

# Complete Sentences and Sentence Fragments

## Complete Sentences

A *sentence* is a word group that contains a subject and a verb and that expresses a complete thought. Notice that sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point.

**EXAMPLES** The game was canceled. [The subject is *game*. The verb is *was canceled*. The word group expresses a complete thought and is, therefore, a sentence.]

**Was the game canceled?** [The subject is *game*. The verb is *Was canceled*. The word group expresses a complete thought and is, therefore, a sentence.]

**Please call Mary this afternoon.** [The subject *you* is understood. The verb is *call*. The word group expresses a complete thought and is, therefore, a sentence.]

**What a great game that was!** [The subject is *that*. The verb is *was*. The word group expresses a complete thought and is, therefore, a sentence.]

**EXERCISE A** Use proofreading marks to add capital letters and appropriate end marks to the following word groups to make them sentences.

**Example 1.** what a fun vacation we had!<sup>!</sup> [Capitalize the first letter of the first word of a sentence. This sentence should end with an exclamation point.]

1. which book should she buy [Which word should be capitalized? What end mark should be used?]
2. don't worry about that
3. my brother will be there at noon
4. have you seen the new exhibit at the museum
5. what an interesting book this is

## Sentence Fragments

Incomplete sentences are called sentence fragments. A *sentence fragment* is a word or word group that looks like a sentence but that does not have a subject, does not have a verb, or that does not express a complete thought. Because it is incomplete, a sentence fragment can confuse your reader.

**FRAGMENT** Ran under the table. [The word group does not have a subject. What ran under the table?]

**SENTENCE** **The cat** ran under the table. [*The cat* was added to make a complete sentence.]

**FRAGMENT** Mexico City the capital of Mexico and possibly the largest city in the world. [The word group does not have a verb.]

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**SENTENCE** Mexico City **is** the capital of Mexico and possibly the largest city in the world.  
[The verb *is* is added to make a complete sentence.]

**FRAGMENT** Because it rained. [The fragment does not express a complete thought.  
What happened because it rained?]

**SENTENCE** Because it rained, **the game was canceled**. [The subject *game* and the verb  
*was canceled* were added to make a complete sentence.]

**EXERCISE B** Identify each of the following word groups as a sentence fragment or a complete sentence. On the line provided, write *F* for each sentence fragment. Write *S* for each sentence.

**Example**   *F*   1. During a tropical storm in a coastal region. [This word group does not have a subject or a verb and does not express a complete thought.]

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. The longest river in the world the Nile. [Does the word group have both a subject and a verb? Does it express a complete thought?]

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Which flows through several countries.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. The baby slept soundly all through the night.

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. What an exciting trip we had!

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. After she left for rehearsal.

**EXERCISE C** Rewrite each sentence fragment on the line provided, adding words to make the fragment a complete sentence. If an item is already a sentence, write *S* on the line provided.

**Example** 1. His middle name, taken from his grandfather. [What is his middle name? The word group does not have a subject or a verb.]   *Michael is his middle name, taken from his grandfather.*  

11. After being in class for only a week. [Does the word group express a complete thought?]

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12. Swims in the public pool downtown.

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13. Delighted, James did a somersault.

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14. The player coming down the court with the ball.

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15. Before Rachel sings.

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# Run-on Sentences

## Identifying Run-on Sentences

A *run-on sentence* is a word group made up of two or more complete sentences that have been run together. The sentences either have no punctuation between them or have only a comma. Run-on sentences make it hard for the reader to tell where one thought ends and another begins.

**RUN-ON** John and Mark have joined the team their first game is today. [No punctuation separates the two complete sentences.]

**CORRECT** John and Mark have joined the team. Their first game is today. [A period separates the two sentences.]

**RUN-ON** John and Mark have joined the team, their first game is today. [Only a comma separates the two complete sentences.]

**CORRECT** John and Mark have joined the team, **and** their first game is today. [A comma and the conjunction *and* separate the two sentences.]

**EXERCISE A** Decide which of the following sentences are run-on sentences. If a word group is a run-on, write *run-on* on the line provided. If the sentence is correct, write C on the line provided.

**Example** run-on 1. The ship captain looked worried a storm was coming. [This word group has two complete sentences, but there is no punctuation between them.]

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Katherine was tired and bored with television she decided to go to sleep. [Are the complete sentences separated by the correct punctuation?]

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Bobby received a new bat, glove, and cap, and he was ready to play ball.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. The presidential election of November 7, 2000, was too close to call it was a history-making event.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Rudy and Sheila are both running for class president only one candidate can win.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. The pond was dark and cold Mabel decided not to go for a swim.

## Correcting Run-on Sentences

Run-on sentences can be corrected by making them two separate sentences or by adding punctuation and a connecting word such as *and*, *or*, or *but*.

**RUN-ON** It rained hard for two days the river was rising.

**CORRECT** It rained hard for two days. The river was rising. [Adding a period and a capital letter makes the run-on into two separate sentences.]

**RUN-ON** It rained hard for two days the river was rising.

**CORRECT** It rained hard for two days, **and** the river was rising. [Adding a comma and the connecting word *and* makes the run-on a compound sentence.]

**EXERCISE B** Use proofreading symbols to rewrite each run-on sentence by making two sentences or by inserting a comma and a connecting word to separate the two sentences that have been run together. If a sentence is already correct, write *C* on the line provided.

- Examples** \_\_\_\_\_ 1. His sister Jane moved to Arizona she did not like the cold weather up north. [The run-on sentence has no punctuation. Adding a period and a capital letter makes it two sentences.]
- \_\_\_\_\_ *C* 2. Richard shoveled snow from the driveway, but he did not have time to do the sidewalk. [The two complete sentences are separated by a comma and the conjunction *but*, so this sentence is already correct.]
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Paul had his guitar and amplifiers he still needed to take lessons. [Is the sentence correctly punctuated? Do a conjunction and a comma separate the two complete sentences?]
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The parade marched down Main Street, and hundreds of people lined the street. [Do a conjunction and a comma separate the two complete sentences?]
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Randy and Liz were invited to a dinner party they will bring a dessert.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The auditorium doors opened all of the children rushed to their seats.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. We could go fishing with my brother we could go to the park with my sister.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Chasing a squirrel, the kitten ran up a tree it can't get down.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Jo Anne and Terry spent the morning in the library now they are going to have lunch.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. My big cat does not like trips to the veterinarian, but I took him anyway.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Finally, the bell rang, and lunch was served.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Vance could stay near home and go to the local college he could go to a college on the east coast.

# Combining Sentences by Inserting Words and Phrases

## Inserting Words

One way to combine short sentences is to take an important word from one sentence and insert it into another sentence. Sometimes you will have to change the form of the word before you insert it. You can change some words by adding an ending such as *-ed*, *-ing*, *-ful*, or *-ly*. Other words can be used without changing form.

**ORIGINAL** The artist drew the picture of the landscape. She was calm.

**COMBINED** The artist **calmly** drew the picture of the landscape. [The two original sentences are combined by taking the word *calm* from the second sentence and adding *-ly* to it.]

**EXERCISE A** Use proofreading marks to combine each of the following pairs of sentences. Take the underlined word from one sentence and insert it into the other sentence. Be sure to change the word according to the instructions in parentheses.

**Example 1.** The lioness <sup>playfully</sup> growled at her cub. ~~The lioness was playful.~~ (Add *-ly*.) [The two sentences are combined by adding *playfully* to the first sentence.]

1. The snakes slithered into the river. It was muddy. [Where should the underlined word be placed in the first sentence?]
2. The cardinals tweeted. Their song was cheerful. (Add *-ly*.)
3. Bill listened to the coyote's howl. The howl sounded lonely.
4. The elephant guarded her baby. The baby was injured.
5. The cheetah ran across the dry savanna. It ran rapidly.

## Inserting Phrases

Another way to combine sentences is to take a phrase from one sentence and insert it into another sentence. A *phrase* is a group of related words that acts as a single part of speech. A phrase does not have both a subject and a verb.

**ORIGINAL SENTENCES** Suzanne went to the jazz concert. She went with her sister.

**COMBINED SENTENCE** Suzanne went to the jazz concert **with her sister**. [The phrase *with her sister* is taken from the second sentence and inserted into the first.]

**ORIGINAL SENTENCES** Katie is performing next week. She is a fine musician.

**COMBINED SENTENCE** Katie, **a fine musician**, is performing next week. [The phrase *a fine musician* is taken from the second sentence and inserted into the first. Commas set off the phrase from the rest of the sentence.]

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**ORIGINAL SENTENCES** The teacher graded the last exam. She was working until 10 P.M.

**COMBINED SENTENCE** **Working until 10 P.M.**, the teacher graded the last exam. [The phrase *working until 10 P.M.* is inserted into the first sentence. A comma sets off the phrase from the rest of the sentence.]

**ORIGINAL SENTENCES** Maggie plays tennis regularly. She plays to improve her skills.

**COMBINED SENTENCE** **To improve her skills**, Maggie plays tennis regularly. [The phrase *to improve her skills* is inserted into the first sentence. A comma sets off the phrase from the rest of the sentence.]

**EXERCISE B** Combine each of the following pairs of sentences. Take the underlined phrase from one sentence and insert it into the other sentence. Be sure to add commas if they are needed. Use proofreading marks to show your revisions.

- Examples** 1. I saw a tree with large white flowers. <sup>*in the neighbor's yard*</sup> ~~The tree is in the neighbor's yard.~~ [The phrase *in the neighbor's yard* is taken from the second sentence and inserted into the first.]
2. The teacher watched the children. <sup>*playing happily*</sup> ~~They were playing happily.~~ [The phrase *playing happily* is taken from the second sentence and inserted into the first.]
6. Daryl is a gifted pianist. Daryl plays regularly with the band. [Where should the underlined phrase be inserted in the second sentence? Do you need to add commas?]
7. The cat is sleeping. It is on the sofa. [Where should the underlined phrase be inserted in the first sentence?]
8. Steve has a collection of baseball cards. Steve is my best friend.
9. The Pattersons moved to Phoenix. They moved in the winter.
10. It was at noon. The balloons were released.
11. Uncle Sam bought a new fishing rod. He hopes to catch lots of fish.
12. That spice is delicious. It is used in Indian cooking.
13. Belinda was surfing the Web. Belinda did research for her social studies class.
14. Jack will save up his allowance. He wants to buy a set of encyclopedias.
15. Pamela and Ruth were pleased by the news of winning the contest. Pamela and Ruth called all of their friends.

## Combining Sentences by Using *And*, *But*, or *Or*

You can link ideas of equal importance to combine sentences. With the words *and*, *but*, and *or*, you can make a compound subject, a compound verb, or a compound sentence.

### Compound Subjects and Verbs

When two sentences have the same verb but have different subjects, you can join the subjects to make one sentence. When you join the subjects, you form a **compound subject**. When two sentences have the same subject but have different verbs, you can make one sentence with a **compound verb**.

**SAME VERB** Edward **has seen** the play *As You Like It*. Nell **has seen** it, too.

**COMPOUND SUBJECT** **Edward and Nell** have seen the play *As You Like It*. [The subjects *Edward* and *Nell* are joined by *and* to make a compound subject. The verb *have seen* agrees with the compound subject.]

**SAME SUBJECT** The **team** played their best. **They** lost anyway.

**COMPOUND VERB** The team **played** their best **but lost** anyway. [The verbs *played* and *lost* are joined by *but* to make a compound verb.]

**EXERCISE A** Combine each of the following pairs of sentences using *and*, *but*, or *or*. Combine either the subjects or the verbs. Write your combined sentences on the lines provided. You may need to change or delete some words.

**Example 1.** I like to go to the movies. My brother likes to go, too. [Both sentences have the same verb, *like(s)*. *And* is used to combine the two different subjects.]

*My brother and I like to go to the movies.*

1. Crete is a Greek city. Athens is another Greek city. [Do both sentences have the same verb?]

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2. Tom plays on the soccer team. He runs track, too.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The seagull swooped down to the water. It plucked up a fish.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. John was given an award for excellence in science. Mary was given an award for excellence in science, too.

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5. Does Carlos work around the house on the weekend? Does Alex work around the house on the weekend?

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## Compound Sentences

Often, two sentences will have different subjects and different verbs. When two such sentences are closely related, you can combine them using a comma and a conjunction (such as *and*, *but*, or *or*) to make one sentence called a *compound sentence*.

**ORIGINAL** The dog scratches behind its ears. The cat licks its paws.

**COMBINED** The dog scratches behind its ears, **and** the cat licks its paws. [The two sentences are joined by a comma and *and*.]

**EXERCISE B** Use the words *and*, *but*, or *or* to combine each of the following pairs of sentences. Remember that you may need to change capitalization and to delete or add words. Write your answers on the lines provided.

**Example 1.** Robert E. Lee was six feet tall. Ulysses S. Grant stood only five feet, eight inches.

[A comma and *but* can be used to make a compound sentence.] Robert E. Lee was

six feet tall, but Ulysses S. Grant stood only five feet, eight inches.

6. Ulysses S. Grant led the Northern army. Robert E. Lee led the army of the South. [Which word would be best to join the two sentences?]

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7. The Confederates won many early battles. The tide turned after the Battle of Gettysburg.

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8. Could the Union army defend Washington? Would Lee's army take the capital?

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9. The first shot was fired at Ft. Sumter. The letter of surrender was signed at Appomattox.

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10. The slaves were freed. Jim Crow laws created further servitude.

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# Combining Sentences Using Subordinate Clauses

## Adjective Clauses

An *adjective clause* is used to describe a noun or pronoun. You can combine sentences by turning one sentence into an adjective clause and inserting it into another sentence. Usually, you will need to add a word, such as *who*, *that*, or *which*, at the beginning of the adjective clause.

**ORIGINAL** Hank broke the bat. It flew toward first base.

**COMBINED** Hank broke the bat, **which** flew toward first base. [The two original sentences are combined to make one complex sentence. The word *which* introduces the adjective clause.]

**EXERCISE A** Combine each of the following pairs of sentences by turning one sentence into an adjective clause. Remember that you may need to add, delete, or change words. Write your combined sentences on the lines provided.

**Example 1.** Haley has a wooden rowboat. It is tied to the dock. [The second sentence can be turned into an adjective clause. The word *which* is used to introduce the adjective clause.]

*Haley has a wooden rowboat, which is tied to the dock.*

1. Marisol had a horse. The horse followed her around the farm. [Which word in the first sentence does the second sentence describe?]

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2. Marisol cared for the black stallion. She loved animals.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. She rode her horse every day. The horse was named Pegasus.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Marisol's horse galloped gracefully. It reminded her of poetry.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. In her imagination, Marisol galloped toward her next adventure. It was to slay a dragon or rescue a young prince.

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## Adverb Clauses

*Adverb clauses* describe verbs, adjectives, or adverbs. An adverb clause begins with a word such as *after, before, while, until, unless, when, where, wherever*, or *although*, which tells the reader how the idea in the adverb clause relates to the rest of the sentence.

**ORIGINAL** It rained. The football game continued.

**COMBINED** **Although it rained**, the football game continued. [The first sentence was turned into an adverb clause. The word *Although* introduces the adverb clause.]

**EXERCISE B** Combine the following pairs of sentences by placing an appropriate connecting word (*although, because, when, while, as, if, since, after, until*) in front of one of the sentences. Write your new sentences on the line provided.

**Example 1.** It is not in use. The rake should hang on the hook. [The first sentence is turned into an adverb clause. The word *When* is used to introduce the adverb clause.]

*When it is not in use, the rake should hang on the hook.*

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6. I will enter the race. I have a chance of winning. [Which sentence can be changed into an adverb clause?]

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7. We didn't have much money. We bought the books.

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8. We ran out of cat food. We made an emergency trip to the grocery store.

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9. You like adventure. You should read *Swiss Family Robinson*.

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10. We went to Angelo's for dinner. The movie ended.

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## Revising Stringy Sentences

A stringy sentence is made up of several complete thoughts strung together with words like *and* or *but*. Stringy sentences are boring and don't give the reader a chance to pause before new ideas. To fix a stringy sentence, you can break the sentence into two or more sentences or turn some of the complete thoughts into phrases or subordinate clauses.

**STRINGY** The instructor gave Marge a gentle push, and she tumbled out of the airplane, and it was flying very high, so she was frightened, but the parachute opened, and at last, she landed safely on the ground.

**REVISED** The instructor gave Marge a gentle push, and she tumbled out of the airplane, **which** was flying very high. **She** was frightened **until** the parachute opened. **At** last, she landed safely on the ground. [The sentence has been broken down into shorter sentences. Coordinating conjunctions have been replaced by the subordinating conjunctions *until* and *which*.]

**EXERCISE** Revise the following stringy sentences by breaking each sentence into two or more sentences or turning some of the complete thoughts into subordinate clauses. Write your new sentences on the lines provided.

**Example 1.** George went to the salad bar, and Max went too, and the restaurant staff was too busy, so the salad items had not been refilled, so George and Max fought over the remaining alfalfa sprouts, and they fought over the pickled okra too. [The stringy sentence is broken up into three sentences. Some of the complete thoughts are turned into subordinate clauses. Some of the complete thoughts are turned into compound subjects or compound objects.]

*George and Max went to the salad bar. Because the restaurant staff was too busy, the salad items had not been refilled. George and Max fought over the remaining alfalfa sprouts and pickled okra.*

1. The alligator slid into the water, and the water was mossy, so only the nose was visible. [Which word from the second complete thought can modify a word in the first complete thought? Where can complete thoughts be separated into two sentences?]

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2. The pig was a pet, and it was named Elmer, and it lived under the porch.

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3. We visited the Grand Canyon, and it was beautiful, so we took many photographs, but they didn't come out well, and we were disappointed.

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4. Ms. Moore is our teacher, and she took us to an expensive department store, and there were many things to buy, and it was Christmas, and the people were frantically spending their money, so she said that people sometimes miss the point of this holiday.

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5. In Mexico, my uncle rode a bus, and it was very colorful, and the other passengers were friendly, and they were also cheerful, but the bus broke down on the side of a mountain with pine trees and a stream.

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## Revising Wordy Sentences

Sometimes we use more words in a sentence than we really need. Extra words do not make writing sound better, and in fact, they can even interfere with our message. Revise wordy sentences in these three ways:

Replace a phrase with one word.

**WORDY** **Due to the fact that** Alicia forgot to study, the test on Friday will be difficult.  
**REVISED** **Because** Alicia forgot to study, the test on Friday will be difficult. [The phrase *Due to the fact that* is replaced with the single word *Because*.]

**WORDY** An example of a supreme court justice **would be** John Paul Stevens.  
**REVISED** An example of a supreme court justice **is** John Paul Stevens. [The phrase *would be* is replaced with the single word *is*.]

Take out such phrases as *who is*, *which is*, or *whose name is*.

**WORDY** Tony, **who is the janitor** at our school, has been working here for twenty years.  
**REVISED** Tony, **the janitor** at our school, has been working here for twenty years. [The phrase *who is* is not needed.]

Take out carelessly repeated words and ideas.

**WORDY** Hairball has cut his paw on **each and every sharp, pointy** thorn in the **empty, vacant** lot.  
**REVISED** Hairball has cut his paw on every thorn in the vacant lot. [*Each and every, sharp and pointy, and empty and vacant* all repeat ideas.]

**EXERCISE** Rewrite the following sentences so they are less wordy. You can replace a phrase with one word, take out *who is*, *which is*, or *whose name is*, or take out repeated words and ideas. Write your revised sentence on the lines provided.

**Example 1.** With a sudden movement, the cat, whose name is Smokey, jumped to the top of the bookcase. [The phrase *With a sudden movement* can be replaced with the word *Suddenly*. The words *whose name is* are not needed.]

*Suddenly, the cat, Smokey, jumped to the top of the bookcase.*

1. The effect of the ice storm resulted in the fact that there will be a shortage of peaches. [Which words are not needed? Which phrase can be replaced with a word?]

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2. Each and every dull and boring repetition will be deleted and omitted. [What ideas are repeated?]

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3. There is no excuse for the ignorance of not knowing about computers at this point in time in the twenty-first century.

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4. Due to the fact that young teenagers, ages 13–19, watch too much television, they do not take advantage of the use of libraries.

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5. The jockey, whose name is Marcel, is 125 pounds in weight and five feet tall in height.

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6. In my opinion, I believe in the importance of self-evaluation of myself.

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7. To illustrate the point, an example of a brave and courageous leader would be Cesar Chavez.

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8. On account of the fact that microscopic organisms, which are invisible to the naked eye, had contaminated the laboratory, the scientists stopped the experiment and brought it to a halt.

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9. Melanie, who is our secretary, repeatedly dialed the phone over and over.

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10. In the old horror movie, the frozen, dead corpse of the body revived and came to life.

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## Revising for Parallelism

Parallelism means joining two or more similar items with a word like *and*, *but*, or *or*. These items should be in the same form.

- FAULTY PARALLELISM** The weather was hot and dry, and the wind was blowing. [The third item in the series, *the wind was blowing*, does not parallel the first two. The first two items are simple adjectives. The third item is a complete thought, which is a clause.]
- PARALLEL** The weather was **hot, dry, and windy**. [The clause *the wind was blowing* is changed to the adjective *windy*.]
- FAULTY PARALLELISM** The cat ran through the door, under the table, and it jumped out the window. [The first two items in the series are prepositional phrases. The third item in this series, *it jumped out the window*, is a clause.]
- PARALLEL** The cat ran **through the door, under the table, and out the window**. [The clause *it jumped out the window* is changed to the prepositional phrase *out the window*.]
- FAULTY PARALLELISM** Mary likes to watch the horses trot and how they leap across the hedge. [The first item in the series, *trot*, is a verbal. The second item in the series, *how they leap across the hedge*, is a clause.]
- PARALLEL** Mary likes to watch the horses **trot and leap** across the hedge. [The clause *how they leap across the hedge* is changed to the verbal *leap*.]

**EXERCISE A** Revise the following faulty-parallel structures. Write your new sentence on the lines provided.

**Example 1.** I like skiing, snorkeling, and to hike. [*To hike* should be changed to match *skiing* and *snorkeling*.]

*I like skiing, snorkeling, and hiking.*

1. Birds live in jungles, in deserts, and they even live on icebergs. [How should the third item in the series be changed to match the first two items?]

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2. I like watching pelicans dive into the sea and how they can fly with fish in their beaks.

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3. In the heat, in the rain, or when it is snowing, the show must go on.

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4. Popular careers are teaching, nursing and computer programmers.

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5. My sisters are named Patty, Barbara, and the other one is Marie.

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**EXERCISE B** Rewrite the following sentences using parallel structures. Combine the parallel structures into one sentence. Write your new sentence on the lines provided.

- Example 1.** Maudy enjoys reading. She also likes playing the piano and fencing. [*Playing the piano and fencing match reading and can be added to the first sentence.*]

*Maudy enjoys reading, playing the piano, and fencing.*

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6. The squirrel leaps from limb to limb. It runs across the lawn. It buries pecans in the garden.

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7. To be a guitarist, you must have strong hands. Also, you must be willing to practice long hours. You must possess natural ability, too.

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8. My cat likes sleeping on the rug. It also likes sleeping on the couch. It likes sleeping on the foot of my bed, too.

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9. Earl likes singing ballads. He also likes picking the banjo.

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10. If you study hard you will pass the test. You should also get plenty of rest.

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# Varying Sentence Structure and Sentence Openings

## Varying Sentence Beginnings

Basic English sentences begin with a subject followed by a verb and often with a few other words. This sentence pattern is correct, but it can become boring to a reader. Notice how uninteresting the following paragraph sounds.

It was last Friday night. I decided to make supper for my family. We all love Chinese food. I chose to cook a chicken and vegetable stir-fry. I washed and chopped the vegetables. I carefully prepared the chicken. I put some oil in a hot wok. I stir-fried the chicken and then the vegetables. It didn't take long. My family was sitting down to a hot, nutritious meal.

One way to make sure your writing is interesting is to vary sentence beginnings. Instead of starting each sentence with a subject followed by a verb, you can begin some sentences with other words, phrases, and clauses.

**Last Friday night**, I decided to make supper for my family. **Since we all love Chinese food**, I chose to cook a chicken and vegetable stir-fry. **To begin with**, I washed and chopped the vegetables. **Then**, I carefully prepared the chicken. **After putting some oil in a hot wok**, I stir-fried the chicken and then the vegetables. **Within minutes**, my family was sitting down to a hot, nutritious meal.

**EXERCISE A** The following paragraph is not very interesting because almost all the sentences begin with their subjects. Revise the paragraph by adding a variety of sentence beginnings. Use proofreading marks to show your revisions.

**Example** ~~Mr. Ramos is~~ a retired engineer. ~~He is~~ our neighbor. ~~He is~~ an active man. [The three sentences are combined by using parts of the first two as phrases in the third.]

Mr. Ramos works in his large vegetable garden when the weather is nice. He does projects in his woodworking shop when it is cold or rainy. Mr. Ramos delivers Meals on Wheels to homebound people on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Mr. Ramos is always cheerful. He chats with each of the people on his delivery route. Mr. Ramos also plays golf with his friends at least twice a week. He even takes time to teach me woodworking. I think that's amazing.

## Varying Sentence Structures

Varying sentence beginnings is one good way to make your writing interesting. Another good way to make your writing interesting is to use a variety of sentence structures.

For example, read the following paragraph. Notice that the writer uses mostly simple sentences that have the same structure.

Camels are large desert animals. They can go long distances with little food or water. They can travel easily in areas where trucks get stuck. Camels can carry loads over 300 pounds. These strong animals are more than a source of transportation, however. People throughout Africa and Asia rely on camels to pull plows and turn water wheels. Camels are also an important food source. They provide meat, milk, butter, and cheese.

Now read the revised paragraph. Notice how the writer has varied sentence structure to make the writing more interesting.

Camels are large desert animals. (*simple*) They can go long distances with little food or water, and they can travel easily in areas where trucks get stuck. (*compound-complex*) These strong animals, which can carry loads over 300 pounds, are more than a source of transportation, however. (*complex*) People throughout Africa and Asia rely on camels to pull plows and turn water wheels; camels are also an important food source. (*compound*) They provide meat, milk, butter, and cheese. (*simple*)

**EXERCISE B** The following paragraph is not very interesting because it has only simple sentences. Revise the paragraph to include a variety of sentence structures. Use proofreading marks to show your revisions.

**Example** Aunt Lana and Uncle Frank share their home with a pet cockatiel. <sup>that</sup> They've had ~~the bird~~ <sup>y</sup> for twelve years. [The second sentence is changed to an adjective clause to make a complex sentence.]

They named the young cockatiel Spud. He was a “perch potato.” Spud lives in a large, comfortable cage. He has a good view of the back yard. Spud sees small birds outside. He whistles and sings. He sees a hawk. He lets out a screech of warning. During the day, Spud’s cage is left open. He can fly around the room. At night, Aunt Lana and Uncle Frank “put Spud to bed.” They cover his cage with a sheet.