

Johnson County Community College Sentence Combining

Practice Exercise A

Combine each set of short, choppy sentences into one sentence.

- Example: 1. Paul Newman is a movie star.
 Newman played Butch Cassidy.
 Cassidy was a bandit.
 Newman dazzles audiences.

Paul Newman, a movie star who dazzles audiences, played the part of the bandit, Butch Cassidy.

2. I worked late.
 Then I walked home.
 Home is sixteen blocks from work.
 I am tired.
 I do not want to fix dinner.

3. I want a ticket.
 Mary wants a ticket.
 Ilsa does not want a ticket.
 The tickets are for tonight's concert.

4. Jet fatigue can be serious.
 Jet fatigue paralyzes some passengers.
 Long non-stop flights cause jet fatigue.

5. Fred received no newspaper today.
Yesterday Fred's paper arrived soaking wet.
Fred is disgusted with the carrier.

6. I hate tapioca pudding.
Tapioca pudding is a favorite in our family.
It is a white, gooey mixture.

7. The gelatin is red.
The gelatin wiggles.
It is in a large bowl.

8. The refugees nearly starved.
They escaped in a boat.
They risked their lives.

Practice Exercise B

Combine each set of sentences to (1) coordinate parts that are equally important and to (2) show explicitly how each part is related to the others. (Reminder: Coordinating conjunctions include *and*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *but*, *so*, *yet*, *either/or*, and *neither/nor*.)

Example: 1. Alexander dislikes scallops.

He detests shrimp.

He really likes no seafood.

He does occasionally enjoy lake trout.

Alexander dislikes scallops, detests shrimp, and despises seafood in general, but he occasionally enjoys lake trout.

2. Writers should never omit revising steps.

Revising can improve idea development.

Revising improves thought flow.

Revising writing takes time.

3. The revising stage in writing is important.

The revising stage should not be omitted.

The revising stage makes certain that the message will get across.

4. Sentence combining is useful.

It produces variety.

It adds maturity.

It also gives emphasis where needed.

Practice Exercises C

Rewrite this passage for more variety in sentence patterns. Show relationships: coordinate and subordinate.

A rocking chair is my tranquilizer. I sit in my rocker daily. It calms my nerves. I do not need to take a pill for that. I am too comfortable to get up for a pill. I'll never get hooked on tranquilizers. I can thank my rocker for that.

Subordination allows you to emphasize what should be stressed and to keep the rest in the background. Besides this control of emphasis, sentence variety and maturity are also attained through subordination. Most of all, subordination clearly shows relationships:

Relationship

time

place

cause

contrast

condition

Possible Subordinate Conjunctions

when, after, whenever, while, before

where, wherever

because, in order that, so that

although, while

if, unless, since, as long as

Practice Exercise D

Combine each pair of sentences to emphasize or highlight the most important thought. Subordinate whatever is less important.

Example: 1. Leslie and Mary refuse to budget.

They feel that budgets are useful only for others.

Leslie and Mary refuse to budget because they feel that budgets are useful only for others.

2. You could obtain a loan at an out-of-town bank.

You will find that your local bank has lower interest rates.

3. I notice that I am squinting whenever I read.

Perhaps I need to have my vision tested.

4. You decide on the play.

Then you may order the tickets.

Get tickets for the performance you choose.

5. Are there prizes for the essay contest?

Then I shall enter it.

6. George got his message across.

The thought really flowed from paragraph to paragraph.

7. Morale is low at the office.
Spirits at home are high.

8. Many investors wanted to buy gold.
The price of gold was rising.

9. This church is the oldest building in the city.
The county library is the oldest building in the state.

10. Recipes in this industry are no longer trade secrets.
Many other companies are claiming rights to our formulas.

11. DC-10 planes were banned temporarily.
Now DC-10's transport many passengers every day.

12. The driver slammed on his brakes.
One pedestrian was hit.

13. The number of widows might decrease.
Older women are now marrying younger men.

14. The mountain climber wept.
He abandoned all hope of reaching the peak.

15. The bridge is to be built next spring.
Without federal support, work cannot begin.

Parallelism occurs as you arrange your writing in balanced, recurring patterns. This energy-producing technique builds rhythm and sets up in your reader an expectation to be fulfilled. Parallelism appeals to your reader's sense of order. Its effect can be swift and punchy, deliberate and thoughtful, or formal and elegant, depending on the parallelism you construct.

Mismatched parallelism, which you want to avoid, happens when you develop a sequence with parts that are grammatically different. Check to see, for instance, that in a series of words referring to things you have not included a verb form. Parallel parts must match one another grammatically.

NOTE: AVOID OVERUSE OF PARALLELISM AND WATCH OUT FOR MISMATCHED PARALLELISMS.

WRONG: The choir needs funds for robes, hymnals, and to go to the music conference.

RIGHT: The choir needs funds to buy robes, to rent hymnals, and to travel to the music conference.

or

The choir needs funds for robes, hymnals, and the trip to the music conference.

Practice Exercise E

Transform each group of sentences into a single sentence with parallel elements.

Example: 1. The beach in Shorewood should be closed.

It is scattered with debris.

No lifeguard is on duty.

Because the beach in Shorewood is covered with debris and is not staffed by a lifeguard, it should be closed.

2. We have work to do before the new store opens.

We need to hire another clerk, too.

Two display cases must be installed.

3. The policeman insulted us at first.

He seemed to be constantly badgering us.

Later he apologized.

He even smiled.

4. Marie wanted the clock repaired.

She felt it would be worthwhile.

She said it was a necessity.

5. We could not agree on a time for the meeting.

We also disagreed on where we should meet.

6. A solitary walk can help you learn about nature.
Walking alone teaches you to know yourself, too.

7. Most of us realize the importance of self-discipline.
However, we also know that self-discipline is difficult to practice.

8. I have learned to budget my time.
Cooking nutritious meals is another of my accomplishments.
I also know all about cleaning a house.

9. Young Sorenson is bright and sincere.
He can be diplomatic and, at times, witty.
He has what it takes to be an executive.

10. Paul's freckles are dark and obvious.
John has only very pale freckles.

Practice Exercise F

Rewrite each group of sentences into a single sentence that uses balance and repetition.

Example: 1.

I don't avoid smoking because I dislike cigarettes.

I refuse to smoke because advertisers keep telling me how great cigarettes are and that I should smoke.

I avoid smoking not because I dislike cigarettes, but because advertisers keep telling me how great cigarettes are and that I should smoke.

2. The telephone can be used wisely as a tool for worthwhile communication.

The telephone can be misused sordidly as a means of verbal assault and psychological abuse.

3. Looking for rainbows may be an idle person's venture.

Believing in rainbows is every person's need.

4. Eating alone at home can be dismal.

Dining unaccompanied in a restaurant can be miserable, indeed.

Having a meal in the presence of congenial companions, at home or away, is always enjoyable.

5. She realized the importance of establishing herself in a career.

She knew the reality of dwindling opportunities in the field of marketing.

She felt it was time to get started in work if she were ever to have a marketing career.

6. To confuse silence with agreement can lead to misunderstanding.

A person remaining silent may be registering agreement.

A person may, in keeping silent, simply be avoiding confrontation.

7. You may think living on a pension is difficult now.

Living on a pension in the future may be impossible.

Inflation is reducing the purchasing power of every person on a fixed income.

8. Condominiums appeal to people who want the advantages of home ownership.

Condominiums attract those who dislike lawn and maintenance chores.

Let us remember those facts as we vote on this zoning issue.

Practice Exercise G

Explain how repetition is used for emphasis in this passage. Also underline the balanced structures.

Remember that an opinion is not a private fancy; it is an opinion of what the right is, of what the truth is, of what the facts mean. It is a judgment of what is out there somewhere, not merely in somebody's head. An opinion, when careful and informed, is usually as close as you will get to truth: a statement of what the truth of the matter seems to be. Your opinion may be just as accurate as anybody's, and the major task of the research paper is to sift opinions.

--Source: Sheridan Baker, The Complete Stylist, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York, 1966, p. 219.

The power of your writing depends not only on thought flow and sentence style but also on the very words you select. In this part of the Completing Stage, you can pack power and punch into a paper by checking to **see that the words you are using are specific, concrete, and exact.**

1. Replace vague, general terms with specific, concrete words that paint pictures and create sensory images for your reader.
2. Cut out every word you don't absolutely need.
3. Use action-packed verbs.

Practice Exercise H

Rewrite the following sentences, substituting specific, concrete words for vague ones. Use action verbs wherever you can.

Example: 1. The room had comfortable seating.

The formal living room contained three plush, burgundy love seats.

2. Several citizens talked about the disturbance.
3. The laborer helped the victim.
4. The disease caused changes in the animals.
5. The two land areas are separated by water.

Practice Exercise I

Rewrite the following sentences to make them more concise.

Example: 1. Because of the fact that I shall have to return back to my home state where I lived originally, I shall resign at this point in time from this position and vacate it.

Because I have to return to my home state, I must resign immediately.

2. I acknowledge as a true fact that each and every household needs adequate enough heat, but, however, lowering thermostats for a time period of eight hours nightly will not end up depriving anyone as to necessary heating.

3. First, start by bisecting the organ into two separate parts.

4. This is to advise you that our company is in need of a new recruitment policy for attracting and hiring qualified personnel with potential.

5. I repeat again that this here family group has a large number of bills to pay and the aged old parents are not employed in jobs.

6. My recommendation is that it is a good idea for you to purchase a replica map of the campus before your first visit initially.

7. To all who so generously gave and donated their time, we express our thanks and gratitude for helping to make the Mitchell Mall so good to look at and beautiful.

8. Visit all the colleges you are considering enrolling in in order to make your best selection of the one you want for sure.

Practice Exercise J

Rewrite the following sentences with strong action verbs to add power and punch.

Example: 1. The jalopy went as far as the corner and stopped.

The jalopy sputtered to the corner and came to a grinding halt.

2. The cost of waste disposal is on the rise.

3. The mayor's blood pressure went up as she spoke about the budget problem.

4. My chiffon cake turned out flat.

5. Annoyed and angry, the shopper walked to the manager's office and talked to him.