

such ignorance in the governing classes of the past had not been viewed with equal horror?

Again, this skeptical minority asks the clergy to think whether it is really want of education which keeps the masses away from their ministrations--whether the most completely educated men are not as open to reproach on this score as the workmen; and whether, perchance, this may not indicate that it is not education which lies at the bottom of this matter?

Once more, these people, whom there is no pleasing, venture to doubt whether the glory, which rests upon being able to undersell all the rest of the world, is a very safe kind of glory--whether we may not purchase it too dear; especially if we allow education, which ought to be directed to the making of men, to be diverted into a process of manufacturing.

... taken from Thomas Henry Huxley's "A Liberal Education"

Exercises in Coherence

Here are some exercises to help you to understand the process of developing a paragraph coherently. The topic sentence is first in each exercise. The rest of the sentences have been printed out of their correct order. On the blanks at the side put the letters of the sentences in their proper order.

I

- _____ a. Mitchell made his final rounds at ten o'clock that night, and Wags seemed comfortable.
- _____ b. It stood back from the street, as did the other houses in the vicinity, and in the moonless night it looked dark and gloomy, a two-story frame building, once white, and now a dirty gray against its background of low hills.
- _____ c. He decided to walk off his uneasiness, and it was a half-hour later when he found himself near the Hunt property.
- _____ d. It was unlighted save for a dim glow from a rear window—the kitchen, he thought—and rather amused at himself, he turned in and went quietly to the back of the house.

II

- _____ a. To me spring was marked this year by the return of the male redwing blackbirds, who came back with a rush a month ago.
- _____ b. Everywhere, with scarlet epaulets flashing, the blackbirds have been singing and darting about, chasing each other, shooting up like pinwheels.
- _____ c. Before the females arrive, each male stakes out a homestead, and then with spectacular aerobatics defends and holds as much of the territory as he can.
- _____ d. Almost overnight the drear stretches of our winter swamp were filled with life.
- _____ e. It is a kind of Oklahoma land rush.

III

- _____ a. Another game on horseback that the older boys played was “tournament.”
- _____ b. The runner takes a sharpened pole—the “tournament” pole—in his right hand and, holding it level, with the point out in front of him, runs lickety-split down the line of rings trying to spear them.
- _____ c. Three posts are erected in a line a hundred yards apart.
- _____ d. Each post has an arm of wood about a yard long.
- _____ e. The game requires great skill.
- _____ f. Hanging from this arm is a metal ring about two inches in diameter.
- _____ g. Buck was a wonderfully smooth-running horse, and he and I together hooked plenty of rings.
- _____ h. It is held by a spring clasp so that it can be easily disengaged.

IV

- _____ a. On the second floor a few doors west of the Callender and Rodine office was the printing press and office of the *Galesburg Republican-Register*.
- _____ b. As the papers came off the flatbed press, we took them to a table and folded them with three motions.

- _____ c. To this place we carrier boys went as soon as school let out at half-past three in the afternoon.
- _____ d. I was more than satisfied with that weekly silver dollar.
- _____ e. The *Republican-Register* paid me one dollar a week.
- _____ f. When I had folded the fifty of sixty papers for my route, I counted them and took them to a man who counted them again to make sure my count was correct, with one “extra” for myself.

V

- _____ a. Up to the late eighteen-nineties, when Father walked in the front door of his home and closed it behind him, he shut out the world.
- _____ b. If the bell rang late at night, Father looked out of the window to see who it was.
- _____ c. He thought nothing of this—homes had always been shut off since men began building them.
- _____ d. There was no way for anybody to get at us except by climbing up the front stoop and ringing the bell.
- _____ e. Telephones had been invented, but like most people, he hadn’t installed one.

VI

- _____ a. When I consider how much time it took to keep IT (a model T) running, I wonder if there was time for anything else.
- _____ b. It magnified some of my faults and corrected others.
- _____ c. The Model T was not a car as we know them now—it was a person, crotchety and mean, full of jokes—just when you were ready to kill yourself, it would run five miles with no gasoline whatever.
- _____ d. It worked on the sin of patience and destroyed the sin of vanity.
- _____ e. It helped to establish an almost Oriental philosophy of acceptance.
- _____ f. I understood IT, but as I said before, IT understood me, too.

VII

- _____ a. Very few concepts are entirely original.
- _____ b. Many of them are wide open to modern application, and the exploration of old concepts with new tools offers one of the most inviting frontiers of research.
- _____ c. Most ideas are much older than that.
- _____ d. Charles F. Kettering of General Motors says he has never yet had an idea that was not at least twenty years old.

VIII

- _____ a. General Electric scientists discovered in a fifteen-year study of lightning that the Empire State Building was literally stealing the city's thunder.
- _____ b. In its vast height, the Empire State Building collects so much electrical charge from the ground that the charge in the air attracts it.
- _____ c. Eighty percent of the lightning there is born to fly upward mutely.
- _____ d. Since lightning that bolts upward creates no thunder, New Yorkers are relatively unaccustomed to its sound.
- _____ e. Lightning is caused by the collecting on the ground of an electrical charge great enough to attract the far greater charge in the air and make it come to a point.
- _____ f. The result is lightning that moves in reverse.

IX

- _____ a. In the baggage car young Edison had set up a chemical laboratory in which he conducted scientific experiments.
- _____ b. After the train crew had brought the flames under control, Edison and his paraphernalia were dumped at the first crossroad.
- _____ c. It ignited newspapers and other flammable odds and ends.
- _____ d. That was the end of his career on the Grand Track system.
- _____ e. One afternoon, as the train lurched over a rough stretch of track, a jar of highly combustible material broke on the floor.

X

- _____ a. Few insects are fonder of the sun than ants.
- _____ b. I have watched them systematically clear their “back yards” of shrubbery, plants, and leaves.
- _____ c. Finally any low-lying vegetation that threatens to block out the sun’s rays from their paths may be liquidated by charges of formic acid aimed at the base of the plants.
- _____ d. They will go to great pains to bring as much sunlight as possible to their little worlds.
- _____ e. The stems of annoying plans or weeds are literally chewed off very close to the ground.

Exercise in Emphasis

Study the following pairs of paragraphs. The first one appears as the author wrote it. The second has been reworded to appear as it might if it had been written by a beginning student in composition. Explain how the emphasis of the second version has been weakened or destroyed. Notice carefully how the less important ideas have been joined into the sentences in the better version.

Example I:

Although he was then only twenty-three, Edison was known as “the Old Man” to his employees. There was an odd, raffish maturity about him. Heavysset, with sharp gray-blue eyes beneath heavy brows and an extraordinarily broad forehead, he shuffled around his shop in rumpled, grease-stained clothes, looking more like a wayward tramp than a rising young manufacturer. One applicant who inspected the place and then decided not to work for Edison said later, “It struck me that everyone in the shop—including the boss—acted sort of crazy.”

From *Incandescent Genius* by C. B. Wall.

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Example II:

A guard, sitting near the elevators, made as if to start in my direction to find out whom and what I wanted, when one of the elevators came down and a group of men hustled out. There were two men, evidently State Department escorts, neatly clad in gray, double-breasted suits, with three other men walking with them. The three men struck me as a little odd; they wore long black cloaks, big slouch hats with wide brims pulled down over their faces, and carried portfolios. They looked for all the world like cartoon representations of cloak-and-dagger spies. I supposed that they were some sort of foreign diplomats, and as they were coming directly toward me, I stood my ground, determined to see who they were.

From *Sir!* by David Grinnell.

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Example III:

Things came to a climax for me with a taunt and a challenge from another boy, which involved me in my first major sporting event. He was the class's bruiser, known to take lessons in boxing, which left me at a hopeless disadvantage. Luckily, the fight took place in the gym under official conditions and was stopped before I was damaged too much. I crept home that day, not so much hurt by the punishment as by the shame of being beaten. I never told my parents.

From *Four-Minute Mile* by Roger Bannister.

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Example IV:

Eddie Barnes looked at the huge Adirondack hills, browning in the strong summer afternoon sun. He listened to his brother Lawrence practice finger exercises on the piano inside the house, onetwothreefourfive, onetwothreefourfive, and longed for New York. He lay on his stomach in the long grass of the front lawn and delicately peeled his sun-burned nose. Sadly, he regarded a grasshopper, stupid with sun, wavering on a bleached blade of grass in front of his nose. Without interest, he put out his hand and captured it.

From "Strawberry Ice Cream Soda" by Irwin Shaw.

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