

Building Better Sentences

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“If you have not written much, I urge you to get started. A sharp pen reflects a sharp mind. ... Writing is not for the weak. The writer must form and then expose his or her ideas to public scrutiny. That takes confidence.”

– CNO Admiral John Richardson with Lieutenant Ashley O’Keefe

Now Hear This - Read. Write. Fight.

How do you become a
better writer? Read more
and write more.

When faced with a blank page, do you ever feel like this?



Photo by Peter Alfred Hess "Frustration,"
courtesy of Peter Alfred Hess on Flickr

Or this?



Photo by Juliana D., courtesy of judacoregio on Flickr

Would you rather feel calm and confident, as if approaching a wide open sea of adventure?



Please note:

BBS builds from the idea that you already know how to correctly punctuate and form your sentences. The reality is that many graduate students and even professional writers do not. Who remembers everything they learned in third grade? No one! The GWC coaches can help you identify areas of difficulty; write these down and request from me the appropriate *Mastery Series* slides (*Grammar, Punctuation, and Clarity and Concision*).

Better yet, attend the Mastery workshops!

Workshop Roadmap

- When to polish sentences; how the GWC can help
- Sentence Definition and Purpose
- Sentence Refresher:
 - Major Players (sentence parts and their purposes):
 - Specific subjects (the actors)
 - Active verbs (the actions)
 - Punctuation and other connectors
 - Standard Sentence Forms (phrases and clauses)
- Passive / Active voice
- Elimination of Fluff and more BBS Tips
- Topic & Thesis Sentences
- Exercises and Questions

A sentence

expresses a complete idea,

contains at least one subject and at least one verb,

and ends with proper punctuation.

For example:

I sing.

Jane smiles.

The **Navy** sails, and the **Marine** enlists.

SIMPLE SENTENCES

Typically = **S** + **V** (+ Object)
(**Actor**, **Action**, and, if necessary,
what's being acted upon)

- The **swimmers** **dove** into the depths.
- The **students** **studied** their books.
- **Traveling** **enriches** the soul.



- *AVAILABLE PARTS*
– *WORDS AND*
PUNCTUATION

Subject = Actor

- Often, the subject is the noun that *does something*

Chuck runs every morning.

Luck led me to my future husband.

**Note above that “morning” and “husband” are also nouns, but they are not doing anything. They are thus not the subject/actor of the sentence.*

Every morning **finds** Chuck running.

My future husband **found** me by luck.

**Changing the actor changes the meaning, even slightly.*

The **subject of a sentence** **is** usually a noun, pronoun, or gerund (“ing” word).

I hike the mountain trail.

Traveling opens the world.

**Subjects/actors can also be abstract nouns*

Peace is the ultimate goal.

and even other parts of speech acting as nouns:

Happily (adverb) **is** how she dances.

BBS TIP #1: Polish your sentences by choosing specific subjects rather than vague ones.

- *There are* many important factors that contribute to success in graduate school.
 - Good writing skills contribute to success in graduate school.
- *This is* a great workshop.
 - Building Better Sentences encourages me to take other workshops.
 - **Notice* how specific subjects allow you to include more details.

*BBS TIP #2: **Avoid** pronoun confusion.*

Two men walked into a bar.

He ordered two shots of
tequila and two beers.

Which he?

When they get confused or question, readers lose track of what you are saying...and lose interest in what you are writing.

Workshop Practice

Available Parts: Subject

- Add an abstract noun to the following sentence.
 - Today, _____ prevails.
- Add a proper noun to the following sentences.
 - Of all my loves, _____ offers the most entertainment.
- Identify the subject in the following sentence.
 - On a hot day at the beach, the new recruits took a swim in the sea.

Verbs (the actions)

***English hinges** on the energy of its verbs.

Verbs either state action

Hank sneezes.

Jim studies.

Jane throws a frisbee.

or define a state of being.

Carla feels great.

George is comfortable in his new tuxedo.

BBS TIP #3: Choose energetic verbs that specifically address the action of the sentence.

- *It is* very important that *we find* a way to examine the DoD's cyber-security budget.
 - ❖ This *paper* _____ the DoD's cyber-security budget in order to highlight savings.
- *My thesis* will *be* on U.S.-China trade relations.
 - ❖ *My thesis* will _____ U.S.-China trade relations.

Workshop Practice

Dive for the verb (the action).

- Some countries with a wealth of oil become poor.
- Some countries with a wealth of oil **become** poor.
- The consequences of the resource curse depend on the management of the increased revenue.
- The consequences of the resource curse **depend** on the management of the increased revenue.
- The oil market is a volatile market with frequent booms and busts.
- The oil market **is** a volatile market with frequent booms and busts.

BBS TIP #4: Identify auxiliary (“helper”) verbs, especially “to be” verbs, and ask yourself whether the sentence really needs the auxiliary verb.

Carla was walking to work.

YES (meaning): **Carla was walking** to work when she saw a deer.

NO (meaning): **Carla walked** to work.

List of Auxiliary Verbs

“TO BE”

is, am, are, be, being, was, were, been

OTHERS

can could

do does did

will would

have has had

may might must

shall should

“TO BE” IS INHERENTLY PASSIVE

- Search your work for “to be” verbs. Often they can be either deleted entirely or replaced with active verbs. Notice with amazement how these verbs frequently mark places where our thinking has yet to clarify.
 - There **are** many reasons to love.
 - Reasons to love **include**: love **brings** more love, love inherently **feels** good, and giving love **leaves** us with few regrets.

*BBS TIP #5: How Microsoft Word's Edit / Find can help you transform your sentences.**

Steps for your reference:

In Microsoft Word, click on Edit

Click on Find, then Find Replace

Search for one word at a time (was, were) and replace them with highlighted versions of themselves, repeat, then print and adjust accordingly.

Also, if you prefer to look at each on the screen, simply click Edit, Find, then examine each instance.

** An online (or print) thesaurus is excellent also.*

Let's talk about the active voice.



Wait. Isn't the passive voice grammatically correct? Why do so many people dislike the passive voice?

Savage Chickens

by Doug Savage



www.savagechickens.com

BBS Tip #6: Stop sentence-level passive-aggressiveness.

Attribute responsibility by writing in the active voice.

- **Active**

- **Congress passed the legislation.**

- **A travel agent planned our trip to Italy.**

- **Passive**

- **The legislation was passed by Congress.**

- **Our Italy trip was planned by a travel agent.**

Omitting the subject of a sentence, for better or worse, often obscures meaning and assumes no responsibility.

Many people were killed.

By whom or by what?

Workshop Practice

*Subject + **Verb** (+Object) where the subject is the actor = active voice.*

Is the actual actor the subject here?

- My brother was attacked by a herd of turkeys.
 - A herd of turkeys **attacked** my brother.
- The legislation was stalled by a group of lobbyists.
 - A group of lobbyists **stalled** the legislation.
- Clean air is necessary for people.
 - People **need** clean air.
- The door was locked by the murderer.
 - The murderer **locked** the door.
- Passive sentences were being used by the students.
 - The students **used** passive sentences.
- The executive order was signed by the president.
 - The president **signed** the executive order.
- The Nobel Prize was received by me.
 - I **received** the Nobel Prize.

Harriet was proposed to by Mark, but she refused to marry him unless and until the job he wanted was offered. After six months of waiting for Harriet to say “yes,” Mark’s attention was caught by other women. Dating other women who were not Harriet was fun for Mark. His proposal was withdrawn.

Mark proposed to Harriet, but she refused to marry him unless and until he was offered the job he wanted. After six months of waiting for Harriet to say “yes,” other women caught Mark’s attention. He found it fun to date other women who were not Harriet. He withdrew his proposal.

Workshop Practice

- The students were challenged by the very idea of writing a thesis.
- *The very idea of writing a thesis challenged the students.*

- The thesis writing process is made easier by daily practice.
- *Daily practice makes the thesis writing process easier.*

BBS TIP #7: Ways to Eliminate To Be

- Write in active voice
 - Many people were killed. = Many people survived.
 - Lots of companies were impacted by the hackers' actions.
= The hackers' actions caused three thousand businesses to go bankrupt in one day.
- Change unnecessary continuous tense to simple present or past tense
 - I am surfing. = I surf. / I surfed.
- Replace with an active verb
 - Writing is hard. = Writing challenges writers.
- Revise the sentence(s)
 - It is important to consider the consequences of our words. Each day, people's words are changing the context of our world. = Our words can change the world.

Punctuation

- Periods – full stop
- Commas – pause
- Semi-colons – brief stop, imply connection
- Question marks – encourage response

If you are viewing these slides without the benefit of participating in the workshop, please make a coaching appointment to understand more about how punctuation influences readers, sign up for *Mastery Series: Punctuation*, or view those slides.

BBS Tip #8: Use questions wisely.

Which text message are you more likely to respond to right away?

- How **are** you?
- I hope you **are** well.
 - The use of questions in writing **encourages** reader response. **Use** questions in moderation to provoke reader thought. In essays, if you **pose** a question, be sure to **answer** it. Note: Please **avoid** combining a statement with a question.
 - Rather than: The question is: to text or not to text her?
Write: I **considered** whether or not to text her.

SUBJECT, VERB, PUNCTUATION

- Now that we understand a sentence's main available parts (subject, verb, and punctuation), let's see how to build those available parts into common sentence forms.

- *Common sentence forms*



SIMPLE SENTENCES *

Often= **S** + **V** + Object

(ONE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE)

- The **swimmers** **dove** into the depths.
- The **students** **study** their books.
- **Traveling** **enriches** the soul.

* Never be afraid to keep a sentence simple!

- *The key to understanding common sentence forms - which also helps greatly to avoid fragments, run-ons, and comma errors - is to understand clauses. First, we need to understand that words join together in one of two ways.*

Words team up in either phrases or clauses.

- PHRASES

- Two or more words **without** both a subject and a verb

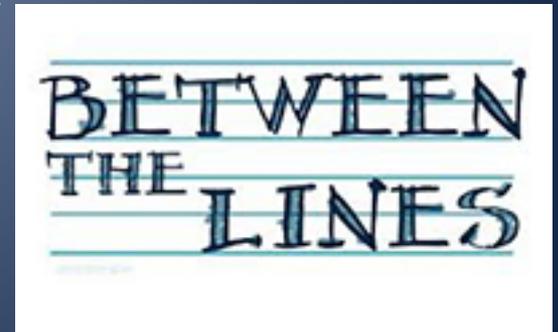
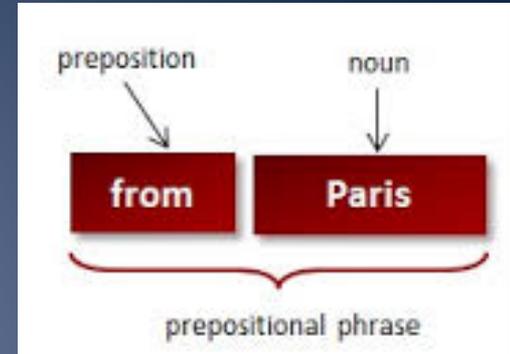
- CLAUSES

- Two or more words **with** both a subject and a verb

PHRASE EXAMPLES



on Tuesday
in front of the school
beautiful divinity
amphibious warfare
after the meal
the nice neighbor



*photo credit: <http://www.zazzle.com/nuttier+gifts>

**photo credit: <http://www.pinkandgreene.com/nuttier-than-a-fruitcake.htmlake.html>

BBS TIP #9: Please avoid linking together lots and lots of prepositional phrases.

*I sprint. (Clear)

*I sprint *across* base. (Still clear)

* I sprint *in* the evening *across* base *over* the river *through* the trees *into* the sea hidden *by* the night. (What?)

(Who remembers that you were sprinting? Readers are all either confused or lost by now.)

*The chapter analyzes the data. (Yes)

*The chapter analyzes the data *about* cyber-attacks. (Yes)

*The chapter analyzes the data *about* cyber-attacks *on* the U.S. *in* the private sector *by* China *in* the last ten years. (What?)



List of Common Prepositions

about	below	for	to
above	beneath	from	toward(s)
across	behind	in	under
after	beside(s)	into	underneath
against	between	like	until
along	beyond	of	unto
amid	but (except)	off	up
among	by	on	upon
around	concerning	over	with
as	down	past	within
at	during	since	without
before	except	through(out)	

CLAUSES – the best key to understanding grammatically correct sentences

- **CLAUSE** – a group of two or more words with both subject and verb

TWO TYPES OF CLAUSES

1. **DEPENDENT CLAUSE (DC)**

- Like a dependent person, a DC cannot stand on its own.

2. **INDEPENDENT CLAUSE (IC)**

- Like an independent person, an IC *can* stand on its own.

- *I fly.* (IC)
- *Jane gardens.* (IC)
- *The puppy grows up to be a dog.* (IC)

- *When I find my way* (DC)
- *Although Joe denied it* (DC)
- *Whether you agree or not* (DC)

DEPENDENT CLAUSES

- Remember, dependent clauses are still clauses! They still contain a subject and a verb. But...they are independent clauses with a **subordinating conjunction (dependent marker word)** in front. They cannot exist alone. It's like adding too much liquor to a usually sober person. Intoxicated, they no longer can function on their own.

Alert! These “connectors,” or “dependent marker words,” or “subordinating conjunctions” **signal a dependent clause.**

After	Since
Although	Though
As	Unless
As if	Until
Because	Whatever
Before	When
Even if	Whenever
Even though	Whether
If	While
In order to	

Dependent clause examples:

- **When** I shop until I drop
- **Because** Jane ran the marathon
- **After** the Admiral wrote his memoir
- **Although** the student completed her thesis
- **Whatever** you might think

Common Sentence Forms

- IC.
 - I sing by moonlight.
 - The birds serenade me at dawn.
 - Whales live in pods.
 - The United States Navy and the Marine Corps work together to find ways to optimize defense.

Note: Word or phrase + IC = still all one IC

- Tomorrow, the photo safari heads out.
- In the heat of the moment, she exercises patience.

Combining a DC with an IC – two forms

- DC, IC.
 - When **I woke** up today, **I smelled** coffee.
 - Because **we signed** the treaty, **peace lasted** for 1400 years.
 - IC DC. (no comma)
 - **I smelled** coffee when **I woke** up today.
 - **Peace lasted** for 1400 years because **we signed** the treaty.
- *Decide which to use by what comes before and after.*

Coordinating Conjunctions

FANBOYS

Coordinating Conjunctions



- For
- And
- Nor
- But
- Or
- Yet
- So

The renovation was not completed, ___ the manager allowed the tenants to move in.

Choice of conjunction shades the meaning

IC, fanboy IC.

- Maria sails the world, and she writes of her adventures.
- Pat dreams of becoming a rock star, but she can't play any instruments.
- Hungry, Mike orders everything on the menu, and now he feels too fat.
- Fred paints portraits, or he draws landscapes.
- Carolyn dates everyone, yet she cannot find a boyfriend.

A note on spotting the **second subject** and conjunctions

❖ Correct:

- The boy skateboarded to the park, and **he** met friends.
- The chapter presents the results of the SWOT analysis, and **the arguments** illustrate the need for security.
- My friend dances on Broadway, and **she** loves it.

❖ Incorrect (no second subject so no comma needed):

- ~~The boy skateboarded to the park, and met friends.~~
- ~~The chapter presents the results of the SWOT—analysis, and illustrates the need for security.~~
- ~~My friend dances on Broadway, and loves it.~~

IC; IC.

- Like anything that's best enjoyed in moderation, semi-colons can work very nicely to demonstrate connection between ideas; however, please use correctly. Incorrectly used semi-colons stand out like red flags, confusing / irritating the reader.
 - Adorable, the puppy video went viral; four million people watched it in three hours. (correct)

TWO CORRECT USES OF SEMI-COLONS

- Separating two independent (stand alone) clauses
 - Weather patterns across the U.S. are increasingly unpredictable; climate change is a culprit.
- Separating items in a list that already contain commas
 - United States capital cities include: Carson City, Nevada; Sacramento, California; and Lansing, Michigan.

IC; word or phrase, IC.

- I love Fridays; **tomorrow**, I plan to cycle the hills of Ford Ord.
- The funny-cats video went viral; **by the end of the day**, four million people had watched it.
- Your sentences?

Conjunctive Adverbs

Accordingly,

Additionally,

Also,

Alternatively,

Anyway,

Besides,

Certainly,

Consequently,

Conversely,

Contrarily,

Elsewhere,

Finally,

Furthermore,

Hence (no comma needed)

Henceforth,

However,

Incidentally,

Indeed,

Instead,

Likewise,

Meanwhile,

Moreover,

Namely,

Nevertheless,

Next,

Nonetheless,

Now (no comma needed)

Otherwise,

Similarly,

Simultaneously,

Specifically,

Still,

Subsequently,

Then,

Therefore,

Thus (no comma needed)

Ultimately,

What are some basic ways to cut the fluff?



BBS Tip #10: Eliminate Fluff

- It is important that Congress pass the law.
- It is significant that, as pets, cats are more popular than dogs.
- Due to the fact that opioid use is dramatically increasing, it will be worthwhile to examine the role of drug manufacturers in the process of bringing opioids to market.

- ~~It is important that Congress *needs* to pass the law.~~
- ~~It is significant that *Significantly, as pets,* cats are more popular than dogs.~~
- ~~Due to the fact that Opioid use is dramatically increasing, so it will be worthwhile to examine the role of drug manufacturers in ~~the process of~~ bringing opioids to market.~~

Choose energetic, active verbs: eliminate the weak and vague: *it is, this is, there are, it was, this was, there were*

- **It is** important that our writing has proper grammar.
 - *One way: Our writing excels with proper grammar.*
- **This is** important because it shows that we take our ideas seriously.
 - *One way: Proper grammar shows that we take our ideas seriously.*
- **There are** others that will take our ideas more seriously if we demonstrate our own seriousness.
 - *One way: Others will take our ideas more seriously if we demonstrate our own seriousness.*
- Yesterday, while I was reading the news, **it was** obvious what a difference proper grammar makes.
 - *One way: Yesterday, while I read the news, I noticed what a difference proper grammar makes. (Note that I also killed the unnecessary continuous tense here: while I was reading = while I read)*
- **This was** most obvious when I looked at social media.
 - *One way: My jealousy was most obvious when I looked at social media.*
- **There were** selfies throughout my friends' feeds that upset me.
 - *One way: I was upset by selfies throughout my friends' feeds.*

***BBS Tip #11: Use short sentences for fact/action and build longer sentences by adding causality. Examine
Who-What-When-Where-Why...and How***

- Venezuelans are starving. (*Who? Where? What?*)
- Venezuelans are starving partially because of widespread corruption. (*Why?*)
- In 2017, Venezuelans starved partially due to widespread corruption. (*When?*)
- In 2017, Venezuelans starved partially due to widespread corruption; one long-term solution can happen through rebuilding the agricultural sector. (*How?*)

BBS Tip #12: Vary sentence structure

- George ran down the street. George then grew tired and sat on a park bench. The sun made George sleepy, so he took a nap.
- After running down the street, George grew so tired that he sat on a park bench where, made sleepy by the sun, he took a nap.

Overall, follow these steps to polish sentences:

- Choose specific subjects (Maserati, not car)
- Choose verbs of action
- Be bold! Be direct! Use the active voice
- Revise and combine sentences to cut fluff
- Take great care with thesis and topic sentences
- Observe correct grammar
- Use conjunctive adverbs, semi-colons, and other connectors properly so that your structure creates flow and persuasion.

Topic Sentences / The Thesis Statement

The Topic Sentence:

- expresses the main idea of the paragraph
- is clear and easy to follow, uses engaging vocabulary, and provides an accurate indication of what will follow in the rest of the paragraph
- typically is placed at the beginning of a paragraph
- introduces sentences that explain, prove, or enhance the topic sentence by offering facts, reasons, statistics, quotations, or examples
- is ultimately followed by concluding sentences that summarize the paragraph's key points and reiterate the main idea without repeating it word for word

Sample Topic Sentences

- ❖ Last summer, my friend and I sailed his boat from England to France and back again through rough seas and high winds. The constant strain from leaning over the side of the boat to keep an even keel and fight the pull of the wind was counteracted by the breeze, which kept us soaked with spray and wide awake. Sailing the boat through bad weather was a great experience; this is why I say sailing is a tough and enjoyable sport.
- ❖ _____ . Soft, adjustable seats await the driver as he gets in. Even his feet get special attention as they are welcomed by thick floor carpets. No matter what the weather, the A/C and heater offer cooling or warming air. The radio and CD player supply music or news for the driver's enjoyment. Today's drivers have never had it so good.

The Thesis Statement

- is one (or two) sentences that are a concise summary of the main point of your research paper or essay
- makes a claim, and directly answers a question/problem
- must be very specific, describing the claim about to be made in your paper that will be supported by examples, arguments and evidence
- typically is found at the end of your introduction, or first paragraph

How To Write a Thesis Statement

1. **Create a Thesis Question/Problem.** Take your essay topic idea and turn it into a question or problem.

❖ **Example:** divorce. Thesis Question: *How does divorce affect children?*

2. **Brainstorm Answers.**

❖ **Example:** *Divorce causes children to: feel fearful about the future; not do as well in school; feel insecure in relationships; worry about their parents; become bullies or be bullied; have to get along with a new family of siblings; live a lower standard of income; wonder if they caused the divorce.*

3. Choose a Thesis Answer / Make a Hypothesis

- ❖ **Example:** How does divorce affect children? Divorce causes children to feel insecure.

4. Make a Thesis Road-Map: what are the best reasons/arguments for your answer?

- ❖ **Example:** How does divorce affect children? Divorce causes children to feel insecure because they often have a lower standard of living after the divorce, they feel less secure in relationships, and they worry about the future.

5. Add Emphasis: Steps 1-4 will make a very strong thesis, but if you want to bump it up to the next level you can do two more steps: tell how your view contrasts with other facts/research/people, and use intensifying transitions like "in reality" or "in fact."

❖ **Final Thesis Statement:** *How does divorce affect children? Although some research argues that children quickly get over a parent's split, in reality, divorce causes children to feel insecure for a long time afterwards because they often have a lower standard of living after the divorce, they feel less secure in relationships, and they worry about the future.*

Critical Concepts

1) **Avoid common grammar and punctuation errors that weaken sentences**

- Eliminate sentence fragments
- Fix run-on sentences
- Ensure fanboy commas and semi-colons have full ICs on either side
- Ensure introductory elements have commas

2) **Keep reader awake, and give them opportunities for clarity!**

- Revise over-abundant prepositional phrases
- Revise *this* at sentence beginnings to specific noun or phrase
- Pick specific subjects rather than vague ones

3) **Choose energetic, specific (active) verbs**

- Pick an energetic, specific (active) verb as a straight substitution for “to be” when possible
- Eliminate unnecessary continuous tense
- Fight sentence-level passive-aggressiveness: revise passive voice to active voice
- Easily eliminate *it is, this is, there are, it was, this was, there were*
- Once you start eliminating common fluff, you will start to see other opportunities, too!

4) **Build Great Sentences from the Ground up**

- Consider how the parts fit (prepositional phrases, dependent/ independent clauses, coordinating conjunctions, appositive phrases, semi-colons)
- Start with a fact, and add from the 4Ws and 1H
- Vary sentence structure

Final Exam: Rewrite this paragraph as Hemingway originally wrote it.

- In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains in the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders dry and white in the sun and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees the trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising and leaves stirred by the breeze falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves.
- *A Farewell to Arms*, by Ernest Hemingway

- In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains. In the bed of the river there were pebbles and boulders, dry and white in the sun, and the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. Troops went by the house and down the road and the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves.

- *A Farewell to Arms*, by Ernest Hemingway

Final Exam: Rewrite this paragraph as Jack London originally wrote it.

- Dark spruce forest frowned on either side of the frozen waterway the trees had been stripped by a recent wind of their white covering of frost and they seemed to lean toward each other black and ominous in the fading light a vast silence reigned over the land the land itself was a desolation lifeless without movement so lone and cold that the spirit of it was not even that of sadness there was a hint in it of laughter but of a laughter more terrible than any sadness a laughter that was mirthless as the smile of the Sphinx a laughter cold as the frost and partaking of the grimness of infallibility it was the masterful and incommunicable wisdom of eternity laughing at the futility of life and the effort of life it was the Wild the savage frozen-hearted Northland Wild.

- *White Fang*, by Jack London

- Dark spruce forest frowned on either side of the frozen waterway. The trees had been stripped by a recent wind of their white covering of frost, and they seemed to lean toward each other, black and ominous, in the fading light. A vast silence reigned over the land. The land itself was a desolation, lifeless, without movement, so lone and cold that the spirit of it was not even that of sadness. There was a hint in it of laughter, but of a laughter more terrible than any sadness — a laughter that was mirthless as the smile of the Sphinx, a laughter cold as the frost and partaking of the grimness of infallibility. It was the masterful and incommunicable wisdom of eternity laughing at the futility of life and the effort of life. It was the Wild, the savage, frozen-hearted Northland Wild.

- *White Fang*, by Jack London

Building Better Sentences, Part II

Sentence Exercises



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Fix run-on sentences #1

Trouble here? Review the three ways to properly connect ICs: place a period in between, place a comma and a FANBOY in between, or place a semi-colon in between. Locate the start to a new clause by the presence of an additional sentence subject.

- George sat down to write and drank whiskey the whiskey was great the writing started easily.
 - *One fix: George sat down to write and drank whiskey; the whiskey was great, and the writing started easily.*
- On his third glass of whiskey, however, George decided that it was not so great anymore he thought he was writing but found himself eating a donut.
 - *One fix: On his third glass of whiskey, however, George decided that it was not so great anymore. He thought he was writing but found himself eating a donut.*
- George decided it was more fun to write sober he also decided that fine whiskey, like fine writing, deserves to be enjoyed to the fullest rather than overdone.
 - *One fix: George decided it was more fun to write sober. He also decided that fine whiskey, like fine writing, deserves to be enjoyed to the fullest rather than overdone.*

Fix run-on sentences #2

Trouble here? These are all comma-splices, a specific type of run-on created by separating two ICs with only a comma. Common in fiction, comma splices are frowned upon in academic writing. Fix by properly connecting the ICs.

- One night, Sue decided to watch Netflix while editing, she did not get a lot done.
- *One fix: One night, Sue decided to watch Netflix while editing, **but** she did not get a lot done.*
- She decided that watching TV while writing was better than watching TV while editing, she switched to writing and chose another movie.
 - *One fix: She decided that watching TV while writing was better than watching TV while editing, **so** she switched to writing and chose another movie.*
- After awhile, she found herself alternately staring off into space and checking Facebook, she decided she preferred no TV until she made her deadline, she then could reward herself with as many movies as she pleased.
 - *One fix: After awhile, she found herself alternately staring off into space and checking Facebook; she decided that she preferred no TV until she made her deadline. She then could reward herself with as many movies as she pleased.*

Fix run-on sentences #3

*Trouble here? These are all ICs connected by FANBOYS without commas. Simply insert the comma. *Find yourself putting in extra commas here? Check if you are doing so before subordinating conjunctions, and, if so, review how to combine an IC with a DC.*

- Tired of writing alone Sue and George decided to write a book together and they found that collaboration was fun.
 - *One fix: Tired of writing alone, Sue and George decided to write a book together, **and they** found that collaboration was fun.*
- Sue was extremely good at punctuation and ideas and George was terrific at structure and counter-arguments so it worked out well.
 - *One fix: Sue was extremely good at punctuation and ideas, **and George** was terrific at structure and counter-arguments, **so** it worked out well.*
- To their surprise Sue and George became bestselling authors so they decided to try a screenplay where they could also become famous for making movies. In the mornings they both wrote and they laughed a lot.
 - *One fix: To their surprise, Sue and George became bestselling authors, **so they** decided to try a screenplay where they could also become famous for making movies. In the mornings, they both wrote, **and they** laughed a lot.*

Trouble here? Choose whether to insert the second subject when writing based on your best estimation for reader clarity and sentence variation. Always specify before you use pronouns, too.

Ensure commas + FANBOYS have full ICs on either side

- Tired of writing alone, Sue and George decided to write a book together, **and** found that collaboration was fun.
 - *One fix: Tired of writing alone, Sue and George decided to write a book together and found that collaboration was fun.*
- Sue was extremely good at punctuation and ideas, and George was terrific at structure and counter-arguments, **so** it worked out well.
 - *Ha! It is already correct. 😊 😊*
- To their surprise, Sue and George became bestselling authors, and decided to try a screenplay where they also could become famous for making movies. In the mornings, they both wrote, and laughed a lot.
 - *One fix: To their surprise, Sue and George became bestselling authors and decided to try a screenplay where they also could become famous for making movies. In the mornings, they both wrote, **and they** laughed a lot.*

How about these semi-colons?

- I do not know what to write for my thesis; however, I will figure out how to write it.
 - Yes.
 - Similar to their ability to start a sentence, conjunctive adverbs can be used directly after a semi-colon. Don't forget to follow them with a comma!
- Chapter III gave my methodology for researching a new design for the electoral college; subsequently, Chapter IV examines one case study to demonstrate the usefulness of my proposed framework.
 - Yes.
 - “Subsequently” is also a conjunctive adverb. These helpers come in handy for quickly and specifically demonstrating connection between ideas. Using them appropriately increases the flow of your writing.

- Therefore Congress will vote on the judicial nominee.

• *Therefore, Congress will vote on the judicial nominee.*

• *Congress will, therefore, vote on the judicial nominee.*

• *Congress, therefore, will vote on the judicial nominee.*

- *How will you fix this sentence?*
- The thesis examines cybersecurity, and finds that it can be improved.
- *The thesis examines cybersecurity and finds that it can be improved.*
- *The thesis examines cybersecurity, and the analysis finds that it can be improved.*

- And this?

- At the heart of things Jeff wants to help people.

- *At the heart of things, Jeff wants to help people.*

This, too?

- Jeff wants to help people however he sometimes forgets to take care of himself.
- *Jeff wants to help people; however, he sometimes forgets to take care of himself.*

- And this...

- Sharon has cultivated strength, Sharon also cultivates empathy.

- *Sharon has cultivated strength; Sharon also cultivates empathy.*

- *Sharon has cultivated strength and now cultivates empathy.*

- Although Mike wants to see the world change. He doesn't always know how to help. Still he tries.
- *Although Mike wants to see the world change, he doesn't always know how to help. Still, he tries.*

- My paper analyzes three ways to prevent corruption so the Venezuelans can enjoy a higher quality of life.
- *My paper analyzes three ways to prevent corruption, so the Venezuelans can enjoy a higher quality of life.*

- Uber gives their drivers about a 40% cut but the drivers must pay for their own gas.
- *Uber gives their drivers about a 40% cut, but the drivers must pay for their own gas.*

- Freewriting each day in increasing minute increments per week helps build writing muscles.
- *Freewriting* each day, in increasing minute increments per week, *helps build* writing muscles.

- Chapter I introduced the importance of increasing on-ship communications, and reviewed the communications improvements of the last twenty-five years as well as the current challenges.
- *Chapter I introduced the importance of increasing on-ship communications, and it reviewed the communications improvements of the last twenty-five years as well as the current challenges.*

- *Chapter IV presents my methodology; my reasoning stems from a core understanding that we must save as many lives as possible, in the shortest amount of time.*

Correct already 😊

- United States capital cities include; Lansing, Michigan, Sacramento, California and Carson City, Nevada.
- *United States capital cities include: Lansing, Michigan; Sacramento, California; and Carson City, Nevada.*

- Congress votes on the proposed bill;
tomorrow.
 -
- *Congress votes on the proposed bill
tomorrow.*
- *Tomorrow Congress votes on the
proposed bill.*

- Most of us experience tough times, however, the kindness that people demonstrate to each other, can make all the difference.

- *Most of us experience tough times; however, the kindness that people demonstrate to each other can make all the difference.*

- *I am sure that things will work out.*

- *Things will work out.* 😊