)

- ▶ **Indefinite Pronoun with Singular Verbs** — Many indefinite pronouns (*someone, somebody, something, anyone, anybody, anything, no one*,

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*nobody, nothing; everyone, everybody, everything; each, either; neither, one, this*) serving as subjects require a singular verb.

**Everybody** is welcome to attend the chancellor's reception.

**No one** was sent an invitation.

**Note:** Although it may seem to indicate more than one, *each* is a singular pronoun and requires a singular verb. Do not be confused by words or phrases that come between the indefinite pronoun and the verb.

**Each** of the new students **is** (not *are*) encouraged to attend the reception.

- ▶ **Indefinite Pronouns with Plural Verbs** — Some indefinite pronouns (*both, few, many, most, and several*) are plural; they require a plural verb.

**Few** are offered the opportunity to study abroad.

**Most** take advantage of opportunities closer to home.

- ▶ **Indefinite Pronouns or Quantity Words with Singular/Plural Verbs** — Some indefinite pronouns or quantity words (*all, any, most, part, half, none, and some*) may be either singular or plural, depending on the nouns they refer to. Look inside the prepositional phrase to see what the antecedent is.

**Some** of the students **were** missing. (*Students*, the noun that *some* refers to, is plural; therefore, the pronoun *some* is considered plural, and the plural verb *were* is used to agree with it.)

**Most** of the lecture **was** over by the time we arrived. (Because *lecture* is singular, *most* is also singular, requiring the singular verb *was*.)

## PRONOUN-ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT

A pronoun must agree in number, person, and gender (sex) with its antecedent. The antecedent is the word to which the pronoun refers.

**Yoshi** brought **his** laptop and iPad to school. (The pronoun *his* refers to the antecedent *Yoshi*. Both the pronoun and

its antecedent are singular, third person, and masculine; therefore, the pronoun is said to agree with its antecedent.)

- ▶ **Singular Pronoun** — Use a singular pronoun to refer to such antecedents as *each, either, neither, one, anyone, anybody, everyone, everybody, somebody, another, nobody, and a person*.

**Each** of the maintenance vehicles has **their** doors locked at night. (Incorrect)

**Each** of the maintenance vehicles has **its** doors locked at night. (Correct: Both *Each* and *its* are singular.)

**Somebody** left **his or her** (not *their*) vehicle unlocked. (Correct)

- ▶ **Plural Pronoun** — When a plural pronoun (*they, their*) is mistakenly used with a singular indefinite pronoun (such as *everyone* or *everybody*), you may correct the sentence by replacing *their* or *they* with optional pronouns (*her* or *his* or *he* or *she*) or by making the antecedent plural.

**Everyone** must learn to wait **their** turn. (Incorrect)

**Everyone** must learn to wait **her or his** turn. (Correct: Optional pronouns *her* or *his* are used.)

**People** must learn to wait **their** turns. (Correct: The singular antecedent, *Everyone*, is changed to the plural antecedent, *People*.)

- ▶ **Two or More Antecedents** — When two or more antecedents are joined by *and*, they are considered plural.

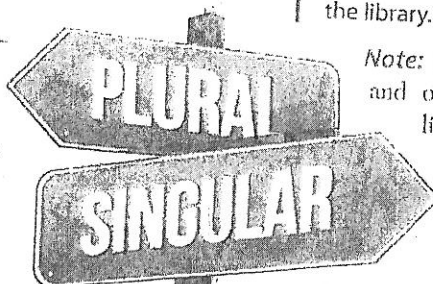
**Tomas and Jamal** are finishing **their** assignments.

When two or more singular antecedents are joined by *or* or *nor*, they are considered singular.

**Connie or Shavonn** left **her** headset in the library.

**Note:** If one of the antecedents is masculine and one feminine, the pronouns should likewise be masculine and feminine.

**Is Ahmad or Phyllis** bringing **his or her** laptop?



*Note:* If one of the antecedents joined by *or* or *nor* is singular and one is plural, the pronoun is made to agree with the nearer antecedent.

Neither Ravi nor **his friends** want to spend **their** time studying.

Neither **his friends** nor Ravi wants to spend his time studying.

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## SHIFTS IN SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

A shift is an improper change in structure midway through a sentence. The following examples will help you identify and fix several different kinds of shifts.

- ▶ **Shift in Person** — **Shift in person** is mixing first, second, or third person within a sentence.

*Shift:* **One** may get spring fever unless **you** live in California or Florida. (The sentence shifts from third person, *one*, to second person, *you*.)

*Corrected:* **You** may get spring fever unless **you** live in California or Florida. (Stays in second person)

*Corrected:* **People** may get spring fever unless **they** live in California or Florida. (*People*, a third person plural noun, requires a third person plural pronoun, *they*.)

- ▶ **Shift in Tense** — **Shift in tense** is using more than one tense in a sentence when only one is needed.

*Shift:* Sheila **looked** at nine apartments in one weekend before she **had chosen** one. (Tense shifts from past to past perfect for no reason.)

*Corrected:* Sheila **looked** at nine apartments in one weekend before she **chose** one. (Tense stays in past.)

- ▶ **Shift in Voice** — **Shift in voice** is mixing active with passive voice. Usually, a sentence beginning in active voice should remain so to the end.

*Shift:* As you look (active voice) for just the right place, many interesting apartments **will probably be seen**. (passive voice)

*Corrected:* As you look (active voice) for just the right place, **you will probably see** (active voice) many interesting apartments.

- ▶ **Unparallel Construction** — **Unparallel construction** occurs when the kind of words or phrases being used shifts or changes in the middle of a sentence.

*Shift:* In my hometown, people pass the time shooting pool, fishing, and at softball games. (Sentence shifts from a series of gerund phrases, *shooting pool* and *fishing*, to the prepositional phrase *at softball games*.)

*Parallel:* In my hometown, people pass the time **shooting pool, fishing, and playing softball**. (Now all three activities are gerund phrases—they are consistent, or parallel.)



## Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers

A **misplaced modifier** is a word, phrase, or clause that is improperly separated from the word or clause it modifies or describes. Because of this separation, the meaning of the sentence is often awkward, ridiculous, illogical, or confusing.

Example 1: On her way home, Jan found a **gold** man's watch.

Correction: On her way home, Jan found a man's gold watch.

Example 2: The dealer sold the Cadillac to the buyer **with leather seats**.

Correction: The dealer sold the Cadillac with the leather seats to the buyer.

Example 3: The waiter served a dinner roll to the woman **that was well buttered**.

Correction: The waiter served a dinner roll that was well buttered to the woman.

A **dangling modifier** is a phrase or clause that is not clearly and logically related to the word or words it modifies or describes. Often, they can be found at the beginning of sentences, but they are found at the end of sentences too. Dangling modifiers often include an -ing word (a gerund) or a to + verb (infinitive) phrase. Unlike misplaced modifiers, dangling modifiers cannot be fixed simply by moving it to a different place in the sentence. Either the sentence or the dangling modifier must be changed by adding needed information or rearranging the structure of one of the phrases or clauses.

Example 1: **Looking towards the west**, a tornado stirred up dust and debris.

Correction: **Looking towards the west**, I saw that a tornado stirred up dust and debris.

Example 2: **When nine years old**, my father enrolled in medical school.

Correction: **When I was nine years old**, my father enrolled in medical school.

Example 3: **Having been fixed the night before**, Tatiana could use the car.

Correction: **Since the car had been fixed the night before**, Tatiana could use it.

Directions: In the blank beside each sentence, indicate whether the sentence is a dangling modifier (DM) or a misplaced modifier (MM). Rewrite each sentence correctly and check the answers using the answer key below. Make sure to have a writing consultant check your rewritten sentences to ensure their correctness.

1. The truck on the bridge which is green is mine. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Expecting confusion, our plans were made. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Feeling hot, sweaters were taken off. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I showed my cat to the veterinarian with the fleas. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Bob told me he was getting married that afternoon at night. \_\_\_\_\_

6. This typewriter is used by a staff member with a wide carriage. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Swimming out into the sea, the current grew stronger. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Walking along the shore, a cruise ship suddenly appeared. \_\_\_\_\_
9. The Mazda was stalled on the highway out of gas. \_\_\_\_\_
10. He kept a tiny black book of all the women he had dated in his desk. \_\_\_\_\_
11. Upon entering the room, the messages are easily seen. \_\_\_\_\_
12. While at the amusement park, the sun shone brightly on all the tourists. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Landon should jump at whatever is demanded quickly. \_\_\_\_\_
14. Jodi kept all her medicine in the medicine cabinet that had been prescribed to her. \_\_\_\_\_
15. When only a toddler, Dad took me scuba diving. \_\_\_\_\_

Answers:

- |       |       |        |        |
|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| 1. MM | 5. MM | 9. MM  | 13. MM |
| 2. DM | 6. MM | 10. MM | 14. MM |
| 3. DM | 7. DM | 11. DM | 15. DM |
| 4. MM | 8. DM | 12. DM |        |



## Misplaced Modifier Worksheet

Directions: Write "C" if the modifier is correctly placed; write "MM" if it is misplaced. In the "MM" sentences, rewrite the sentences correctly.

1. The woman was stopped for speeding in the green sweater.
2. I almost saw the whole movie, but I fell asleep towards the end of it.
3. Daniel promised to mow the lawn running out the door.
4. The names were those of the lovers carved on the tree.
5. There are only three spaces left in the parking lot.
6. Every two hours the nurse told him to take a pill.
7. Sitting on the porch, I took my last sip of lemonade.
8. The man walked toward us wearing a black fedora hat.
9. The plane crashed into a mountain carrying 200 passengers.
10. I hardly ate any food at the banquet dinner.
11. I watched the mechanic fix the bus with intrigue.
12. I earn a thousand dollars a month scarcely.
13. Reaching into the cabinet, I found the bag of chips.
14. We borrowed a leaf blower from a neighbor that was broken.

15. Climbing up a tree, Maria saw a squirrel.
16. Kevin, running quickly, disappeared around the corner.
17. The dog was rescued after the house was set on fire by a fireman.
18. We've almost found all the pieces of the shattered vase.
19. She vowed on her birthday to go skydiving.
20. We need gas badly.

## Dangling Modifier Worksheet

Directions: Draw a line under the dangling modifier in each of the following sentences.

1. Driving in heavy L.A. traffic, my head started to pound.
2. Fishing for bass, our boat flipped over.
3. Crossing the border, my car was searched.
4. Searching my wallet, my missing credit card was found.
5. A shovel was used, digging the hole.

Directions: Write "DM" if a dangling modifier is present or "C" if the sentence is correct.

- \_\_\_ 1. Chasing his brother, Ryan fell and bruised his knee.
- \_\_\_ 2. Feeling nervous, stomachs were queasy.
- \_\_\_ 3. Running scared, the bear climbed the tree.
- \_\_\_ 4. Laughing hysterically, the story was repeated.
- \_\_\_ 5. Slipping on the wet pavement, her leg was broken.

Answers:

1. C    2. DM    3. C    4. DM    5. C

Directions: All of the following sentences have dangling modifiers. Rewrite each sentence correctly in the space provided below. Because answers will vary, have a writing consultant check your answers.

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1. Reaching the finals, the game was won by the Lions.

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2. Playing skillfully, a touchdown was made by the visiting team.

---

3. Raising his hand, the question was answered by Thomas.

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4. Planting tomatoes, her knees got filthy.

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5. Speaking for the committee, the issue was raised by Victoria.

---

# **Paragraph Writing**



**MODEL****Paragraph  
Structure****Gold**

<sup>1</sup>Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. <sup>2</sup>First of all, gold has a lustrous<sup>1</sup> beauty that is resistant to corrosion.<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. <sup>4</sup>Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. <sup>5</sup>For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished<sup>3</sup> today as the day it was made 25 centuries ago. <sup>6</sup>Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. <sup>7</sup>For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications, such as photography and dentistry. <sup>8</sup>The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits. <sup>9</sup>Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection when they go outside spaceships in space. <sup>10</sup>In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.

**Writing Technique Questions**

1. What is the topic of the paragraph?
2. What two main points does the writer make about the topic?
3. In which two sentences does the writer say that there are two main points?
4. What examples does the writer use to support each point?

## The Three Parts of a Paragraph

All paragraphs have a **topic sentence** and **supporting sentences**, and some paragraphs also have a **concluding sentence**.

The **topic sentence** states the main idea of the paragraph. It not only names the topic of the paragraph, but it also limits the topic to one specific area that can be discussed completely in the space of a single paragraph. The part of the topic sentence that announces the specific area to be discussed is called the **controlling idea**. Notice how the topic sentence of the model states both the topic and the controlling idea:

TOPIC  
Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics.  
CONTROLLING IDEA

**Supporting sentences** develop the topic sentence. That is, they explain or prove the topic sentence by giving more information about it. Following are some of the supporting sentences that explain the topic sentence about gold.

First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion.

For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was made 25 centuries ago.

Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science.

The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits.

<sup>1</sup>lustrous: glowing

<sup>2</sup>corrosion: chemical damage

<sup>3</sup>untarnished: unchanged in color

The **concluding sentence** signals the end of the paragraph and leaves the reader with important points to remember:

In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.

Concluding sentences are customary for stand-alone paragraphs. However, paragraphs that are parts of a longer piece of writing usually do not need concluding sentences.

## The Topic Sentence

Every good paragraph has a topic sentence, which clearly states the topic and the controlling idea of the paragraph.

A topic sentence is the most important sentence in a paragraph. It briefly indicates what the paragraph is going to discuss. For this reason, the topic sentence is a helpful guide to both the writer and the reader. The writer can see what information to include (and what information to exclude). The reader can see what the paragraph is going to be about and is therefore better prepared to understand it. For example, in the model paragraph on gold, the topic sentence alerts the reader to look for *two* characteristics.

Here are three important points to remember about a topic sentence.

1. A topic sentence is a complete sentence; that is, it contains at least one subject and one verb. The following are *not* complete sentences because they do not have verbs:

Driving on freeways.

How to register for college classes.

The rise of indie films.<sup>1</sup>

2. A topic sentence contains both a topic and a controlling idea. It names the topic and then limits the topic to a specific area to be discussed in the space of a single paragraph.

TOPIC CONTROLLING IDEA  
 Driving on freeways requires skill and alertness.

TOPIC CONTROLLING IDEA  
 Registering for college classes can be a frustrating experience for new students.

TOPIC CONTROLLING IDEA  
 The rise of indie films is due to several factors.

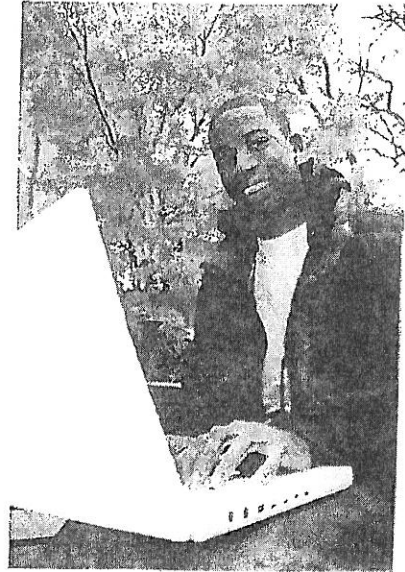
<sup>1</sup>indie films: independent films; films not made in or by Hollywood studios



## Student Use of Computers

Computers are excellent machines to help students.

Before computers, students had to do their schoolwork on typewriters. Typewriters did not allow students to make major changes easily, so they had to use special correction fluid to fix mistakes. Today computers let students move information around without retyping it and correct errors with little effort. Computers also make research more convenient for students. For example, before computers, students had to go to the library. Many times, they would read for four or five hours in several sources before finding useful information. However, students can now use the Internet from their home to obtain the information that they need much more quickly. Some computers are very expensive. My friend bought a computer that cost almost three thousand dollars. Computers have certainly made students' lives much easier.



a fluid: a liquid  
 fix: to repair  
 let: to allow, permit

effort: hard work, trying  
 obtain: to get, take

1. The general topic of the paragraph is how computers help students. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence? If so, write it here.

Computers are excellent machines to help students.

2. Are all the sentences related to the topic? If not, write the unrelated sentences here.

Some computers are very expensive.

My friend bought a computer that cost almost three thousand dollars.

3. Is the first line indented? yes
4. What is the concluding sentence?

Computers have certainly made students' lives much easier.

## EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 6

### Simón Bolívar

Simón Bolívar (1783–1830) was one of South America's greatest generals and one of the most powerful people in world political history. In Spanish, Simón Bolívar is often called *El Libertador*, which means "The Liberator." Spanish is the **main** language in at least twenty-two countries. This **nickname** is a very good one because his planning and military actions helped to gain independence from Spain for six countries: Bolivia (1809), Colombia (1819), Ecuador (1820), Panama (1821), Peru (1821), and Venezuela (1811). In fact, Bolivia is named for Bolívar, making him one of the few people to have a country named for him. These six countries are **approximately** the same size as modern Europe, so the independence of such a large area was an amazing military and political **feat**. **Although** Bolívar's name is not as well-known outside Latin America, people there remember him as perhaps the most important person in their history.



**main:** principal, the most important

**a nickname:** a short name that people use in place of a longer name

**approximately:** about, more or less

**a feat:** an accomplishment

**although:** contrast between two ideas; but

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the paragraph have a topic sentence? If so, write it here. If not, create one here.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Are all the sentences related to the topic? If not, write the unrelated sentences here. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

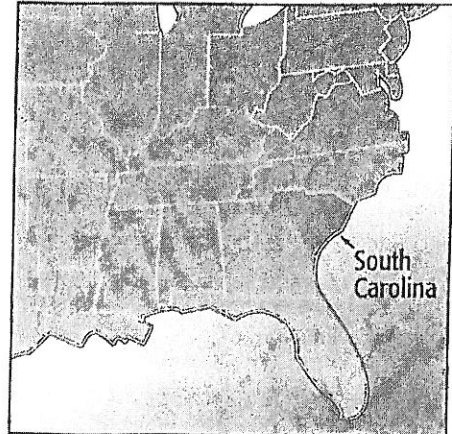
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Is the first line indented? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Underline the concluding sentence.

### The State of South Carolina

First, it is valuable for its industries. South Carolina factories **manufacture** **textiles** and many chemical products. In addition, two of its most important cash crops are **cotton** and **tobacco**. The second reason **involves** American history. Many important **battles** of the American Revolution were fought in South Carolina. Almost one hundred years later, on December 20, 1860, it became the first state to leave the Union. Four months later, the Civil War between the North and South began in Charleston, a **port** in South Carolina. The products and history of South Carolina make it **distinct** from the other states.



**manufacture:** to make, produce

**textiles:** cloth for clothing

**a crop:** a plant that is grown for money

**cotton:** a white fiber that is used to make clothing

**tobacco:** a plant that is used to make cigarettes and cigars

**involve:** to have to do with, be connected with

**a battle:** a fight in a war

**fought:** past participle form of the verb *fight*

**a port:** a city on the coast

**distinct:** different, unique

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the paragraph have a topic sentence? If so, write it here. If not, create one here.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Are all the sentences related to the topic? If not, write the unrelated sentences here. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Is the first line indented? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Underline the concluding sentence.

### Jim Thorpe's Final Victory

Jim Thorpe is a controversial sports figure in sports history. He won Olympic gold medals in 1912, but he was not allowed to keep them. In the 1912 Olympics, Thorpe won both the pentathlon (five events) and decathlon (ten events). However, a month later, the U.S. Olympic Committee took away his medals because Thorpe had played baseball for money. An athlete who takes money for sports is called a *professional*, and at that time, professional athletes were not allowed to take part in any Olympic Games. In 1982, the U.S. Olympic Committee reversed this ruling. Seventy years after his achievements, Thorpe's name was finally returned to the list of 1912 Olympic winners.



both: two

take part in: to participate in

reverse: to change to the opposite position

a ruling: a decision, especially one that is made by a judge or court

an achievement: something special that a person is able to accomplish or do

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_

Does the paragraph have a topic sentence? If so, write it here. If not, create one here.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Are all the sentences related to the topic? If not, write the unrelated sentences here. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Is the first line indented? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Underline the concluding sentence. What time phrases in the concluding sentence make the sentence sound like the ending of the paragraph?

\_\_\_\_\_

1. Which one of these ideas tells the purpose of this paragraph? Put a check mark (✓) next to the correct answer.

- ☐ a. to talk about the different kinds of manual transmissions
- ☐ b. to explain what a manual transmission is
- ☐ c. to tell why a manual transmission is better than an automatic transmission
- ☐ d. to describe how a manual transmission interacts with the brakes in a vehicle

2. What is the topic sentence in this paragraph? Underline the topic sentence.

3. If you underlined the first sentence, you are correct. The first sentence states the purpose clearly—to tell about the advantages of having a manual transmission car.

4. A good paragraph has clear organization. This paragraph lists three benefits of a manual transmission. What are they?

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5. The following expressions are important to the organization of the paragraph. What does each one mean?

a. first of all

---

b. in addition to

---

c. finally

---

6. Do you prefer driving a vehicle with a manual transmission or one with an automatic transmission? Why?

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## ACTIVITY 2 Recognizing Effective Topic Sentences

What do you already know about topic sentences? Read each set of sentences. Write the general topic that the sentences share. Then put a check mark (✓) on the line next to the best topic sentence. Be prepared to explain your answers. The first one has been done for you.

1. General Topic: Winter

- ☐ Winter is a good season.
- ☐ Winter weather is cold, and it snows.
- ☒ The best season for kids is winter.

2. General Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Soccer is popular for many reasons.
- ☐ You need a leather ball to play soccer.
- ☐ Soccer is a nice game.

3. General Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ There are many people in Los Angeles.
- ☐ People from many different cultures live in Los Angeles.
- ☐ Los Angeles is a big city in California.

4. General Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Monolingual dictionaries have only one language, but bilingual dictionaries have two languages.
- ☐ Many language students prefer bilingual dictionaries to monolingual dictionaries.
- ☐ Dictionaries that have two languages, such as French and English, are called bilingual dictionaries.

5. General Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ French perfumes are expensive for a number of reasons.
- ☐ My mother's perfume smells flowery.
- ☐ You can purchase perfumes in expensive blue crystal bottles.

6. General Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ *An American Education* has 946 pages.
- ☐ A woman graduates in *An American Education*.
- ☐ *An American Education* is an excellent historical novel.

How did you decide which sentences were the best topic sentences? What were you looking for? Discuss your ideas with your classmates.



For more practice with recognizing effective topic sentences, try Unit 3, Activity 1 on the *Great Writing 2* Web site: [elt.heinle.com/greatwriting](http://elt.heinle.com/greatwriting)

## Features of a Good Topic Sentence

A good topic sentence has the following features:

- It controls or guides the whole paragraph. When you read the topic sentence, you know what to expect in the paragraph.
- A good topic sentence is not a general fact that everyone accepts as true. For example, a bad topic sentence would be, "Libraries have books." The information in this sentence is true, but it is a general fact and is not a good choice for a topic sentence.
- A good topic sentence is specific. "Tea is delicious" is not a good topic sentence because the information in the sentence is too general. The reader does not know what to expect in the paragraph. If you want to write a paragraph about tea, make your topic sentence more specific, such as "Green tea has many health benefits."
- However, a good topic sentence is not too specific. "This monolingual dictionary contains more than 42,000 words" limits the topic too much—there is nothing else for the writer to say. (Can you imagine what the sentence after this would say? Or the third sentence of the paragraph? No, you cannot because there is really nothing else to add.)
- A good topic sentence has controlling ideas—words or phrases that help guide the flow of ideas in the paragraph.

## Controlling Ideas

Here are some example topic sentences with controlling ideas. The controlling ideas have been underlined.



1. The best season for kids is winter.

*Explanation:* The reader expects the paragraph to give reasons and examples why winter is the best season for children.

2. Soccer is popular for many reasons.

*Explanation:* The reader expects the paragraph to give a variety of information about soccer and why it is popular around the world.



3. People from many different cultures live in Los Angeles.

*Explanation:* The reader expects the paragraph to include information about various groups of people who make up the population of Los Angeles.

4. Many language students prefer bilingual dictionaries to monolingual dictionaries.

*Explanation:* The reader expects the paragraph to explain why this statement is true.

### ACTIVITY 3 Recognizing Controlling Ideas in Topic Sentences

Read the following topic sentences. The main idea for each sentence has been circled. Underline the controlling idea. Then explain what information you expect to find in the paragraph.

1. The SAT Reasoning Test™ contains three distinct sections that deal with three important skills.

*Explanation:*

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2. The shocking crash of a 747 jumbo jet off the coast of New York baffled investigators.

*Explanation:*

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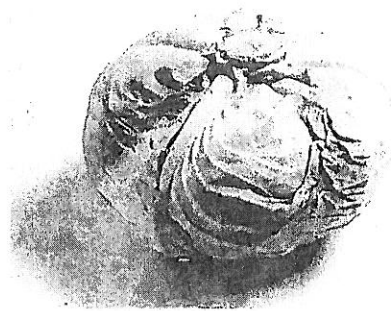
3. Crossword puzzles are not only educational and fun but also addictive.

*Explanation:*

---

---

4. Recent research has confirmed that eating dark green, leafy vegetables, such as broccoli and cabbage, may reduce the risk of some types of cancer.





*Explanation:*

5. Although buying a house may seem appealing, renting an apartment has many advantages.

*Explanation:*



## Building Better Sentences

Correct and varied sentence structure is essential to the quality of your writing. For further practice with the sentences and paragraphs in this part of the unit, go to Practice 4 on page 253 in Appendix I.

### ACTIVITY 4 More Practice Recognizing Controlling Ideas

*Read the sentences in each item. Put a check mark (✓) next to the best topic sentence. Underline the controlling ideas in that sentence. Be prepared to explain your answers.*

1. ☐ Most of the girls in the class get higher grades in Spanish than the boys.  
☐ Research has shown that girls are better at languages than boys.  
☐ Many students like languages very much.
2. ☐ Cats are better pets than goldfish for many reasons.  
☐ Cats and goldfish are both animals.  
☐ Cats cannot swim very well, but goldfish can.
3. ☐ Yesterday I did not have lunch with my coworkers.  
☐ Yesterday I went to work late.  
☐ Yesterday was the worst day of my life.



#### EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 17

3. \_\_\_\_\_

First, your body will look better. Exercise is perfect for staying trim and healthy-looking, and it does not have to take a long time. Second, you will actually have more energy. A person who exercises will have fewer problems walking up stairs or climbing hills. In addition, your heart will be healthier. A good, strong heart is necessary for a long, healthy life. Finally, exercise reduces stress and keeps your mind in shape. Therefore, if you want to improve your overall health, exercise is an excellent way to accomplish your goal.



#### EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 18

4. \_\_\_\_\_

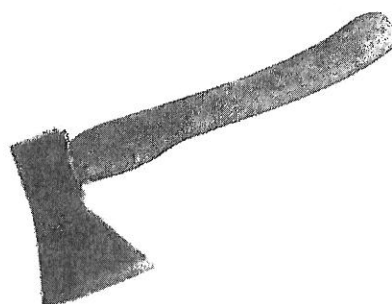
It is without a doubt one of the easiest foods to eat. You do not need any special utensils, and it does not have to be served piping hot like some foods do. In addition, with only 20 calories per cup and almost no fat, it is both a filling and a heart-friendly snack. Furthermore, it can be an important source of natural fiber, a substance that has been shown to be important in limiting certain types of cancer. Based on this information, can anyone be surprised that sales of popcorn are soaring in many countries?

(This one is more difficult than the others. Good luck!)

#### EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 19

5. \_\_\_\_\_

In this method, learners form their own sound association between the foreign language word they are trying to learn and any word in their native language. In the second stage, learners form an image link between the target word and the native language word. For example, a Japanese learner of English might look at



the English word *hatchet* and connect it to the Japanese word *hachi*, which means “eight.” In this case, the learner might remember that he can use a hatchet eight times to cut down a tree. An English speaker learning Spanish might remember the word *trigo* (“wheat”) by using the English words *tree* and *go* because they sound like the Spanish word *trigo*. For some people, this particular method is effective.



For more practice with writing topic sentences, try Unit 3, Activity 5 and Activity 6 on the *Great Writing 2* Web site: [elt.heinle.com/greatwriting](http://elt.heinle.com/greatwriting)

### Writer's Note

#### Keeping a Journal for New Ideas

If you do not have a good topic for your paragraph, then it is very difficult to write a solid, interesting topic sentence. Many students say, “I don’t know what to write about.” A good source for ideas is a personal journal. A journal is a notebook in which you write ideas about any topic you want. If you do not know what to write, then write what you did today or how you are feeling about an experience. Every now and then, you should read your previous journal entries; you may be surprised to find many good ideas for paragraphs.

## ACTIVITY 7 Identifying Supporting Sentences

Sometimes writers give too much information about the topic. When this happens, the paragraph does not read smoothly, and the reader might get confused about the writer's meaning.

*In this activity, do the following for each paragraph:*

- Read the paragraph.
- For each of the underlined, numbered sentences, write good supporting sentence or unrelated sentence on the corresponding lines below the paragraph.
- Write reasons for your choices. (One sentence in each paragraph is unrelated to the topic.)

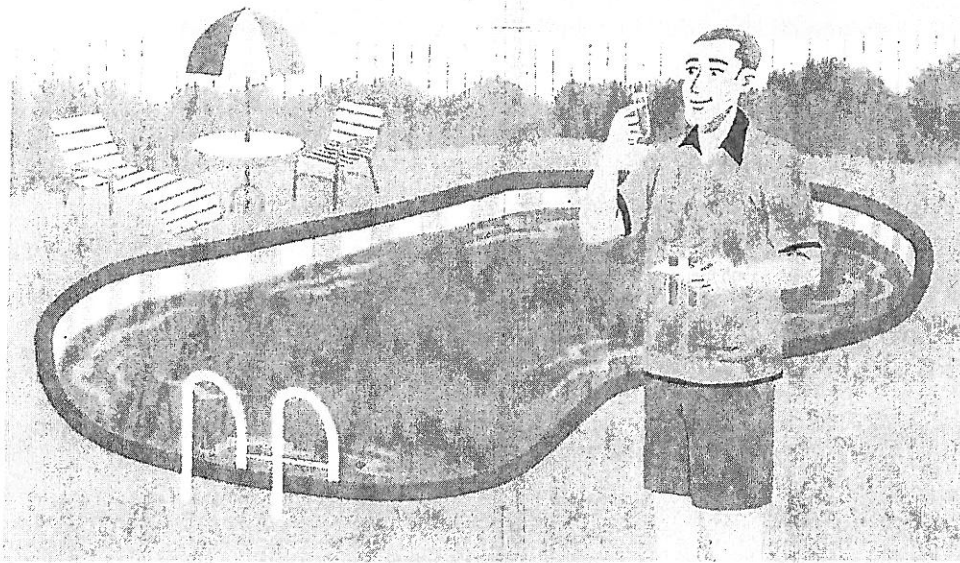
*Remember: All the supporting sentences must be related to the topic sentence. The first paragraph has been done for you.*

### EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 24

#### Rules of Childhood

Fortunately, my parents were very strict with me when I was a child. I think that they were protective because I was an only child. However, at that time, it felt like I was in prison. I had to come straight home after school and immediately do my homework. (1) After I finished my homework, I was allowed to watch only one hour of television. While my friends were playing video games or watching cartoons, I was usually doing chores around the house to help my mother. (2) This included doing some of the laundry and ironing, mowing the lawn, and helping to prepare dinner. (3) My father was an architect, and my mother was a housewife. Looking back, I am not sorry that my parents were strict with me because I benefited from all the hard work.

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <u>good supporting sentence</u> | <u>It is an example of why the writer felt he or she was in prison.</u>  |
| 2. <u>good supporting sentence</u> | <u>It is a list of the chores the writer had to do around the house.</u>   |
| 3. <u>unrelated sentence</u>       | <u>The writer's parents' occupations are not related to how the writer was treated.</u><br><u>There is no relationship between being an architect and being a strict parent.</u> |



### Maintaining Your Pool

Swimming pools can be beautiful, but they need to be maintained every day. First, you must check the amount of chlorine in a swimming pool. (1) If there is not enough chlorine, the pool might begin to grow algae. In addition, you must check the pH level, especially after a rainstorm. Certain chemicals can be added to make sure that the pH level of the pool water is balanced. (2) If you accidentally swallow some of these chemicals, you have to go to the doctor at once. (3) Finally, you should remove any leaves and small insects that are in the pool. By doing all these things, you can be certain that your pool will last a very long time.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Kinds of Concluding Sentences

There are many different kinds of concluding sentences: restatement, suggestion, opinion, prediction.

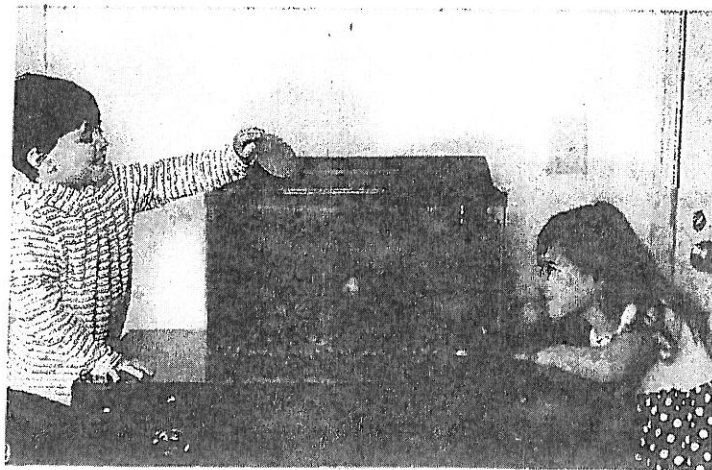
### Restate the Main Idea

Perhaps the easiest concluding sentence to write is one that restates the main idea or summarizes the main points of the paragraph.

#### Examples:

- (Example Paragraph 4, pages 10–11) “In brief, although many children want a pet, parents are divided on this issue for a number of significant reasons.”

The information in this concluding sentence is very similar to the topic sentence: *At some point, most parents have to decide whether or not to allow their children to have pets.* In addition, the concluding sentence includes the phrase “a number of significant reasons” because the paragraph includes several reasons for allowing or not allowing children to have pets.



- (Example Paragraph 5, page 13) “Computers have certainly made students’ lives much easier.”

This concluding sentence also restates the idea of the topic sentence: *Computers are excellent machines to help students.* The examples in the paragraph show how computers help students in their schoolwork, and the concluding sentence emphasizes this fact.

### Offer a Suggestion, Give an Opinion, or Make a Prediction

A concluding statement can offer a suggestion, give an opinion, or make a prediction. Sometimes a concluding statement does a combination of these options.

#### Examples:

- (Example Paragraph 15, page 51) “Whatever the reasons, I think sports cars are here to stay.”

The writer makes a prediction about the topic of the paragraph (sports cars).

- (Example Paragraph 25, page 72) “By doing all these things, you can be certain that your pool will last a very long time.”

In this paragraph, the writer makes a prediction about your pool if you follow the suggestions in the topic sentence—*Swimming pools can be beautiful, but they need to be maintained every day.* Here the writer makes a prediction that is based upon a suggestion.

## Analyzing and Writing Concluding Sentences

In this section, you will analyze paragraphs. You will also write concluding sentences and revise them if necessary.

### ACTIVITY 9 Paragraph Analysis

*In this activity, do the following for each paragraph:*

- *Read the paragraph.*
- *Underline the topic sentence and write TS above it.*
- *Circle any sentence that is not a good supporting sentence based on the controlling ideas in the topic sentence.*
- *Write a concluding sentence on the lines provided.*

#### EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 27

##### College Adjustments

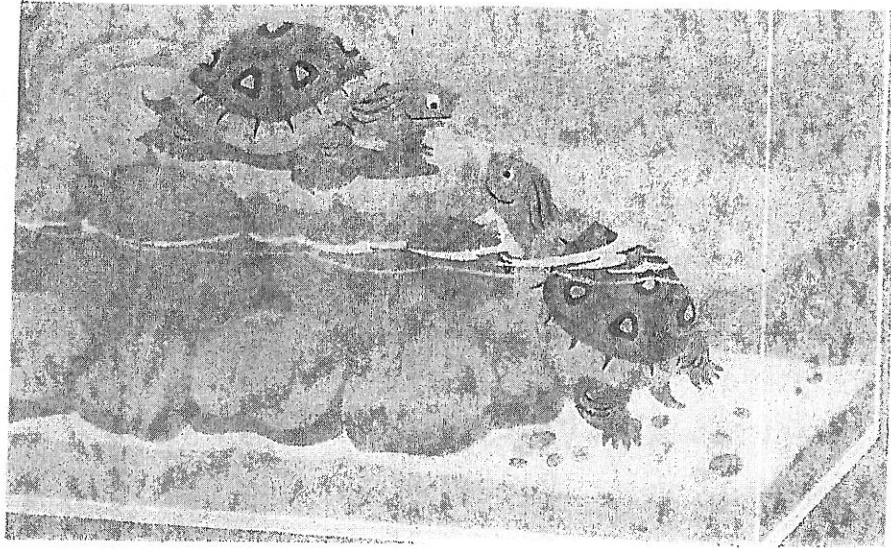
When I first started going to college, I was surprised at all the studying that was required. In high school, I hardly ever studied, but my grades were fairly good. At the university, it seemed that all my professors gave me mountains of homework every night. They all thought that their class was the most important! I could not watch TV anymore because I had to read pages and pages of information. As a result, my nights out with my friends became limited. In fact, I went out only on Saturday nights. It was a huge change from high school, where I used to go out every other night.

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### River Turtles

Caring for river turtles is easier than many people think. You do not need a lot of equipment. In fact, all you need is a large aquarium, some rocks, sand, and a little bit of vegetation. After you buy the equipment, arrange all the items inside the aquarium. Remember to make sure that your river turtles have an area for swimming. If you have a large turtle, you will need to construct a small pond in your backyard. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Different Ways to Cook Eggs

There are four easy ways to prepare a delicious egg. Some people believe that brown eggs taste better than white eggs. The first and probably the easiest way is to boil an egg. Just drop the egg into a pot of water and boil it for five minutes. Another easy way is to scramble an egg. All you need is a fork to beat the egg mixture before you put it into the hot frying pan. A third way is to fry an egg "over easy." This involves breaking the egg into the skillet without breaking the yolk. After a few moments, take a spatula and turn the egg over to cook on the other side. Finally, poaching an egg involves cooking the egg in a small dish that is sitting in boiling water. Break the egg into a small metal cup that is sitting in a pan of very hot, shallow water. Poaching an egg takes only four to five minutes.



**boil:** to heat water to 212° Fahrenheit (100° Celsius)

**scramble:** to mix, blend

**a mixture:** the ingredients after they have been mixed together

**involve:** to include or contain as a necessary part of something

**a skillet:** a frying pan

**yolk:** the yellow part of an egg

**a spatula:** a utensil to turn or flip flat items that are being cooked

**poach:** to cook in hot water or other liquid

**shallow:** not deep



For more practice with analyzing paragraphs, try Unit 4, Activity 7 on the *Great Writing 2* Web site: [elt.heinle.com/greatwriting](http://elt.heinle.com/greatwriting)

outside the United States as an alternative, but if you write several sentences about buying drugs outside the United States, you are getting off the topic, and your paragraph will not have unity.

### PRACTICE 1

#### Unity

- A. The three paragraphs that follow all discuss the same topic. Only one of them shows unity. First read the paragraphs. Then answer these questions.
1. Which paragraph has unity?
  2. Which paragraph does not have unity because it discusses two different topics?
  3. Which paragraph does not have unity because it has sentences that are not related to the main topic?

#### Paragraph 1

##### Effects of Color

Colors create biological reactions in our bodies. These reactions, in turn, can change our behavior. In one study, prisoners were put in a pink room, and they underwent a drastic and measurable decrease in muscle strength and hostility within 2.7 seconds. In another study, athletes needing short bursts of energy were exposed to red light: Their muscle strength increased by 13.5 percent, and electrical activity in their arm muscles increased by 5.8 percent. Athletes needing more endurance for longer performances responded best when exposed to blue light. Other studies have shown that the color green is calming. Green was a sacred color to the Egyptians, representing the hope and joy of spring. It is also a sacred color to Moslems. Many mosques and religious temples throughout the world use green (the color of renewal and growth) and blue (the color of heaven) to balance heavenly peace with spiritual growth. To sum up, color influences us in many ways (Daniels 10).<sup>1</sup>

#### Paragraph 2

##### Effects of Color

Colors create biological reactions in our bodies. These reactions, in turn, can change our behavior. In one study, prisoners were put in a pink room, and they underwent a drastic and measurable decrease in muscle strength and hostility within 2.7 seconds. In another study, athletes needing short bursts of energy were exposed to red light. Their muscle strength increased by 13.5 percent, and electrical activity in their arm muscles increased by 5.8 percent. Athletes needing more endurance for longer performances responded best when exposed to blue light. Other studies have shown that the color green is calming. After London's Blackfriars Bridge was painted green, the number of suicides decreased by 34 percent. These and other studies clearly demonstrate that color affects not only our moods but our behavior as well (Daniels 10).

<sup>1</sup>Daniels, Amanda. "Curing with Color." *From House to Home* Feb./Mar. 2004: 8-10. Published by the *Marin Independent Journal*, Novato, California.

## Paragraph 3

## Effects of Color

Colors create biological reactions in our bodies. These reactions, in turn, can change our behavior. In one study, athletes needing short bursts of energy were exposed to red light. Their muscle strength increased by 13.5 percent, and electrical activity in their arm muscles increased by 5.8 percent. Athletes needing more endurance for longer performances responded best when exposed to blue light. Blue is not a good color for dinnerware, however. Food looks less appetizing when it is served on blue plates, perhaps because very few foods in nature are of that color. Other studies have shown that the color green is calming. After London's Blackfriars Bridge was painted green, the number of suicides from it decreased by 34 percent. It is clear that color affects not just our moods, but our behavior as well (Daniels 10).

- B. Both of the following paragraphs break the rule of unity because they contain one or more sentences that are off the topic.

**Step 1** Locate and underline the topic sentence of each paragraph.

**Step 2** Cross out the sentence or sentences that are off the topic.

## Paragraph 1

Adventure travel is the hot trend in the tourism industry. Ordinary people are no longer content to spend their two weeks away from the office resting on a sunny beach in Florida. More and more often, they are choosing to spend their vacations rafting down wild rivers, hiking through steamy rain forests, climbing the world's highest mountains, or crossing slippery glaciers.<sup>1</sup> People of all ages are choosing educational study tours for their vacations.

## Paragraph 2

Daredevil<sup>2</sup> sports are also becoming popular. Young people especially are increasingly willing to risk life and limb<sup>3</sup> while mountain biking, backcountry snowboarding, or high-speed skateboarding. Soccer is also popular in the United States now, although football is still more popular. One of the riskiest new sports is skysurfing, in which people jump out of airplanes with boards attached to their feet. Skysurfing rivals<sup>4</sup> skydiving and bungee jumping for the amount of thrills—and risk.

- C. Both of the following paragraphs not only have sentences that are off the topic but also discuss two or more topics.

**Step 1** Decide where each paragraph should be divided into two paragraphs. Underline the topic sentence of each.

**Step 2** Find sentence(s) that are off the topic and cross them out.

<sup>1</sup>glaciers: slowly moving rivers of ice

<sup>2</sup>daredevil: very dangerous

<sup>3</sup>life and limb: death and injury (idiom)

<sup>4</sup>rivals: competes with

## Paragraph 1

Because the Internet makes the world a smaller place, the value of having a common language is greatly increased. The question is—which language? Because the Internet grew up in the United States, the largest percentage of its content is now in English. Bill Gates, Microsoft's president, believes that English will remain valuable for a long time as a common language for international communication. His company spends \$200 million a year translating software into other languages. He says, "Unless you read English passably well, you miss out on some of the Internet experience." Someday, software may be available to instantly translate both written and spoken language so well that the need for any common language could decline. That day is decades away, however, because flawless machine translation is a very tough problem. Computer spelling checkers also exist for various languages. Software that does crude<sup>5</sup> translations already exists. It is useful if all you are trying to do is understand the general idea of something you see on your computer screen. However, if you are trying to negotiate a contract or discuss a scientific subject where details are important, machine translation is totally useless (Gates).<sup>6</sup>

## Paragraph 2

Even when you try to be polite, it is easy to do the wrong thing inadvertently<sup>7</sup> in a new culture. For example, when someone offers you food or a beverage in the United States, accept it the first time it is offered. If you say, "No, thank you" because it is polite to decline the first one or two offers in your culture, you could become very hungry and thirsty in the United States. There, a host thinks that "no" means "no" and will usually not offer again. Meals in the United States are usually more informal than meals in other countries, and the times of meals may be different. Although North Americans are usually very direct in social matters, there are a few occasions when they are not. If a North American says, "Please drop by sometime," he may or may not want you to visit him in his home. Your clue that this may not be a real invitation is the word "sometime." In some areas of the United States, people do not expect you to visit them unless you have an invitation for a specific day and time. In other areas of the United States, however, "dropping by" is a friendly, neighborly gesture. Idioms are often difficult for newcomers to understand.

## Coherence

Another element of a good paragraph is coherence. The Latin verb *cohere* means "hold together." For coherence in writing, the sentences must hold together; that is, the movement from one sentence to the next must be logical and smooth. There must be no sudden jumps. Each sentence should flow smoothly into the next one.

<sup>5</sup>crude: rough, unfinished

<sup>6</sup>Gates, Bill. "One universal language for all on the Internet." *Bill Gates: Technology*. Syndicated column, 1977.

<sup>7</sup>inadvertently: accidentally

LL



There are four ways to achieve coherence:

1. Repeat key nouns.
2. Use consistent pronouns.
3. Use transition signals to link ideas.
4. Arrange your ideas in logical order.

### Repetition of Key Nouns

The easiest way to achieve coherence is to repeat key nouns frequently in your paragraph. Read the model paragraph about gold to see how it uses this technique to smooth the flow of sentences. The key noun in this paragraph is *gold*. Circle the word *gold* and all pronouns that refer to it.

#### MODEL

#### Paragraph with Coherence

#### Gold

<sup>1</sup>Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. <sup>2</sup>First of all, gold has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion. <sup>3</sup>Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. <sup>4</sup>Gold never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. <sup>5</sup>For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was made 25 centuries ago. <sup>6</sup>Another important characteristic of gold is its usefulness to industry and science. <sup>7</sup>For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications, such as photography and dentistry. <sup>8</sup>The most recent use of gold is in astronauts' suits. <sup>9</sup>Astronauts wear gold-plated heat shields for protection when they go outside spaceships in space. <sup>10</sup>In conclusion, gold is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.

You should have circled the noun *gold* seven times, the pronoun *it* twice, and the pronoun *its* three times. (The word *it* in sentence 5 refers to *coin*, not *gold*, so you should not have circled it.)

There is no fixed rule about how often to repeat key nouns or when to substitute pronouns. You should repeat a key noun instead of using a pronoun when the meaning is not clear.

Throughout the following paragraph, the word *gold* has been replaced by pronouns, making the paragraph much less coherent.

#### MODEL

#### Paragraph without Coherence

#### Gold

Gold, a precious metal, is prized for two important characteristics. First of all, it has a lustrous beauty that is resistant to corrosion. Therefore, it is suitable for jewelry, coins, and ornamental purposes. It never needs to be polished and will remain beautiful forever. For example, a Macedonian coin remains as untarnished today as the day it was made 25 centuries ago. Another of its important characteristics is its usefulness to industry and science. For many years, it has been used in hundreds of industrial applications, such as photography and dentistry. Its most recent use is in astronauts' suits. Astronauts wear heat shields made from it for protection when they go outside spaceships in space. In conclusion, it is treasured not only for its beauty but also for its utility.

**PRACTICE 2**  
**Repetition**  
**of Key Nouns**

- A. In the following paragraph, the key noun is never repeated. Replace the pronoun *it* with the key noun *English* wherever you think doing so would make the paragraph more coherent.

**English**

<sup>1</sup>English has almost become an international language. <sup>2</sup>Except for Chinese, more people speak it than any other language. <sup>3</sup>Spanish is the official language of more countries in the world, but <sup>4</sup>more countries have it as their official or unofficial second language. <sup>5</sup>More than 70 percent of the world's mail is written in it. <sup>6</sup>It is the primary language on the Internet. <sup>7</sup>In international business, it is used more than any other language, and it is the language of airline pilots and air traffic controllers all over the world. <sup>8</sup>Moreover, although French used to be the language of diplomacy, it has displaced it throughout the world. <sup>9</sup>Therefore, unless you plan to spend your life alone on a desert island in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, it is a useful language to know.

- B. In the following passage about dolphins, replace some of the pronouns with appropriate singular or plural nouns.

**Dolphins**

<sup>1</sup>Dolphins are interesting because they display almost human behavior at times. <sup>2</sup>For example, they display the human emotions of joy and sadness. <sup>3</sup>During training, when they do something correctly, they squeal excitedly and race toward their trainer. <sup>4</sup>When they make a mistake, however, they droop<sup>1</sup> noticeably and mope<sup>2</sup> around their pool. <sup>5</sup>Furthermore, they help each other when they are in trouble. <sup>6</sup>If one is sick, it sends out a message, and others in the area swim to help it. <sup>7</sup>They push it to the surface of the water so that it can breathe. <sup>8</sup>They stay with it for days or weeks until it recovers or dies. <sup>9</sup>They have also helped trapped or lost whales navigate their way safely out to the open sea. <sup>10</sup>They are so intelligent and helpful, in fact, that the U.S. Navy is training them to become underwater bomb disposal experts.

**Key Noun**  
**Substitutes**

If you do not wish to repeat a key noun again and again, you can use synonyms or expressions with the same meaning. For example, in sentence 8 of the first paragraph about gold, the writer substituted the noun *use* as a synonym for *application* in sentence 7, thereby smoothing the flow of thought from one sentence to the next.

<sup>1</sup>droop: sink down

<sup>2</sup>mope: act depressed

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**PRACTICE 3****Key Noun  
Substitutes**

**Step 1** In the topic sentence of the following paragraph, underline the key noun that names the topic.

**Step 2** Then circle (a) repetitions of the key nouns, (b) pronouns that refer to them, and (c) synonyms that are substitutes for them. You should have a total of 10 circles: 3 circles around key nouns, 3 around pronouns, and 4 around synonyms.

**A Mardi Gras Custom**

<sup>1</sup>"Throw me something, mister," is the customary plea for a Mardi Gras "throw."<sup>2</sup>In the final days of Mardi Gras, the season of parties, parades, and revelry<sup>1</sup> that precedes the Christian period of fasting and penance<sup>2</sup> called Lent, crowds of spectators line the streets of New Orleans.<sup>3</sup>They hope to catch a Mardi Gras souvenir tossed from parading floats.<sup>4</sup>Mardi Gras organizations called "krewes" build the floats and sponsor the parades, and while cruising along parade routes, costumed krewe members throw plastic trinkets to the crowds below.<sup>5</sup>The trinkets, which are called "throws," consist of bead necklaces, coins, cups, toys, Frisbees, and figurines stamped with the krewe's symbol or the parade theme.<sup>6</sup>Mardi Gras throws are big business for the companies that supply them.<sup>7</sup>Krewe members spend an average of \$800 on them, and some spend \$2,000 or more.<sup>8</sup>By far the most treasured of the Mardi Gras mementos are gaudy bead necklaces.<sup>9</sup>Originally made of glass, they are now made of plastic (Roach).<sup>3</sup>

**Consistent  
Pronouns**

When you use pronouns, make sure that you use the same person and number throughout your paragraph. Don't change from *you* to *he* or *she* (change of person) or from *he* to *they* (change of number). Notice the changes the writer made for consistency in the following example.

Students know have  
A student who knows a few Latin and Greek roots and prefixes has an  
students do not  
advantage over a student who does not know them. They can often guess the  
students  
meaning of new words. If, for example, you know that the prefix *omni* means  
they  
"all," you have a better chance of guessing the meanings of words such as  
students know  
*omnibus*, *omnipresent*, and *omnidirectional*. Furthermore, a student who knows  
that the root *sci-* comes from *scire*, "to know," can guess that *omniscient* means  
"all-knowing."

<sup>1</sup>revelry: celebration, festivities

<sup>2</sup>penance: punishment that you accept to say that you are sorry for misbehavior

<sup>3</sup>Roach, John. "The Rich History of Mardi Gras's Cheap Trinkets." *National Geographic.com* 20 Feb. 2004. 24 Feb. 2004 <[http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/02/0220\\_040220\\_mardigras.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/02/0220_040220_mardigras.html)>.



### PRACTICE 4

#### Using Consistent Pronouns

In the following paragraph, the pronouns are not consistent. Correct them to make this paragraph more coherent.

#### Olympic Athletes

Olympic athletes must be strong both physically and mentally. First of all, if you hope to compete in an Olympic sport, you must be physically strong. Furthermore, aspiring<sup>4</sup> Olympians must train rigorously<sup>5</sup> for many years. For the most demanding sports, they train several hours a day, five or six days a week, for ten or more years. In addition to being physically strong, athletes must also be mentally tough. This means that you have to be totally dedicated to your sport, often giving up a normal school, family, and social life. Being mentally strong also means that he or she must be able to withstand the intense pressure of international competition with its accompanying media<sup>6</sup> coverage. Finally, not everyone can win a medal, so Olympians must possess the inner strength to live with defeat.

### Transition Signals

Transition signals are expressions such as *first*, *finally*, and *however*, or phrases such as *in conclusion*, *on the other hand*, and *as a result*. Other kinds of words such as subordinators (*when*, *although*), coordinators (*and*, *but*), adjectives (*another*, *additional*), and prepositions (*because of*, *in spite of*) can serve as transition signals.

Transition signals are like traffic signs; they tell your reader when to go forward, turn around, slow down, and stop. In other words, they tell your reader when you are giving a similar idea (*similarly*, *and*, *in addition*), an opposite idea (*on the other hand*, *but*, *in contrast*), an example (*for example*), a result (*therefore*, *as a result*), or a conclusion (*in conclusion*).

Transition signals give a paragraph coherence because they guide your reader from one idea to the next.

### PRACTICE 5

#### Transition Signals

Compare paragraphs 1 and 2 that follow. Which paragraph contains transition signals and is more coherent? Circle all the transition signals you can identify.

#### Paragraph 1

One difference among the world's seas and oceans is that the salinity<sup>7</sup> varies in different climate zones. The Baltic Sea in northern Europe is only one-fourth as salty as the Red Sea in the Middle East. There are reasons for this. In warm climates, water evaporates<sup>8</sup> rapidly. The concentration<sup>9</sup> of salt is greater. The surrounding land is dry and does not contribute much freshwater to dilute<sup>10</sup> the salty seawater. In cold climate zones, water evaporates slowly. The runoff created by melting snow adds a considerable amount of freshwater to dilute the saline seawater.

<sup>4</sup>aspiring: hopeful

<sup>5</sup>rigorously: strictly, without weakness

<sup>6</sup>media: radio, television, newspapers, magazines

<sup>7</sup>salinity: salt content

<sup>8</sup>evaporates: dries up

<sup>9</sup>concentration: percentage (of salt)

<sup>10</sup>dilute: reduce the concentration

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# Process Analysis Paragraphs

## Unit 7

**GOAL:** To learn how to write a process analysis paragraph

**\*Language Focus:** Transition words and chronological order

What did you do to get ready for class today? Think about what you did first, then second, and so on. Perhaps you woke up and took a shower. After that, maybe you got dressed and combed your hair. As you prepared yourself to come to class, you completed a process.

The world is full of processes. At times, you are required to describe how to do something or how something works. You can often use a **process analysis paragraph** to convey the information.

### What Is a Process Analysis Paragraph?

In a process analysis paragraph, you divide a process into separate steps. Then you list or explain the steps in chronological order—the order of events as they happen over time. Special time words or phrases allow you to tell the reader when a particular step occurs. The process analysis paragraph ends with a specific result—something that happens at the end of the process.

A process analysis paragraph

- explains a sequence or process.
- presents facts and details in chronological order.
- uses time words or phrases.
- ends with a specified result.

The best way to learn what a process analysis paragraph looks like is to read and study several examples. Even though the three paragraphs that follow are about different topics, each one is an example of a process analysis paragraph.



## ACTIVITY 1 Studying Example Process Analysis Paragraphs

Read and study these example paragraphs. Answer the questions.

### Process Analysis Paragraph 1

The topic of this paragraph is a popular Mexican dish. People have to be careful when they eat this food because it can be messy.

Before you read the paragraph, discuss these questions with your classmates.

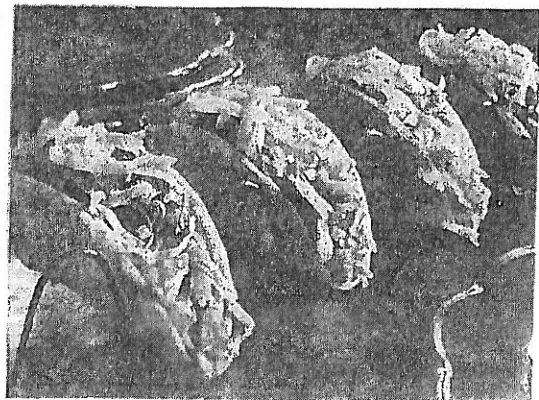
1. What are some popular Mexican food dishes? Do you know the ingredients? If so, what are they?
2. Are any of these dishes messy when you eat them? If so, what makes them messy?
3. Name a food that you have eaten that was very messy. Why was this particular food messy?

Now read the paragraph.

### EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 49

#### Eating a Messy Food

Eating a mouthwatering taco is not easy—it requires following **specific** directions. First, you must be sure that you are wearing clothes that you do not mind getting dirty. Eating a taco while you are wearing an expensive **silk** blouse is not a smart idea. The next thing that you should do is to decide if you want to eat the taco alone or in front of others. Eating a taco in front of someone you do not know very well can be **embarrassing**. It is important to plan your attack! It is a good idea to pick up the taco gently and then carefully keep it in a **horizontal** position. As you raise the taco, slowly turn your head toward it and position your head at a twenty-degree **angle**. The last step is to put the corner of the taco in your mouth and take a bite. By following these simple directions, eating a taco can be a less messy experience.



messy: not neat

a taco: a Mexican dish consisting of a corn tortilla wrapped around a mixture of meat, lettuce, tomato, cheese, and sauce

specific: exact

silk: an expensive kind of cloth made from thread produced by silkworms

embarrassing: causing a self-conscious or uncomfortable feeling

horizontal: across, from side to side (opposite of vertical)

an angle: where two lines meet

1. What is the topic sentence of this paragraph?

---

---

2. This paragraph discusses three things about eating tacos. What are they? The first one has been done for you.

a. Do not wear expensive clothes because you might spill something on them.

---

b.

---

---

c.

---

---

3. Do you think that the writer's tone in this paragraph is serious, angry, or humorous?

\_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

---

4. Is there anything that should be added?

---

---

### **Process Analysis Paragraph 2**

The next paragraph is about the steps involved in applying to an American university.

*Before you read the paragraph, discuss these questions with your classmates.*

1. What are the steps in applying to a university?
2. What are the steps in applying to a community college?
3. Have you ever applied to a school online? How does this experience compare with applying to a school on a paper application?

*Now read the paragraph on the next page.*

### Applying to an American University

Although the process for applying to an American university is not **complicated**, it is important to follow each step. The first step is to choose several schools that you are interested in attending. Next, write to these schools to ask for information, **catalogs**, and applications. You may also want to visit the schools' **Web sites**. After you have researched several schools, **narrow** your list to between three and five schools. Then mail all the required forms and documents only to your final list of three to five schools. If the school of your choice requires you to take a standardized test, such as the **SAT™**, **ACT**, or **TOEFL®**, be sure to do so early. In addition, ask various school officials and teachers to write letters of recommendation for you if the university requires them. Finally, almost all schools have an application fee. This fee should be sent in the form of a check or money order. One last piece of advice is to start early because thousands of high school students are all applying at the same time.

**complicated:** difficult, complex

**a catalog:** an information booklet

**a Web site:** a location of information on the World Wide Web ("www")

**research:** to investigate

**narrow:** to limit, reduce

**the SAT:** a college entrance exam used in many American colleges and universities

**the ACT:** American College Test

**the TOEFL:** Test of English as a Foreign Language

**a fee:** a required payment

1. What is the topic sentence of this paragraph?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the author's main suggestion for a successful application process?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Does the paragraph explain the difference between the ACT, the SAT, and the TOEFL? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
4. According to the information in this paragraph, how many steps are there in applying to an American university? \_\_\_\_ Which step has two parts? \_\_\_\_ Write them here.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you think that the writer's tone in this paragraph is serious, angry, or humorous? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why? \_\_\_\_\_

### Process Analysis Paragraph 3

Like "Eating a Messy Food," this paragraph is about a kind of food, but it tells how to make the food instead of how to eat it. It describes how to make a Turkish beverage.

*Before you read the paragraph, discuss these questions with your classmates.*

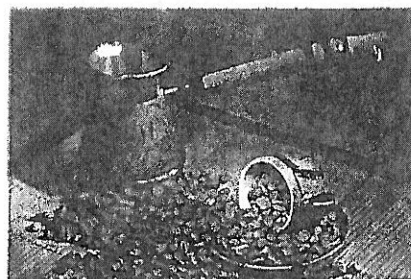
1. What are some popular beverages? Are they served hot or cold? Are they easy or difficult to prepare?
2. Have you ever visited Turkey? What information do you know about this country?
3. Can you name any popular beverages that come from Turkey?

*Now read the paragraph.*

#### EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 51

##### A Unique Beverage

Turkish coffee is not easy to make, but the result is worth all the work. First, you need a special coffeepot called a *jezve*. This is a long-handled, open brass or copper pot. Next, pour three small cups of water into the pot. Heat the water until it boils. Then remove the pot from the heat. Add three teaspoons of coffee and three teaspoons of sugar to the water. Gently stir the mixture and return it to the heat until you can see foam on the top. When the foam appears, take the *jezve* from the heat and hit it lightly with a spoon to make the foam go down. Next, reheat the coffee and tap the pot two more times, making sure to remove it from the heat each time the foam forms. Before you serve the coffee, give everyone a small glass of cold water to drink with the hot, thick coffee.



a beverage: any kind of drink  
a result: the product of an action  
brass: a gold-colored metal

copper: a reddish-gold metal  
remove: to take away  
foam: liquid with a lot of tiny air bubbles in it

1. List the first five steps in making Turkish coffee.

- a. Get the special coffeepot.
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_



2. The process of making Turkish coffee includes more than ten small steps. Good writers do not always write one sentence for each small step. Instead, they combine some steps in longer sentences. Write a sentence from the paragraph that has more than one step in it.

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3. Combine these two steps in one sentence: *Next, pour three small cups of water into the pot. Heat the water until it boils.*

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4. The author states that Turkish coffee is difficult to make. Find three examples from the paragraph that support this idea.

- a. 

---
- b. 

---
- c. 

---



For more practice with process analysis paragraphs and topics for process analysis paragraphs, try Unit 7, Activity 1 and Activity 2 on the *Great Writing 2* Web site: [elt.heinle.com/greatwriting](http://elt.heinle.com/greatwriting)



## Building Better Sentences

Correct and varied sentence structure is essential to the quality of your writing. For further practice with the sentences and paragraphs in this part of the unit, go to Practice 13 on page 259 in Appendix I.

## Organizing a Process Analysis Paragraph

The order of steps in a process is important to the success of a process analysis paragraph.



### Writer's Note

#### Using Index Cards to Help You Organize

It is important that all the steps in your process analysis paragraph be in the correct order. A simple way for you to organize the steps is to write each one on a 3-by-5 index card. This organization method will allow you to arrange and rearrange the steps. It will also help point out any steps that may be missing.

### Language Focus

#### Transition Words and Chronological Order

A process analysis paragraph is usually arranged in chronological order. In other words, the steps in the process are listed in the order that they occur in time. The three paragraphs in Activity 1 each describe how to do or make something. The writers use chronological order to show the reader when the steps in the process occur.

Writers use *time phrases*, *time clauses*, and *time words* to show time order in a process. These items are also called **transition words** because they mark the transition from one step to the next.

1. Study the transition words in the following chart. In the right column are examples of how they are used in the paragraphs in Activity 1.

Transition Words	Examples
Then	Then remove the pot . . .
First, (Second, Third, etc.)	First, you must be sure . . . The first step is to choose several schools . . .
Next, (The next step/thing)	The next thing you should do is to decide . . .
The last step (Finally,)	The last step is to put the corner . . .
In addition,	In addition, ask various school officials and teachers to write letters . . .
Before	Before you serve the coffee, . . .
After (When)	When the foam appears, . . .

2. Now turn back to Example Paragraph 50 and circle all the transition words that you can find. Notice that some time phrases and words are followed by a comma when they appear at the beginning of a sentence. Time clauses, such as "After you have researched several schools," are always followed by a comma when they appear at the beginning of a sentence.



For more practice with transition words and chronological order, try Unit 7, Activity 3 on the *Great Writing 2* Web site: [elt.heinle.com/greatwriting](http://elt.heinle.com/greatwriting)

# Descriptive Paragraphs

## Unit 8

**GOAL:** To learn how to write a descriptive paragraph

**\*Language Focus:** Adjectives; denotation and connotation; prepositions of location

Description is one of the most common purposes of language. You use description every day. You might describe to a family member how you feel or what you had for lunch. You might tell a friend what a room in your house looks like. You might describe the colors in the paintings in a museum or how the paintings are arranged. When describing, you tell someone what something looks like or how it feels. What descriptions have you used today?

### What Is a Descriptive Paragraph?

A **descriptive paragraph** describes how something or someone looks or feels. It gives an impression of something. If, for example, you only wanted to explain to someone what a samovar is, you could write a definition paragraph because a definition paragraph does not include how the writer feels. However, if you wanted to tell about the feelings you had when you drank a cup of Russian tea that was made in a samovar, you would write a descriptive paragraph.

A descriptive paragraph

- describes.
- gives impressions, not definitions.
- "shows" the reader.
- creates a sensory\* image in the reader's mind.

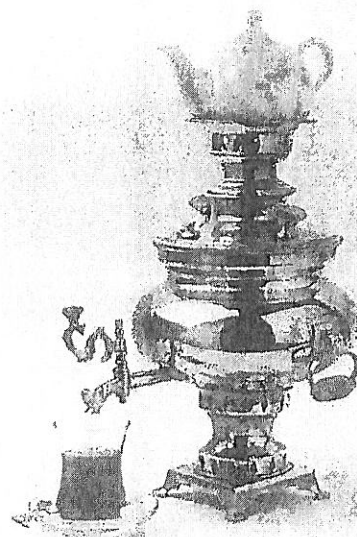
\*related to the five senses: hearing, taste, touch, sight, and smell

Read this example descriptive paragraph.

## EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 54

### Samovar Memory

Every time I have a cup of strong Russian tea, I remember my sweet grandma and her magical samovar. When I was a little girl, my grandmother used to make tea for me in this giant, gleaming tea urn, which is called a samovar. I was fascinated by the samovar and its tasty contents. Its copper sides were decorated with beautiful red and black swirls. Grandma told me that the intricate decorations were painted by skilled craftsmen from her village. I can still remember the smell of the dark tea that my grandma made using the urn. Its leaves always filled her tiny apartment with an exotic aroma, and the rich brew tasted like liquid velvet.



gleaming: shining

an urn: a large metal container for serving coffee or other beverages, a vase

fascinated: very curious about or very interested in something

a swirl: a circular design

intricate: complex, having many parts

skilled: having great or special talent

a village: a small, rural town

exotic: unique or special, not usual

an aroma: a good smell from something that is cooking

velvet: a thick cloth that is soft and silky

## Describing with the Five Senses

Good writers use words that appeal to some or all of the five senses—sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell—to help describe a topic. Here is a list of the senses and examples of what they can describe. Add examples of your own under the column labeled “Example 2.”

Sense	Example 1	Example 2
sight	a sunset	_____
taste	a chocolate cake	_____
touch	silk	_____
hearing	a baby's cry	_____
smell	a perfume	_____

### ACTIVITY 1 Using Adjectives to Describe Sensory Information

In the left column, write your five examples from your list on page 136. In the right column, write three adjectives that describe each object. Try to use different senses. One has been done for you as an example.

Example	Description
<u>sunset</u>	<u>purple, streaked, majestic</u>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____



For more practice with describing with the five senses, try Unit 8, Activity 1 on the *Great Writing 2*  
Web site: [elt.heinle.com/greatwriting](http://elt.heinle.com/greatwriting)

### ACTIVITY 2 Writing Sentences Using Sensory Adjectives

Use the five examples from Activity 1 to write five descriptive sentences. Use each example item as the topic of one of the sentences and include one or more of the adjectives you wrote. Share your sentences with a classmate.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The best way to learn what descriptive paragraphs look like is to read and study several examples. Even though the three paragraphs that follow are about different topics, each one is an example of a descriptive paragraph.

### ACTIVITY 3 Studying Example Descriptive Paragraphs

Read and study these example paragraphs. Answer the questions.

#### Descriptive Paragraph 1

This first paragraph describes the sights, smells, and sounds of a subway station.

Before you read the paragraph, discuss these questions with your classmates.

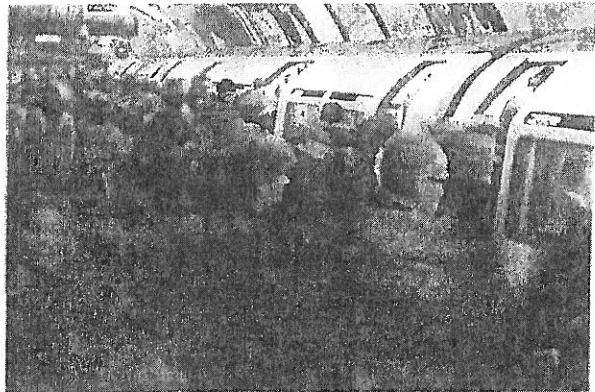
1. What is a subway? What is its purpose?
2. Where do you usually find a subway?
3. What kinds of people use the subway?
4. Have you ever been on a subway? How did you feel when you rode on it? Can you recall what you saw, smelled, and heard?

Now read the paragraph.

#### EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 55

##### Underground Events

The subway is an assault on your senses. You walk down the steep, smelly staircase onto the subway platform. On the far right wall, a broken clock shows that the time is four-thirty. You wonder how long it has been broken. A mother and her crying child are standing to your left. She is trying to clean dried chocolate syrup off the child's messy face. Farther to the left, two old men are arguing about the most recent tax increase. You hear a little noise and see some paper trash roll by like a soccer ball. The most interesting thing you see while you are waiting for your subway train is a poster. It reads, "Come to Jamaica." Deep blue skies, a lone palm tree, and sapphire waters call you to this exotic place, which is so far from where you actually are.



an assault: an attack  
smelly: smelling bad or unpleasant  
a platform: a raised area  
a syrup: a thick liquid

farther: comparative form of the word *far*  
argue: to fight verbally  
sapphire: dark blue color like the color of a sapphire stone

1. From the information in this paragraph, how do you think the writer feels about the subway?

2. Can you think of other places where people wait for something?

3. Which of the five senses does the writer use to describe this place? Give examples from the paragraph to support your answers.

4. What verb tense is used in this paragraph? Why do you think the writer uses that tense?

### ***Descriptive Paragraph 2***

The following paragraph describes a memory about a dangerous kind of weather.

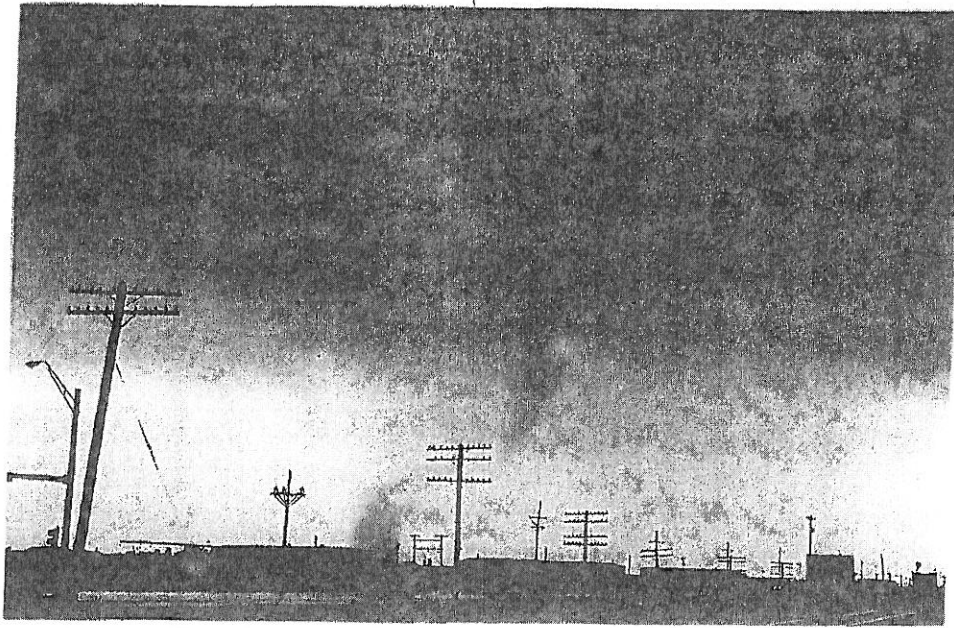
*Before you read the paragraph, discuss these questions with your classmates.*

1. What are some dangerous kinds of weather?
2. Have you ever experienced these kinds of weather? How did you feel?
3. When you think of these kinds of weather, what sensory adjectives come to mind?

*Now read the paragraph.*







### Danger from the Sky

The long, **slender** tornado began to **descend** from the swirling clouds and started its horrible destruction. When the deadly **funnel** finally touched the ground, pieces of **debris** were **hurled** through the air. The tornado **ripped** the roof from an old house and threw the contents of the home across the neighborhood. The tornado used its power to **uproot** huge trees and toss cars around as if they were toys. Power lines and traffic lights were also victims of its deadly **might**. All the while, the tornado's **ferocious** winds **roared** like a wild beast. It was hard to believe that something that looked so **delicate** could cause so much destruction.

**slender:** thin, narrow (positive adjective)

**a tornado:** a rotating column of air that moves at very high speeds

**descend:** to move downwards

**swirling:** rotating or spinning

**a funnel:** a cone-shaped object

**debris:** broken pieces of something

**hurl:** to throw with great force

**rip:** to tear violently and quickly

**uproot:** to tear a plant up by the roots

**might:** power

**ferocious:** very wild and savage

**roar:** to make a loud, deep, long sound

**delicate:** fragile

1. What does this paragraph describe?

---

---

2. What verb tense does the writer use in this paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_

Choose five verbs and change them to the simple present tense.

---

---

3. Which of the five senses does the writer use to describe this kind of weather? Give some examples to support your answer.

---

---

4. One feature of a good descriptive paragraph is the use of adjectives that help the reader feel what it is like to be in the situation. List any five adjectives in "Danger from the Sky." Then write the feelings they describe.

Adjective	Feelings
a. _____	_____
b. _____	_____
c. _____	_____
d. _____	_____
e. _____	_____

### ***Descriptive Paragraph 3***

The next paragraph describes what the writer's mother did while she worked in her garden. Notice how often the writer appeals to the readers' senses of sight and touch.

*Before you read the paragraph, discuss these questions with your classmates.*

1. What is a garden? What kinds of gardens can you grow?
2. What is a rose? What does the rose symbolize?
3. What other flowers can you name? Do you think they are as popular as the rose?
4. When you think of a garden, especially a flower garden, what sensory adjectives immediately come to mind?

*Now read the paragraph.*

# Narrative Paragraphs

## Unit 10

**GOAL:** To learn how to write a narrative paragraph

**\*Language Focus:** Verb tense consistency

Have you read a good story lately? What did you like about it? Readers enjoy a good story when it is told well. When you write a **narrative paragraph**, you tell a story. The information in this unit will help you write a good narrative paragraph.

### What Is a Narrative Paragraph?

A narrative paragraph can be fun to write because you tell a story or depict an event. Narratives have a beginning, a middle, and an end to their stories. Any time you go to a movie or read a fiction book, you are being exposed to a narrative. A narrative paragraph often describes an event from the writer's life.

#### A narrative paragraph

- tells a story.
- gives background information in the opening sentence or sentences.
- has a clear beginning, a middle, and an end.
- entertains and informs.
- uses vivid, descriptive language that paints a picture that is so real that the reader can almost feel that he or she is witnessing the event live.



## Writer's Note

### Including Background Information

The topic sentence of a narrative paragraph—usually the first sentence—gives background information about the action that is going to happen in the story. The background sentence is not usually the beginning of the story—it sets up the story. Try to think of what information you need to give your reader so that the story flows smoothly.

## Beginning, Middle, and End

Every narrative paragraph has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Read this example paragraph from a student whose fear of public speaking causes her great grief in her speech class. Then read the explanation of the parts of the narrative paragraph that follows.

### EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 68

*Background of story —  
(topic sentence)*

I never thought I could do it, but I finally conquered my fear of public speaking. At the beginning of the semester, my English

*Beginning of story*

teacher assigned us the daunting task of speaking in front of the class for three minutes, and I worried about it for the next two months. I have always been afraid of making a speech in public.

*Middle of story*

I wrote all of my ideas on note cards. I practiced my speech with my notes in front of a mirror, in front of my cat, and in front of my husband. Would I be able to make my speech in front of my class? When the day of my speech came, I was ready. As I reached the podium, I looked at my audience and smiled. Then I looked down at my note cards. At that moment, I realized that I had the wrong information. These were the notes for my biology test, not the information about my speech! I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. Without further hesitation, I began the speech. To my surprise, the words flowed from my mouth.

*End of story*

Three minutes later, it was over. Everyone applauded my speech that day, and I left the podium feeling like a winner.

### ***The Topic Sentence***

The first sentence in the paragraph—the topic sentence—gives background information about the story. The writer introduces the main character—the writer herself—and prepares her readers for the action that will come. The reader can guess from this first sentence that the story will probably be about what the writer did or what happened that made her less afraid of public speaking.

### ***The Beginning of the Story***

The topic sentence is the beginning of the paragraph, but it is not usually the beginning of the story. The main action begins after the topic sentence. Not all narratives contain action. They may be about a problem or a conflict. In this paragraph, the writer has a problem—she has to make a speech in front of the class, but she is afraid of public speaking.

### ***The Middle of the Story***

After the beginning part, you will find the middle part of the story. The middle part is where the main action or problem occurs. In this paragraph, the main action or problem is the speech. When the writer stood in front of the class, she discovered that she had biology notes instead of speech notes.

### ***The End of the Story***

The end of the story gives the final action or result. If there is a problem or conflict in the story, the solution is presented here. In this paragraph, the story has a happy ending. Because the writer had practiced the speech so many times, she remembered it without her notes. The writer learned that she had the ability to make a speech in front of a group.

## **ACTIVITY 1 Analyzing Example Narrative Paragraphs**

*Read and study these example paragraphs. Answer the questions.*

### ***Narrative Paragraph 1***

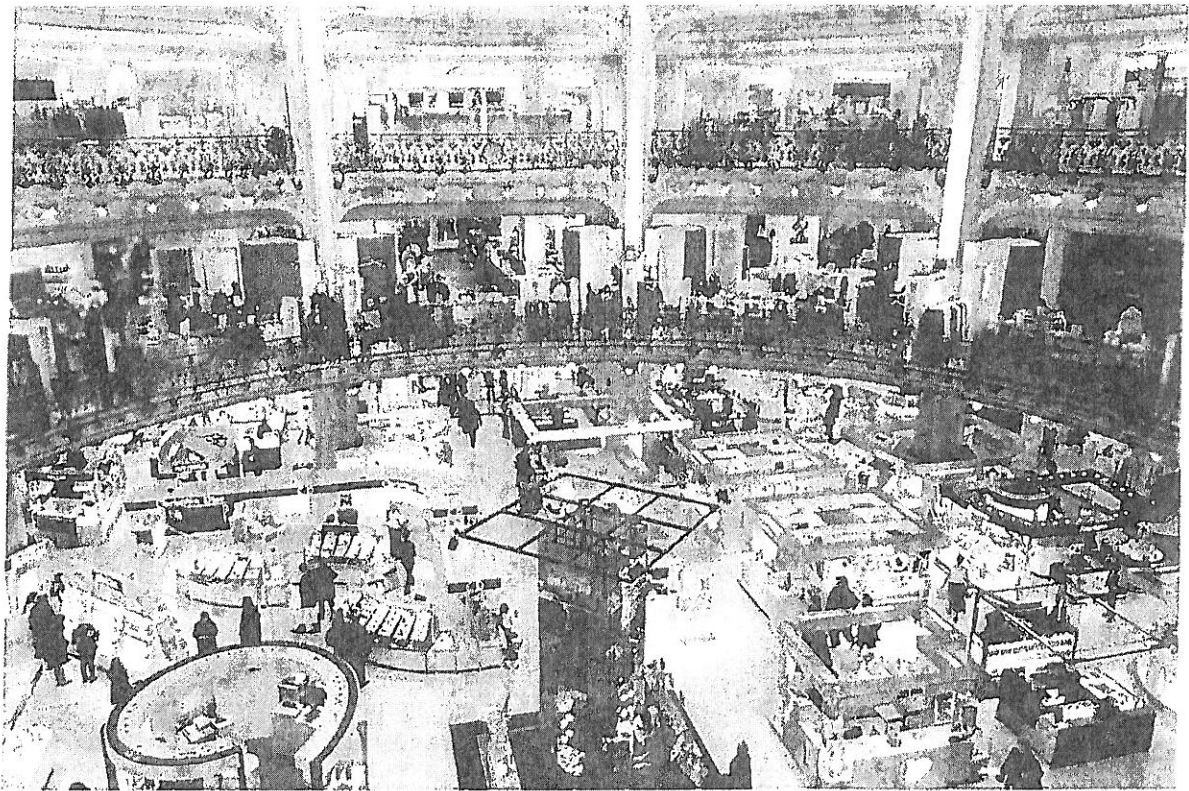
The following paragraph is a personal story about a time when the writer was scared.

*Before you read the paragraph, discuss these questions with your classmates.*

1. Have you ever felt really scared? Describe the situation.
2. What was going on around you during the scary event? Give some sensory adjectives that describe the surroundings.
3. How did the situation end?

*Now read the paragraph.*





#### EXAMPLE PARAGRAPH 69

##### My Department Store Nightmare

I will never forget the first time I got lost in New York City. I was traveling with my parents during summer vacation. We were in an incredibly large department store, and I was so excited to see such a huge place. Suddenly I turned around to ask my mom something, but she was gone! I began crying and screaming **at the top of my lungs**. A salesclerk came up to me and asked if I was OK. She got on the public address system and **notified** the customers that a little boy with blue jeans and a red cap was lost. Two minutes later, my mom and dad came running toward me. We all cried and hugged each other. This story took place over twenty years ago, but every time that I see a department store, I am reminded of that terrified little boy.

at the top of my lungs: very loudly

notify: to give information

1. What is the topic sentence of this paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Where does the story take place? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How old do you think the boy was at the time of the story? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the beginning of the story? (*Circle one.*)
  - a. He was in a large New York department store.
  - b. He got separated from his parents.
5. What is the middle of the story? (*Circle one.*)
  - a. He screamed and cried.
  - b. He got separated from his parents.
6. What is the end of the story? (*Circle one.*)
  - a. His parents found him.
  - b. The size of the store excited him.
7. What is the writer's purpose for writing this paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

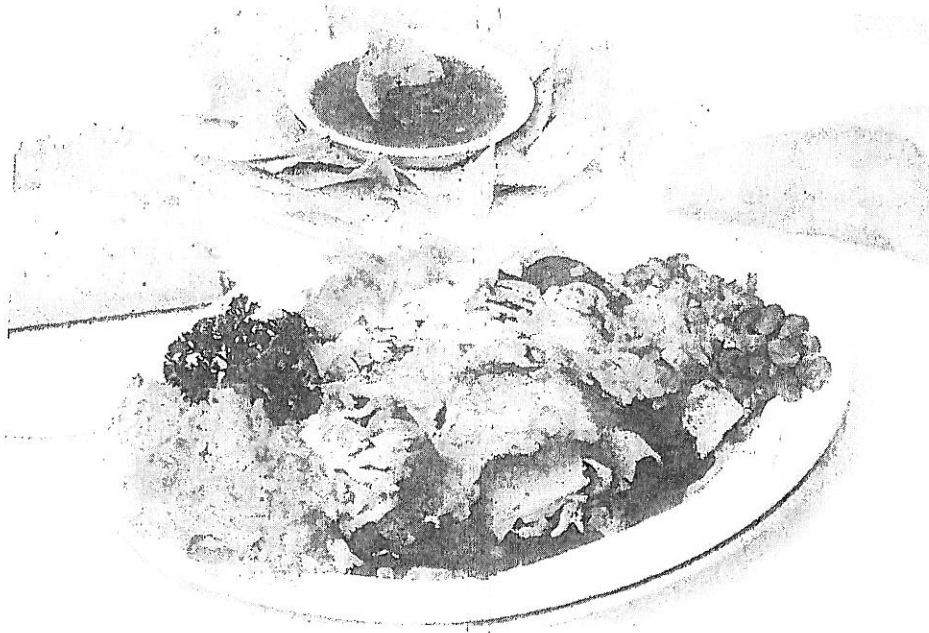
### ***Narrative Paragraph 2***

The following paragraph deals with an embarrassing moment in the writer's life.

*Before you read the paragraph, discuss these questions with your classmates.*

1. Think of an embarrassing moment in your life. What happened? What was the result?
2. Imagine that you are a waiter or waitress in a restaurant. What do you think is the most embarrassing thing that could happen to you in this job?

*Now read the paragraph.*



**Friday Night Disaster**

My most embarrassing moment happened when I was working in a Mexican restaurant. I was a hostess working on a busy Friday night. As usual, I was wearing a blouse and a long Mexican skirt. While I was taking some menus to a table, one of the waiters **accidentally** stepped on the **hem** of my skirt. This made my skirt come off. However, I did not feel it fall off, and I walked through the whole dining room in my **slip**. Almost every customer in the restaurant saw me without my skirt on! I was so embarrassed by the event that I had a hard time **showing my face** there the next day.

a **disaster**: a complete failure

a **hostess**: the person who takes you to your table in a restaurant

**accidentally**: not intentionally or on purpose

a **hem**: the sewn edge of clothing

a **slip**: a loose undergarment that functions as a lining for a skirt or dress

**show (my, your, etc.) face**: to be seen by someone, to show up in public

1. What is the topic sentence? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why was the writer embarrassed? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the beginning of the story? (*Circle one.*)
  - a. She was embarrassed.
  - b. She was working in a restaurant.
4. What is the middle of the story? (*Circle one.*)
  - a. Her skirt fell off.
  - b. She was working in a restaurant.
5. What is the end of the story? (*Circle one.*)
  - a. She was embarrassed because the customers saw her without a skirt.
  - b. She quit her job.
6. What is the writer's purpose for writing this story? \_\_\_\_\_