

Wet Clay Language

Playing With Information

Writing requires mastery of all those components of grammar and language usage you've developed over your lifetime and during your formal education. While speaking and writing differ in their formality, the basic "mechanics" of language do not. Beyond performing these skills correctly in a variety of levels of formality, having terminology to discuss writing will help you articulate to yourself and to others both successful and less successful moments in communication. The following sections contain exercises. However, you'll notice not all the parts of speech are included. Instead, this section focuses on some areas of sentence writing where specificity is sometimes lost. To simplify, we'll discuss nouns, verbs, and clauses as tools to build good writing.

This is not a chapter of "grammar exercises." This chapter provides tools to judge drafts and to discuss the mechanics of successful and incomplete writing. I've based each usage problem on errors I often see in my own students' writing. Please remember that the advice in this section pertains mainly to sentences. Although all this chapter's advice will be highly useful in the upcoming section on revising paragraphs and essays, the demands of combining ideas into paragraphs may override the "easier" fixes for sentences provided in this chapter. As always, you must remember your larger writing purposes, even when focusing on something as small as editing a sentence.

Instructors: There is an abundance of material in this section. You may wish to teach these sentence revision tips in a different order than I've provided here. Also, you may wish to have students try the exercises included here on their own sentences and paragraphs for further practice. Last, many exercises in this chapter can have a variety of answers. Instructors, encourage your students to share answers different than those included. Students, remember that many of these exercises do not have easily discernable right or wrong answers. Instructors and students should discuss the *quality* of all student answers.

Information or No Information? Content Words Versus Function Words:

Some words carry the ideas in language. They are called content words. Typically they are nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Function words are more like glue. You'll need prepositions, conjunctions, and other grammatical categories to connect your content words.

When errors occur in writing that are not thought-based, but are language errors, it is often times because a writer has good ideas and content words but has glued them together wrong. Typically, when a writer is unsure how to connect two ideas, they pour on the function words hoping that enough of them will act like grammatical glue. However, extra function words nod to different relationships between your content words. Your reader becomes confused.

My program for writing includes concentrating on these content words—mainly nouns, verbs, and phrases and clauses which contain nouns and verbs, although adjectives and adverbs can be important too.

Here are several examples. Circle the information that must remain, despite the order of the information:

Ford Motor Company supports the economy of many Michigan cities.

We must prepare our youth for the future. Technology is important to the lives of teenagers,

whether in school or in recreational activities.

Here are the sentences again with the information moved around. Once again, underline the words or phrases carrying information.

The economy of many Michigan cities is supported by the Ford Motor Company.

Many Michigan cities' economy is supported by the Ford Motor Company.

Support for many Michigan cities economy is provided by the Ford Motor Company.

In the above examples, what words disappear or are replaced?

They are function words. Rearranging important information means different words are needed to glue the information back together.

Try writing the “Michigan” sentences with some information missing. Does the meaning change?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Here are some examples of lost information. How has the meaning changed?

The economy of Michigan cities is supported by the Ford Motor Company.

Michigan is supported by the Ford Motor Company.

The Ford Motor company supports Michigan.

Although the changes are small, leaving out a information like “many” or “cities” changes the precision of the sentence. Suggesting that the entire state of Michigan is supported by Ford Motors is not the precise meaning of the original sentence. However, as long as *all* the information is present, it can be arranged different ways.

Now rewrite the “teenager” sentences.

Technology is important to the lives of teenagers, whether in school or in recreational activities.

- 1.
- 2.

Now rewrite without one piece of important information. Does the sentence’s meaning change?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Here are some potential rewrites with all information included:

Whether teenagers are in school or recreational activities, technology is important to their lives.

Teenagers lives depend upon technology, whether in school or in recreational activities.

Examine these examples of small omissions of information. Has the original idea been changed?

1. Technology is important to teenagers, whether in school or recreational activities.
2. *Technology is important, whether in school or recreational activities.*
3. *In school, technology is important in teenagers' lives.*
4. *Technology, whether in school or recreational activities, is important to teenager's lives.*

In #1, the sentence may now imply that the technology is important to teenagers themselves, not to their life and development after their teenage years.

In #2, we don't know to *whom* the technology is important. It would include *anyone* in school or recreational activities. We've lost our subject: teenagers.

In #3, the idea of technology being important outside of school no longer exists.

In #4, some readers may see no change. Technically, it is now the *technology* that is in school and recreational activities, not the teenagers. In the original, the teenagers were in school and recreational activities.

The focus of this chapter is to teach an awareness of the ability to shift language and to recognize the content/information of all sentences. When rewriting, recognizing important information allows you to clear away non-essential information as well as change the order of information without losing the meaning. This is the path to clear sentences.

Instructors: Although passive and active voice does not appear until the "Verbs" section, you may wish to assign and discuss it here. Passive and active voice is the most obvious and traditional discussion about rearranging information.

Grammar Lessons of Old:

You undoubtedly remember being drilled on subjects, verbs, and objects in your previous schooling. Let's briefly look at the basics of a sentence. This will give us the mechanical terminology for the upcoming chapter which will focus on nouns, verbs, and clauses as the basic units of revision.

Subject:	Verb:	Object or Clause (Optional):
(Nouns)		(Noun : String of words)
<i>The sprinter</i>	<i>sprints.</i>	
<i>The sprinter</i>	<i>left</i>	<i>the starting line.</i> (object)
<i>The sprinter</i>	<i>ran</i>	<i>to the stadium.</i> (clause)
<i>The president</i>	<i>announced</i>	<i>the end of his bid for a second presidential term.</i> (object + clauses)

Nouns:

We all know what nouns are. Nouns are typically defined as a person, place, thing or idea. This definition captures the vast amount of *things* in the world, which is what nouns are. From *George Washington* to *Smallville* to *gunnysack* to *democracy*, nouns can be concrete things a child can name, or nouns can be abstract ideas that require years of study to understand to their full extent. Nouns can be objects in a sentence, subjects in a sentence, or attached to either of these ideas as part of a longer modifying clause.

The president (subject) announced the end (object) of his bid (modifying information) for a

second presidential term (modifying information).

Perhaps a second definition of a noun can be found in its basic qualities. First, a noun is something that can take a “determiner.” The most typical determiners are articles (a, an, the), but there are others as well. Second, nouns are conjugated as singular or plural. Most singular nouns are pluralized with -s or -es, but a noun such as *geese* complicates the singular/plural distinction. Also, mass nouns such as *sugar*, *sand*, and *air* are not singular, yet they are not merely singular units with an -s or -es. When awkward or unclear sentences are caused by misuse of a noun, the misuse can usually be traced to either conjugation problems or to a “missing” noun.

Exercise A. Identify the nouns in the following sentences, but more importantly, note where and how nouns can appear in a sentence (subject, object, or as part of a clause).

1. The governor of California has been sick for some time.
2. In the morning hours, I like to quietly walk around the town.
3. I prefer to eat my large meals in the evening.
4. The springtime is Uncle Ray’s time.
5. Johnny went running around the town during the holiday weekend.
6. Wisconsin joined the United States in 1848.
7. Blink Theory suggests that in advertisements the quantity of exposure is more important than the quality of exposure.
8. Experts agree that the twentieth-century identity depends in large part on images normalized by society.

Conjugation Errors:

Conjugation problems have as much to do with nouns as verbs. Examine the following sentences for errors. Errors of the first several sentences are easy to spot.

John go to the store.

The lawyer attribute his victory to inductive reasoning.

Men and women around the world celebrates Arbor Day every spring.

Conjugation errors such as these catch your eye and ear immediately. They are easily fixed by reading your paper out loud to a friend or classmate or by having your paper read to you. The next several examples are less obvious. While English teachers may catch the following errors, many others may not. It is debatable whether or not these conjugation errors impede communication. Still, some readers will spot these errors and you may lose some of your authority as a writer. The following examples have similar errors to the previous sentences, but the following errors are less obvious. Why?

The space race was sped up by the Cold War. This led to moon landings, which was in the late 60s.

Half of the crowd are in the stands, and the other half remain at the food stands.

Johnson and Johnson, a company always increasing its marketability, remain profitable to this day.

The conjugation errors here revolve around the singular or plural subject, but the “singular”ness or “plural”ness of the subject is lost because of the longer sentences. Our “ear” fails us because of all the information we have to take in and because of the long break between the subject and

verb. Yet good writing will require attention to conjugation. The easiest way to deal with verbs in this situation is to make the sentence as simple as possible. This extremely simple form of the sentence is sometimes called the “kernel” sentence. By temporarily editing out extra information, you can bring the subject and verb together.

Introducing the Kernel Sentence:

In my own experience, I’ve found that the important of kernel sentences goes beyond conjugation. Many other errors in complex sentences can be fixed by using the kernel sentence analysis that is the focus of the next sections of this chapter. If you have a complex or compound sentence that is awkward and you can’t figure out how to fix the sentence, try using less words, at least temporarily. Although you will lose information, you can add it later. Also, this formula will allow you to see what complex clause in the sentence is causing your problems, so your problems are less mysterious.

For the first example, leave out the first sentence entirely. The extra information can only subtract from your focus on the mechanics of a single sentence. You will be left with the following sentence.

This led to the moon landings, which was in the late 60s.

Now make a simpler sentence based in subject-verb-object form. The easiest way to do this is to focus on nouns and verbs.

The moon landings / was / in the late 60s.

It is now easy to let your ear or eyes catch the mistake. The wrong verb conjugation is no longer buried by all the other information. Keep in mind that this wrong verb was “buried” in a small amount of information. If you were reading or proofreading an entire paragraph, it would be even easier to pass through this mistake. This is the reason that small errors like this persist in everyone’s writing. The best strategy is to identify long sentences in your writing, or complex sentences with lots of commas and clauses, and break them into their simpler form. While the essence of good writing is a mix of long and short sentences, you will need a strategy to catch simple errors as you progress into longer and more complex sentences as a writer. As you develop as a writer, this process will be more automatic and “in your head,” so you will need a pen and paper less and less when rewriting. You will quickly rewrite your sentence as:

This led to the moon landings, which were in the late 60s.

We have not yet left behind nouns, yet I would like to begin a discussion of clauses as well. While your main verb can’t disappear from a sentence without “killing” the sentence, nouns and clauses can disappear and leave a kernel sentence. Meaning may change, but the sentence can still function. For this reason, all of the following sections until “Verbs” will be a mixture of nouns and clauses. I believe the rules for shifting and editing their information is similar, or at least they make the rules and purposes of the verb unique, and we will deal with these two similar categories before the unique functions of the verb.

Identifying Multiple Kernels: Clauses

Clauses are “half sentences” or “fragments” that may or may not contain all the parts of a sentence. While complete sentences are known as *independent clauses*, the clauses I refer to are *dependent clauses*. These clauses typically modify a complete sentence. They can appear before, after, or in the middle of a kernel sentence. Clauses can modify a whole sentence or only part of a sentence.

Here are some complex sentences with a lot of information added through modifying clauses. Some of these sentences have conjugation errors. Some do not. Break each into its simplest kernel sentence to find potential conjugation errors.

1. While Koresh and his clan hunkered down in the compound, their stockpiled weapons piled around them, the ATF agents surrounded the premises.

To break each of these into its kernel sentence, you must first identify which clause is a full sentence.

- 1a. While Koresh and his clan hunkered down in the compound
- 1b. their stockpiled weapons around them
- 1c. the ATF agents surrounded the premises.

The kernel sentence is 1c. It has a subject, verb, and object. Sections 1a and 1b are simply clauses that give extra information. They do not have complete subject/verb/object or subject/verb components. By breaking the sentence down, we can see that none of the clauses have an error. Try finding the clauses and kernel sentence in the following:

2. The entire Nixon administration, its young staff famous for intellect and energy, still remain criminal in the minds of many Americans.

Again, break these into clauses.

- 2a. The entire Nixon administration
- 2b. its young staff famous for intellect and energy,
- 2c. still remain criminal in the minds of many Americans

None of these three parts has a subject/verb/object in one clause. So the subject is in one sentence, and the verb and object must be in another. If you read 2a and 2b together, you do not get a complete sentence. If you read 2b and 2c together, you do not get a complete sentence. If you read 2a and 2c together, you get a complete sentence:

The entire Nixon administration still remain criminal in the minds of many Americans.

Now, cross out the adverbs, adjectives and other “extras” in the sentence above. Keep only the nouns and verbs. We will see if there are any conjugation errors in the stretched out conjugation of this sentence.

Kernel sentence: The administration remain criminal.

Even a seemingly important modifier like *Nixon* can get in the way. So boil down things all the way. Now, you can see the conjugation is incorrect. The simple sentence should read

The administration remains criminal.

The conjugation should be the same for the longer sentence. After all, adjectives, adverbs, and clauses don’t have a bearing on subject/verb conjugation.

The entire Nixon administration still remains criminal in the minds of many Americans.

Finish the third example:

Jane Addams and her Hull House compatriots stokes the fires of feminism today.

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Subject plus any extra information	Verb	Object plus any extra information
Kernel subject(noun)	Verb	Kernel object (noun)

Is the conjugation correct?

(No. It is not. After finishing the exercise, you'll find the sentence has a compound subject.)

So we see that choosing important information while losing temporarily unimportant information (adjectives, adverbs, modifying clauses) can straighten out many conjugation problems and other problems as well. Also, many of my past students have taken to the idea that the most important "thoughts" or "information" in a sentence reside in nouns, verbs, and clauses. Being able to divide a sentence into each of these will enable you to rearrange and edit your work concisely. Why? Being able to identify nouns, verbs, and clauses as *meaningful units* of information allows you to see the "trees" instead of just the "forest."

Kernel Sentences and Sentence Combining:

Kernel sentences are also useful to gain an awareness of building complex sentences from several simpler sentences. But before we begin combining sentences, let's examine kernel sentences a bit more.

Subject	Verb/Verb phrase
<i>Birds</i>	<i>fly.</i>
<i>John</i>	<i>walked.</i>
<i>The family</i>	<i>will eat.</i>
<i>That kid</i>	<i>yells.</i>
<i>Superman</i>	<i>rules.</i>

These subject/verb sentences are the simplest in the English language. Because the ideas of each are simple, so is their form. Many sentences, especially in academic and formal writing, will require more information. Look at what happens when I put a complex entity into the subject slot and try to imagine using a verb with no phrase after it.

<i>The government</i>	<i>predicted</i>
	<i>announced</i>
	<i>shifted</i>
	<i>situated</i>
	<i>will not tolerate</i>
	<i>withdrew</i>

Each of the verbs accompanying government requires more information. Why? It is not just these verbs that demand more information. The government itself does such complex things that an "object" or "complement" is almost always required. If you look at verbs like "fly," "walked," and "eat," they are all simple actions. None of them have one entity, the subject, acting on another. Most college and professional writing will involve complex relationships, so the verbs you naturally choose will lead to objects. These verbs needing objects lead to other modifying phrases (requiring commas) that in turn lead to longer sentences. It is easy to see why small mistakes can appear in longer sentences and why sentences can become too long in the first place.

<i>The government</i>	<i>predicted</i>	<i>a windfall of tax relief for the poor.</i>
	<i>announced</i>	<i>the closing of five overseas military bases.</i>
	<i>shifted</i>	<i>its stance in the war on drugs.</i>

situated
will not tolerate
withdrew

the problem as economic, not environmental.
states with weak drunk driving laws.
its support of the rebel leader.

Again, note how each of these verbs requires a noun afterward. Also note that this noun has attached to it more information that makes the sentence as specific as possible. The extra information is almost always “glued” with a preposition (of, in, with, from, etc.) after the object noun.

Subject/Doer	Verb	Object	Modifying Information
<i>The government</i>	<i>predicted</i>	<i>a windfall</i>	<i>of tax relief for the poor.</i>
	<i>announced</i>	<i>the closing</i>	<i>of five overseas military bases.</i>
	<i>shifted</i>	<i>its stance</i>	<i>in the war on drugs.</i>
	<i>situated</i>	<i>the problem</i>	<i>as economic, not environmental.</i>
	<i>will not tolerate</i>	<i>states</i>	<i>with weak drunk driving laws.</i>
	<i>withdrew</i>	<i>its support</i>	<i>of the rebel leader.</i>

We combine information to get rid of redundant words. It is the extra, modifying information that often finds its way into a separate sentence when it can easily be included in one sentence.

The government predicted a windfall. This windfall is comprised of tax relief for the middle class.

The government announced a closing. The closing is of five overseas military bases.

Even from only these two examples, you should see a pattern developing. The pattern is one of repeated terms. Repeated terms in close proximity are often a signal for a chance to combine your ideas into one longer yet smooth sentence.

Finish breaking the final four examples into two sentences.

The government shifted

The government situated

The government will not tolerate

The government withdrew

Another basic idea behind sentence combination is tougher to spot. It is when a verb, such as *do*, is used to replace or repeat previous information. Here is an example.

John fixes cars. Mike does that too.

We have two identical kernel sentences:

John fixes cars.

Mike fixes cars (too).

Although combination isn't visible, sentences with repeated information should be nominated for sentence combination. Here is another example.

The United States will donate twelve million dollars to refugees in Africa. Canada will donate that much too.

becomes:

The United States and Canada will donate twelve million dollars each to refugees in Africa.

As always, larger concerns such as paragraphing, style, and communication will decide whether or not to combine sentences. The main goal is to *recognize the opportunity* to combine sentences, even if you choose not to do so.

Exercise B: Combine the following sentences if possible. Some will not combine as predictably as others.

1. In terms of reciprocity, Chinese environmental policy is an ecological tragedy. This tragedy is played out everyday in weather patterns. These weather patterns are those of neighboring countries.
2. Baseball's steroid policy contramands values. These values are the values of America today and baseball's past as well.
3. While the Marshall Plan did not cure Europe immediately, Europe made a comeback. This comeback took only several decades.
4. Initial investigations suggested that the senator was guilty of embezzlement. The misappropriation of funds was the subject of the investigations.
5. Half time employees protested for adequate health care; this health care consisted of dental care and fair deductibles.
6. The scientific community declared that many minerals found on earth are found in the rest of the galaxy. These minerals predate earth's formation.
7. Television changed American society forever. Radio did that too.
8. The helicopter was first used as a weapon in Vietnam. This goes for the M-16 as well.
9. The jury debated for two hours, then they voted, and did that two more times before reaching a verdict.

Authorial Redundancy: Introducing A Sentence

Adjectives specify the quality of a noun. Adverbs specify the quality of an adverb, an adjective, or a verb. In speaking and writing, we often structure our sentences with an unnecessary use of each. Each of these grammatical categories are not part of a kernel sentence. Often times, we use adverb structures to get our sentences started, but closer analysis reveals no information exists in this "start" of the sentence.

In my opinion, cultural artifacts must be preserved at all costs.

becomes:

Cultural artifacts must be preserved at all costs.

In my opinion is not necessary. The sentence itself reveals the author's opinion, and readers understand this to be an opinion. A similar redundancy provides information that the author thought about the information in the kernel sentence, which is also true without the author stating it. One cannot have an opinion unless one has thought of it. A slightly different form of redundancy provides information on an event's happening that is already present in the verb

tense. Each of these forms exist in the following exercises.

Exercise C: Edit any phrases or information that are redundant. You may wish to identify the kernel sentence to identify redundant information.

1. In the past, mercantilism has often existed in societies that traded internationally.
2. Upon looking very deeply, high school sports, the issue at hand, foster responsibility and build self-esteem.
3. By investigating steroid use in teens, I found that teens are often influenced to use steroids for better performance because their professional role models use them.
4. In light of the fact people are addicted to oil, we must investigate alternative fuel sources.
5. In my estimation of these facts, agricultural growth cannot sustain population growth.
6. Many specialists agree that energy efficient light bulbs and unplugged appliances will go a long way toward making us people who find they prioritize through a green value system.

Other Forms of Redundancy:

Redundancy can come in many forms. We already discussed repeated terms across sentences and phrases of “an author thinking aloud.” Changing longer modifying phrases into a single term is sometimes a possibility as well. Look at each of the following examples. Where does the extra information typically appear? Is it a noun, verb, or phrase? Which of these substitutes for it and makes the sentence briefer?

Bill’s need to run everyday has helped him regain his health.
Running everyday has helped Bill regain his health.

The company’s restructuring of their employee’s schedules improved productivity.
Restructuring the employee schedules improved [the company’s] productivity.

My brother’s having a mind of his own made a decision to sell the stock earlier than I wanted was a mistake.

My brother’s decision to sell the stock earlier than I wanted was a mistake.
Having a mind of his own, my brother’s decision to sell the stock earlier than I wanted was a mistake.

Exercise D: The following set of sentences has potentially empty information similar to the examples above. Rewrite the following opinion-based sentences without the authors’ redundant signaling of their opinion or thoughts. Rewrite other sentences that use prepositions (to, of, etc.) to “glue” information to a noun. While none of these sentences can be considered “wrong,” rewriting these sentences may move out of the subject-verb-object sentence pattern, which is good for your style.

1. My decision to acknowledge my learning disability guaranteed me the help I needed for college success.
2. My option of choosing has brought me to choose marketing as a career providing quality time and a livable salary.
3. When I think about this most of my thoughts pertain to my ideas about how melting ice caps will present a danger to coastal cities within twenty years.

4. I believe whoever commits a crime should be punished.

Exercise E: Rewrite long clauses in the following sentences into a less wordy modifier. Also, look for patterns that create these long modifying clauses.

1. The inconsistencies of the Brooks' commission was found unforgivable by those in the majority of the public opinion.
2. Non-curved buildings are sores to the eyes.
3. To investigate late-nineteenth-century crime, I used the methodology of Sherlock Holmes.
4. The assassinations of the KGB agent were classified within the archives of the Russians that recorded trips to China and Cuba during the late 1940s.
5. The agency then gave an offering of one million dollars to compensate for the breaking of the law.
6. Pundits made a forecast on the economy for the year and the year after that and for each month of each year too.

Turning Two Kernels into a Complex Sentence:

Combining sentences like those above streamlines similar information for your reader. Turning short sentences into clauses and combining them with another full sentence can also enhance your style and help your reader.

Example: *The criminal stole the candlestick. Next, the criminal leapt out of the window.*
After the criminal stole the candlestick, he leapt out of the window.
After stealing the candlestick, the criminal leapt out of the window.
My father golfed on Sunday. He was badly sunburned.
While my father golfed on Sunday, he was badly sunburned.
Golfing on Sunday, my father was badly sunburned.

Notice that we often speak and write without including the “doer” in the opening clause. When combining sentences, attempt to keep a “doer” in both clauses.

Exercise F: Turn the first sentence into an introductory clause/modifying information, and combine it with the second full sentence. Remember that the “doer” must appear in the opening modifying clause.

1. Jerry told his boss he quit. His girlfriend waited in the car.
2. He relented to pressure to step down from office. The dictator resigned from his lifelong post.
3. The clergy announced a fundraiser. They first held a carwash. Then they held a booksale.
4. He turned red in the face. He called an ambulance and waited to be taken to the hospital.

Now, rewrite each of the previous sentences (1-4) with the second sentence as an introductory clause, and the first sentence as the kernel sentence. Notice this may change the sequence of events shared by the sentences. Which examples no longer make sense when reversed?

- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Now, let's look at an example of a complex combined sentences we saw earlier. Turn each of these clauses into its own sentence, rather than a fragment. You will have to change, add, or edit some words in the sentence, but you shouldn't have to modify the order of the words.

1. While Koresh and his clan hunkered down in the compound, their stockpiled weapons piled around them, the ATF agents surrounded the premises.
 - 1a.
 - 1b.
 - 1c.

If you have done this exercise correctly, you'll notice that 1a and 1b have the same subject. Repetition over sentences always signals the possibility of combining sentences. 1a and 1b could be a sentence on its own.

Koresh and his clan hunkered down in the compound. They stockpiled their weapons around them.

becomes

- 1) *Koresh and his clan hunkered down in the compound, their weapons stockpiled around them.*
- 2) *Koresh and his clan hunkered down in the compound, stockpiling their weapons around them.*
- 3) *Koresh and his clan stockpiled their weapons and hunkered down in the compound.*

For stylistic effect, you can switch the clauses at the end.

*Their weapons stockpiled around them, Koresh and his clan hunkered down.
Stockpiling their weapons around them, Koresh and his clan hunkered down.*

Returning to our full sentence, I pose a question: How is it that these two complete ideas become the extra information in a kernel sentence about ATF agents surrounding the premises?

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Ask yourself:

1. What grammatical features in the original sentence make the two clauses on Koresh “extra” information, rather than kernel information?
2. What is the relationship between the kernel information and the extra information and the real-world actions the writer wishes to express?

Sentence Modeling:

A great way to vary your sentence types is to practice putting the same information into various positions. Our earlier clause exercises gave you the basic ability to shift information. Now apply that not only to correct errors, but to have a style that is a mix of long and short sentences.

Exercise G: Break the following sentences into clauses, as in 1a-1c above: *Trying to break the record, the man ran a mile, but failed to do so in under four minutes.*

- a.
- b.
- c.

Next, you could turn each into its own sentence. Notice you need the kernel sentence’s information to complete these other sentences.

The man tried to break the record for running a mile.

The man ran a mile.

The man failed to run a mile in under four minutes.

Notice how the repeated subject allowed for three simple sentences or one complex sentence. Try to create one sentence out of the following sentences. Often, the first sentence can start with or contain an –ing verb. [Instructors: You may wish to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each potential rewrite. I suggest discussion should center on what information each rewrite emphasizes.]

Exercise G Continued:

1. The schoolboard attempted to block the addendum. The schoolboard voted without audience discussion. The schoolboard’s choice angered some parents.
2. I remember my father wanted me to be an Olympic champion. I want to be an Olympic champion.
3. I completed my dream. I became a teacher. I wanted to be a teacher my whole life.
4. I wanted to be a fireman my whole life. I became a fireman. I am proud of myself.

Once again, thinking mainly of nouns, verbs, and clauses, was there a pattern to your changes (nouns to verbs, verbs to nouns, clause to verb, etc.)?

Pronouns:

Pronouns are words that replace other nouns. We use them so often we do not even think about using them or how intricate the substitution process is. In speech, we have visual cues and tone of voice to help us make proper pronoun references. In writing, without these cues, readers may wonder which information the pronoun references. Here are some typical examples of correct everyday pronoun usage.

John broke the lawnmower and Bill fixed *it*.

These are the guilty men.

He and the astronauts are responsible for the astrophotography research.

Each of these sentences has a definite noun that is referenced. There is no confusion. However, even in the third example, the *he* who is the subject of the sentence does not appear in the sentence. It would appear in a paragraph similar to the following.

Bill Johnson is an astrophysicist and an amateur photographer. He and the astronauts are responsible for the astrophotography research.

Typically, people run into pronoun reference problems because of long sentences or multiple sentences. Your goal as a writer is to make certain your reader knows which previous noun the pronoun replaces. Typically, the rule for pronoun usage in formal writing stipulates that a pronoun references the last potential noun for which it could substitute. If this were always the case, the following sentences would not be confusing.

Alex drove Bill to the movies, and he said he had a good time.

The state of Alabama sued an offshore drilling company, and they lost.

He should reference Bill. *They* should reference the offshore drilling company. However, this would hardly be the assumption in everyday speech. Often, rewriting is the clearest option.

1a. Alex drove Bill to the movies, and Bill said he had a good time.

or

1b. Alex drove Bill to the movies, and Alex said he had a good time.

2a. The state of Alabama sued an offshore drilling company, and Alabama lost.

or

2b. The state of Alabama sued an offshore drilling company, and the company lost.

Pronouns are also used in everyday speech to start sentences. Often, these pronouns reference nothing in particular.

3a. *It* sure is a hot one today.

It in this sentence can technically be nothing other than the day. The sentence seems to be saying “The day sure is a hot one today.” While this statement is normal, acceptable, and hardly noticeable in informal conversation, sentences of this type can typically be rewritten.

3b. Today sure is a hot one.

Here are several more formal examples:

4a. It is always easier to rewrite than to patch-up your sentences.

4b. *Rewriting is always easier than patching-up your sentences.*

5a. There was a reason the building closed.

5b. *The building was closed for a reason.*

The Cleft Sentence:

Wet Clay Language

The cleft sentence allows focus to be shifted, much like other stylistic varieties. While sentence-starting pronouns such as “it” and “there” pepper our speech and writing, it is obvious they are not a necessity. The cleft sentence allows a writer to place focus on any of the various elements in the sentence.

A branch in the road caused the accident.
What caused the accident was a branch in the road.

Thick fog reduced the visibility to zero.
What reduced visibility to zero was the thick fog.

It was John that shingled the roof of Dave’s house.
It was Dave’s house that John shingled.
It was shingling that John put on Dave’s house.

Notice how each of the three pieces of information can easily be shifted by starting with a pronoun. Starting a sentence with a pronoun, then, is much like the other subjects in this chapter. Pronoun use can both bolster or hinder writing. Your awareness of how you are using these tools in your writing will predict your level of success. If you choose a sentence pattern that delays information or creates a longer sentence structure, you should have a good reason for doing so.

Exercise H. Rewrite the following sentences as two other cleft sentences. Then rewrite the sentence to avoid the cleft sentence (*it, there, what, etc.*). There will be several possibilities.

What it was was a whistleblower that the senate gave protection.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

It is the college president that received the donation from alumni.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Sentence Fragments:

You saw in earlier examples how clauses can contain only some of the parts needed to be a complete sentence. Fragments typically occur when punctuation is absent or misused. Fragments should typically be added on to the previous or following full sentence.

I used to sing alot. In the church choir.

The fountain of youth has never been found for many reasons. Including the impossibility of its existence.

Because of plentiful rain. After many years of drought. The Irish Potato Famine eventually ended.

Coffee should not be taken by children. Because their growth is stunted.

Fragments can be hard to spot when surrounded by full sentences that complete the thought,

as in the above examples. They are easier to spot if you read “between the periods.”

In the church choir.

Including the impossibility of its existence.

Because of plentiful rain.

After many years of drought.

Because their growth is stunted.

How do you recognize these as fragments? First, try your ear. If you still can't tell, look for a subject and verb (and maybe an object). Notice that many of these examples lack verbs. The last example lacks something else. What is it?

Exercise I: Fix the following fragments by either changing the punctuation to combine it with the surrounding sentence or by turning the fragment into its own sentence. Base your changes on clear and simple sentences.

1. New York, New York is big. Like Chicago.
2. He ran track. Back in high school.
3. Eliminating violence from the world will require many requirements. Such as brotherhood, discussion, and tolerance.
4. Canada's healthcare outranks that of the U.S. For example, cheap pills for seniors, cheap surgery for the ill, and inexpensive doctor's visits.

Fragments are dicey territory. Writing is loaded with them for stylistic effect. They tend to sound spoken, and fragments can convey emphasis because they purposely ignore the longer, formal sentence.

New York is big. Real Big.
I've got no money. Zero.
Lower prices. Today only.

As always, be aware of your fragments. Ask yourself if trading formality for stylistic effect is appropriate. Also ask yourself if the surrounding sentences clearly prepare your reader for fragmented information.

Run-Ons:

Run-on sentences are independent clauses that have not been punctuated properly. Typical fixes are with a comma and conjunction (and, or, nor, for, so, yet) or a semicolon.

The potatoes needed to be cooked at 200 degrees and the onion needed to be kept raw.

becomes

The potatoes needed to be cooked at 200 degrees, and the onions needed to be kept raw.

or

The potatoes needed to be cooked at 200 degrees; the onions needed to be kept raw.

We will discuss punctuation to close the chapter. Please go to the punctuation section now if you are not familiar with commas or the semicolon.

Exercise J: Identify any run-on sentences, splices, or fragments and fix them appropriately.

1. The computer Deep Blue beat a chess champion but I can't remember his name.
2. You owe me thirteen quid or I'll smack you.
3. I like to think that, if it came down to it, I'd be heroic, I can't say I would be, though.
4. The military might often generates a military-industrial complex, Eisenhower warned against this situation.
5. If you're going to the store, buy me something nice and I'll pay you back.
6. Spilling oil into the sea is a regular occurrence for some oil refineries, but some people are pressing for stricter laws.
7. Officials acted quickly saving the school program for another year; helping children in need.
8. Because I wanted to oblige the city's public transportation program I've taken the train everyday this month; I will do the same next month.

Although we could go on forever, I'll stop this churning and turning of sentences, half-sentences, and bits of information here. You and your instructor can continue this process, gaining an awareness of the mobility of sentence parts along the way. You should certainly do this with your own sentences whenever they feel long or off the mark from the thought you wish to capture. I hope you see how clauses, fragments, half-sentences, nouns, and verbs can be shifted and combined for two purposes. The first purpose is always clarity of communication. The second purpose is style, which is also an integral part of communication.

Verbs:

Verbs assert that something occurred or exists. This means they can be *active*, as in a sentence like **John tossed the ball**, or it means they can portray a *state*, as in **I am hungry**, or simply **I am**.

“Be” Verbs:

Be verbs (is, are, was, were) are the most basic verbs in language. In English, they fall under a category known as *linking verbs*. Often seen as weak verbs because they lack action, image, and other “active” qualities that carry meaning, “be” verbs typically connect two ideas to each other. Because these verbs are the most common verbs in English, they often can't be avoided. Yet first drafts may contain “be” verbs that could be replaced by “action” verbs, which will be discussed momentarily.

Exercise K. Identify the “be” verbs in the following.

1. I am an adult.
2. The people down the street were really angry.
3. We are out of sorts.
4. The neighborhood watchmen were misunderstood.

5. Old pizza is not good.
6. Donald is on the roof.
7. Danny was in the driveway all day.
8. Science was absent during the Middle Ages.

As you can see, “be” verbs often function as something of an “equals” sign. These “be” verbs are hard to replace with action verbs. In addition to “be” verbs, there are many other verbs (get, had, have, etc.) that sometimes are required to bridge ideas in a sentence, yet these default verbs are often only our first choice and disguise better verb choices. Part of your rewriting process should pay strong attention to verb choice, always noting whether linking verbs are part of the tense (relation of an event to the present), whether linking verbs are portraying a state, as in the above examples, or whether the verbs are simply weak and could be rewritten with more “active” verbs.

Linking Verbs:

Linking verbs are a general term for important function verbs that also portray states. “Be” verbs are one example of a linking verb. Other examples of linking verbs are *seems*, *feels*, *looks*, *appears*, and *become*. While these linking verbs can be required verbs in some situations, these verbs can often disguise stronger active verbs. (If you can substitute a “be” verb and not change the sentence meaning, then you have a linking verb.)

Exercise L. Identify the linking verbs in the following sentences and choose stronger verbs to replace each.

1. Abraham Lincoln became a supporter of the Emancipation Proclamation during the middle of the Civil War.
2. The robin appeared on the branch.
3. The television show appears to be last night’s winner.
4. The Marshall Plan seemed a building block of post-war European construction.
5. I felt a growing happiness all night long.

Verbs and Tense:

As mentioned, not all verbs that appear weak are actually weak verbs. Many verbs that carry no “meaning” that can be put into noun form can carry meaning relating to the time structure in a sentence. You may remember studying tenses such as past perfect, present perfect, past progressive, present progressive, and others during past English courses.

Exercise M: Read the following sentences and identify why the verbs are not simply weak verbs, but are important to the aspect of time the sentence communicates.

I would have gone to the game, but no one asked.
I have run every year since ‘98.

Wet Clay Language

When I retire, I will have saved 2 million dollars.
I am playing basketball on Friday nights.
I had had enough.
I was speeding to the wedding.
The clerk has been given help during this shift.
The shopper should have had an easier time finding socks.
The politician might have been called dishonest by his opponent.
The kids have driven her crazy because they have been yelling for hours.

Each of the above sentences has multiple verbs that act as a unit and cannot be edited out without changing the sentence's sense of time or causation. The relationship of the past and present the speaker of each sentence wishes would be changed if these phrases were treated as "weak" verbs. Sentences with complex time relationships can be edited for clarity, but a good editor will always ask if they have changed the writer's intention when changing a verb phrase. Also, these lengthier verb phrases, often required to communicate past/present relationships, easily confuse a reader if not properly conjugated or not properly written to maintain the past/present relationships in surrounding sentences.

Action Verbs:

Now note the "action" verbs in the following sentences. These verbs convey a certain meaning rather than simply bridging the subject and predicate of the sentence. While some action verbs are metaphorical and personify objects, others are simply verbs containing ideas.

I spilled my coffee.
The people down the street rioted after the soccer match.
We launched a new campaign.
The neighborhood watchmen tackled the criminal.
Danny crippled the car's transmission.

Many action verbs can exist as nouns. *Be* verbs, you will notice, cannot be turned into nouns. Thus, action verbs contain "meaning" in the way that nouns do.

Verb: spilled
Noun:

Verb: rioted
Noun:

Verb: launched
Noun:

Verb: tackled
Noun:

Verb: crippled
Noun:

Because verbs and nouns contain the same meaning from a common root word, often times

initial drafts will have weak verbs and strong nouns that can be shifted into strong verbs.

Exercise N. Change a noun in the following sentences into an active verb. Also notice what types of verbs are replaced in these sentences by active verbs.

1. The people down the street get angry easily.
2. The people down the street had a riot after the soccer match.
3. John is a maker of soap carvings.
4. Bob is the new program's implementer.
5. Come to a stop.
6. The truck is a delivery truck for a bread company.
7. Since the last baseball game, Ralph became a supporter of the Yankees.
8. Electing a new president is a requirement calling for voter awareness.

Selecting an active verb is not always as easy as changing a noun to a verb. Often times, choosing an active verb depends upon considering all the options for verbs that exist in your vocabulary. Thesauruses can be helpful as well. The following is an example of an active but plain verb disguising more specific active verbs.

The man *walked* across the street.

The man *shuffled* across the street.

The man *ambled* across the street.

The man *sped* across the street.

The man *raced* across the street.

The man *trudged* across the street.

Walked is an active verb, but you can see how different active verbs enhance a particular meaning a writer or speaker desires. You can also consider a previous example using the linking verb *appears*.

The robin *appeared* on the branch.

The robin *glided* onto the branch.

The robin *floated* onto the branch.

The robin *landed* on the branch.

The robin *weighted* down the branch.

The robin *nested* on the branch.

Now you can see that the linking verb *appeared* may not always be the strongest choice. If it can mean all of these things, then the verb is not specific to the exact meaning the writer desires. *Glided* and *floated* are specific to how the robin approached the branch and “appeared” on the branch. *Landed* and *weighted* do not explain the robin’s approach; rather, they explain the robin’s position post-flight, and *weighted* describes the robin’s physical effect on the branch. *Nested* is similar to *landed* and *weighted*, but it is a long-term event. While the first four choices all seem to describe the immediate appearance of the robin, the fifth describes a long-term event. Thus, in these five sentences we have three different types of context. Each would be dependent upon the overall paragraph’s purpose describing the approach, the physical effect, or the long-term event. The linking verb *appeared* captured none of these. Active verbs will allow you to execute your writing goals with precision.

Most academic writing will not deal with men walking or robins appearing. Here is an example closer to academic and professional writing.

The superior court changed the law concerning campaign financial contributions.

The verb *changed* is active—the “change” actively affected a law. However, much like the *walked* example, we don’t get the exact change. The writer would then have to explain the change in the following sentence. Why not mention the type of change specifically if possible?

The superior court abolished the law concerning campaign financial contributions.

The superior court refined the law concerning campaign financial contributions.

While each of these sentences require more explanation simply because this “change” requires lengthy explanation, each of these sentences signals the reader toward a more specific type of “change” that will be detailed in upcoming paragraphs.

Here is another example of a sentence with nondescript verb phrase. While this verb phrase is functional, find verbs that narrow the direction of the change. Notice how thinking of this sentence in simple subject/verb/object terms has *opened up* the possibility of stronger verbs. The initial phrase, “said no,” actually robs a writer of vocabulary. An awareness of basic language and information structures (subject/verb/object) allow you to see the sentence in all its possibilities.

The woman *said no* to her accuser.

The woman _____ her accuser.

Example: rebuffed

“Reporting” Verbs:

All this talk of verbs leads us to one final category important to formal academic and professional writing: reporting verbs. Reporting verbs are verbs that are common to writing that take the ideas of others and uses it to forward its own ideas. Because academic and professional writing are always building a base of ideas upon which the thesis depends, reporting verbs are a good category of verbs to master. While there are many “reporting” verbs and some are more specific to certain fields, here is a short list of verbs that can be used to “report.”

reported

suggested

denied

validated

stated	purported	negated	indicated
reminded	delineated	argued	discussed
described	told	disputed	disproved
assumed	asked	conceded	noted
illustrated	promised	investigated	predicted
demonstrated	explained	evaluated	testified
recognized	predicated	analyzed	communicated
compared	observed	indicated	
concluded	verified	criticized	

Some of these reporting verbs pepper our everyday speech, and some are more formal and may require repeated use before they become natural to your writing and speech. Each carries with it the danger of misuse you saw in the previous examples. Also, remember each of these verbs carries with it a certain meaning. “Purports” has a much different meaning than “delineates.” You must be familiar with how to use each so as to use it discriminately in your own ideas without distorting the original idea. Ideally, you should be able to rearrange these verbs according to the degree of certainty each suggests.

Exercise O: Search through the verbs in the following sentences and passages. Replace any weak verbs with stronger verbs, and use reporting verbs where appropriate.

1. It is said that 1.5 million African hospital beds contain AIDS patients. Research shows that this number will continue to grow without international intervention. Multiple international organizations have said that an emphasis on condom distribution as a deterrent has not met earlier projections.
2. The oil boom that Louisiana went through after the start of World War II reached its peak in 1969. The proposed review will talk about why the oil industry is the major reason why Lafayette developed into a large and successful city.
3. Because of the emphasis on Marxism, some humanities scholars have turned toward older forms of secular humanism. This is seen in the work of Harold Bloom. Bloom’s work shows a combination of historical information and close reading. Biographical material can also be used or not used.

For the fourth example, find the strong verbs, especially the reporting verbs, and change them to weaker verbs that complete the sentence but lack specificity and conviction.

4. Meteorologists have documented accurate climate changes in the United States for most of the Twentieth Century. While conservative reports promise slowly rising sea waters,

less conservative reports predict many coastal areas will be threatened by ocean waters within the next several decades. While the United States Government has been slow to explain these findings to the public, the international scientific community publicly communicates this information on a daily basis.

Now, rewrite again, replacing your weaker verbs with a new reporting verbs that are accurate to the original reporting verbs' meanings.

Transitive and Intransitive Verbs:

Some verbs require an *object* that finishes the idea implied by the verb. Other verbs seem to stand on their own. Those verbs that can stand on their own are intransitive. Those that cannot are transitive. While the study of transitive and intransitive verbs is not an issue of writing, but one of grammar, noting the difference between these two verb qualities can help you make sense of your own or a colleague's imperfect writing.

First, let's look at several examples of correct transitive and intransitive verbs.

Intransitive:

I jumped.
The senate voted.
Although I tried, I failed.

Transitive:

I own ten paintbrushes.
When I was young, I collected butterflies.
The astronauts will fix the satellite during their space walk.

Intransitive verbs are finite actions requiring no information after them to complete the idea. The transitive sentences are types of meaning that require more information. Leaving out their objects proves this true.

I own.
When I was young, I collected.
The astronauts will fix.

Each sentence leaves one asking what one owns, collected, or will fix. The most practical application of the transitive/intransitive distinction and of verb use in general to writing stems from mistakes common during a writer's growth process—misused vocabulary.

I internalized during the night.

New York's Museum of Modern Art exhibited brilliantly and continues to do so.

Shaw transcended during his middle period.

The question for each of these sentences is “what”? What is internalized? What is exhibited? What did Shaw transcend? Each of these verbs requires an object, even if a reader can figure out what was internalized or exhibited from previous information in the paragraph. The easiest way to fix awkward sentences like those above is to consult a dictionary to check out what type of verb you are using. This is especially important when using verbs you have not used much in writing. As you progress in your chosen major, the vocabulary you develop will be new and highly specific. As you grow into ownership of a more formal vocabulary, you may often have to consult a dictionary or thesaurus.

Rewrite each of the following sentences. Provide a noun object for each of the verbs requiring a “what.” Not all of the sentences require editing. A variety of answers are possible, so answers are not included. Answers should be discussed as a class.

1. The Nielson ratings collect weekly.
2. Each member of the platoon fulfilled his duties responsibly.
3. He and the other members solidified.
4. While Martin Luther King, Jr. received, Malcolm X militantly agitated for rights.
5. The architecture of I.M. Pei stuns and impresses.
6. Whether on or off the court, Michael Jordan is a leader who inhibits and exudes.

As writers progress, they may exhibit another peculiarity based in vocabulary development that can relate to the transitive/intransitive distinction. This peculiarity is when a writer uses nouns as verbs. In the first example, a transitive verb is needed. The second example is simply a noun misused as a verb.

The bank assetted Rockefeller one million in equity.

The mayoral decision was to terminalize the project.

A quick check of the dictionary would have suggested that “asset” is a noun that cannot be made into a verbal. “Credited” may be a better choice. “Terminalize” is not a word; however, “terminate” is a verb that would work well, although the writer has included a potentially unnecessary “be” verb as well. Each of these verbs stem from the noun “terminate.” Correctness depends upon a trip to the dictionary to ensure you've made the right choice. Yet I do not want to give you the idea that the English language is extremely rigid and unchanging. A word such as “assetted” may be used in some banking or financial circles that most people are not a part of. And recently in popular culture the verb *conversate* appeared, although we already had the verb *converse* doing the same work. Language is a complex system that is always changing according to how people are speaking and writing. Conventions and usage will change as the new becomes old.

One more type of mistake is common as people move into more formal academic and professional writing. Using awkward or odd prepositions to make incongruent sentence parts fit.

He demands listeners to take action.

Due to past experience, the legal profession has accredited toward teaching lawyers more business skill to better understand their future employers.

Dr. Hofstadter emphasized upon an increase in vice taxes to provide for education revenue.

In the first example, the sentence should read

He demands that listeners take action.

He commands listeners to take action.

While each change is a small distinction, your readers and colleagues will either know or “feel” that something is wrong with your word choice. Small mistakes like this can undermine your credibility with your reader. While the explanation as to why *demand*s is not correct in the above sentence is a lengthy explanation requiring intricate knowledge of grammar, the easiest way to erase mistakes when working with formal language is simply to read as much as possible. Exposure to correct usage of typical verbs in longer and formal sentences is a much better way to improve your writing than learning the dozens of abstract grammatical rules for which there are as many exceptions as rules. Reading will help improve your vocabulary, your sentence structure, your organizational skills, and your communication abilities without ever picking up a pen or sitting at a keyboard.

Often times we cannot find the word we are looking for and grab whatever word is available, using our language knowledge to make it fit. These mistakes are part of the development of a writer, but if you are ever to naturally choose the correct word, you will need to consult a dictionary to see if your chosen word is actually a functional verb! Also, remember that you will often already have a word in your vocabulary that is specific and correct, so be careful in choosing elevated vocabulary. You risk overwriting and missing a chance to communicate your ideas as clearly as possible.

Active and Passive Voice:

Active and passive voice depend upon the arrangement of ideas in a sentence. If the subject/actor of the sentence acts upon the object, then the sentence is active. If the subject/actor receives the action in the verb phrase, then the sentence is passive. If you prefer, you can think of the subject/actor as a “doer” or “performer of the action” as well. However, not all sentences have actors included, and actors do not always need to be human or animate (Examples: the wind, gravity, fate, etc.).

For example, **The dog bit the mailman** is in active voice. We see the dog doing the biting. The sentence components put the actor of the actions first. In **The mailman was bitten by the dog** we do not have an emphasis on the dog acting. Rather, the emphasis is on the object that received the action.

Exercise P. First, identify the subject/actor in the sentence. Next, identify the object/receiver of the action. Then identify whether the following are in active or passive voice.

1. The boy smashed the vase.
2. String Theory rewrote the laws of physics.
3. I spent too much money.

4. The treaty was rescinded by the British government.
5. British Columbia broke the promise.

Although there is no way to predict when to use active or passive sentences, active sentences are preferred in most genres of writing. (Science writing can be an exception.) Typically, situations where a writer wishes to emphasize the object and not the doer are the situations using passive voice. This will be discussed more in later sections dealing with paragraphing—how and when a writer chooses active or passive voice always depends upon the entire paragraph’s discussion of the subject/actor, action, and object.

Notice that passive voice sentences all contain one unique characteristic. Instead of a single verb, they must have a “be” verb along with their main verb. This is one easy way to identify passive voice sentences. Often times, passive voice will include the preposition “by” to include the actor in the sentence.

- The vase was smashed by the boy.
- A mile was run by me in my green socks.
- Too much money was spent by me.
- The British government rescinded the treaty.
- The promise was broken by British Columbia.

However, not every sentence includes the “doer” of the action, yet the sentence is complete. Even without a “doer,” the sentence is still passive.

- We were arrested.*
- Phil and Marcy were married.*

- We were arrested. (by the police)*
- Phil and Marcy were married. (by their priest)*

Exercise Q. Identify each of the following sentences as active or passive. Rewrite each in the opposite voice. As always, imagine what writing situations would call for each sentence being written in the active or the passive voice.

1. He was seen by your parents last night.
2. They were being audited by the securities commission for over eight months.
3. We might have been evaluated during the interview by the manager.
4. Victims of the earthquake were sent relief.
5. He was considered an outstanding player by the coaches.
6. This year, the orphans should have been helped by the social welfare agency.
7. We were being assisted by our instructor for two hours in the classroom.
8. The car was being tuned up by the very knowledgeable mechanic.
9. I accidentally called the mechanic a greasemonkey.
10. The mechanic laughed at my car.
11. The two parties carefully designed next year’s education program.
12. He has been taught Spanish for three years by her.

You have probably noticed that writing in active voice creates less wordier sentences. In complex sentences, active voice can create much clearer sentences.

Many students in the school tasted Thursday’s meatloaf in Friday’s lunch, but **it was eaten by them** anyway. (passive)

Many students in the school tasted Thursday's meatloaf in Friday's lunch, but **they ate it** anyway. (active)

“The Big Picture”: Active and Passive Voice in a Paragraph

Identify which sentences in the following paragraph are passive sentences. Does the passive voice seem appropriate in these situations? Ask yourself why the passive voice seems appropriate in these situations.

The American worker combines dedication with innovation (1). Statistics prove this true (2). Ninety percent of American workers claim their job as a component of self-esteem(3). Sixty percent reveal they would miss their job(4). Each of these dedicated men and women devise a means to balance work and play in their busy lives(5). Yet the middle and working classes of Americans were robbed of wage increases equal to inflation as early as the 1970s(6). By the 1980s, stagflation wreaked havoc upon the economy(7). Americans were made to work harder just to break even.(8)

Jobs disappeared overseas(9). Many blue-collar towns lost their major sources of employment(10). These sources of employment were not replaced by the government or industry(11).....

Answer to “The Big Picture”:

Sentences 6 and 8 are passive. I would suggest that in this passage, we see the first reason for passive sentences: people being acted upon by an unnamed force. In this case, the American worker is being acted upon by the economic forces, not a particular person. The American worker is a victim without a particular oppressor. Much like the example *They were married (by the priest)*, sentences 6 and 8 are simply missing the “by” that would mention an actor/doer. A writer could easily provide an actor/doer for these sentences:

6. *Yet the middle and working classes of Americans were robbed of wage increases equal to inflation **by bad economic policy** as early as the 1970s.*
8. *Americans were made to work harder **by economic necessity** just to break even.*

Often these “invisible forces” are implied or could simply be too many “doers” to name. So they are left out and the reader simply realizes the “doer” will appear at some point in the argument. The beginning sentences are active because the “doer” is the American worker. The “doer” in sentence 7 is “stagflation.” Although this a switch from the American worker as “doer,” this change makes sense. “Stagflation” is part of the unnamed “doer” that victimizes American workers in sentences 6 and 8. Thus, sentences 6, 7, and 8 seem to be a new idea separate from the first five sentences championing the American worker.

In paragraph two, sentence 11, we see the other major reason for passive voice. Whenever a writer wishes to continue discussing a subject in a new sentence without any information in between, the passive voice provides an outlet to do so. Sentence 10 ends with *major sources of employment*, and sentence 11 begins with *These sources of employment*. Thus, passive voice seems a good choice. Although this breaks both the “write in active voice” rule, as well as the “combine like information” rule, the paragraph may be more successful because it breaks these rules.

Remember that it is impossible to predict whether a sentence should be active or passive without knowing what information came before your sentence and what information will come after your sentence. Equally important is the genre of writing. Each of these criteria should be applied when you are checking your drafts for voice. Later sections dealing with paragraphing will discuss these choices in excerpts from student essays.

Sentence Types:

The four sentence types:

Interrogative

Imperative

Declarative

Exclamatory

Declarative sentences are statements about the world that are not questions, commands, demands, suggestions, or exclamations. Most sentences are declarative sentences. I suppose you could say that declarative sentences lack character. After all, imperative sentences and interrogative sentences require the interplay of two people, speaker and listener. Exclamatory sentences are all in a rush and excited, which most people would do in front of at least a one-person audience. Declarative sentences are simply informational, stating something about the world that may not depend upon the actions, opinions, or answers of the speaker or audience. However, this is also their greatest strength. Here are some basic declarative sentences.

I stopped in a small town.

Harold is a fireman.

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy hens.

IPOD sales are a direct threat to the music industry's sales and profits.

Structural anthropology examines similar societal patterns practiced in multiple societies.

Clarence Thomas is the most conservative African-American justice to reside in the Supreme Court.

Your earliest memories are probably of being drilled on the four sentence types. Beyond identifying them, use this knowledge to help you communicate and argue effectively. Because exposition and argument depend on statements and propositions taken to be truthful or based in sound reason, writers typically choose declarative sentences when expressing their opinions and explaining themselves. Declarative sentences also carry the added advantage of seeming objective and not based as much in the emotions of the writer. Imperative sentences can seem bossy. Exclamatory sentences can make a writer's voice or a writer's idea seem based more in emotion or excitement than sound reasoning. For these reasons, imperatives and exclamatories are not used as frequently as declarative sentences. Consider the following sentences. One sounds professional and carries the gravity of formal writing. The other sounds spoken and informal.

The American Paleontology Society overturned a previous ruling on the age of the Woolly Mammoth.

The American Paleontology Society overturned a previous ruling on the age of the Woolly Mammoth!

As you try to build authority and trust with your audience, small decisions such as sentence type can have large ripple effects on your level of formality. Also, punctuation and sentence type can determine if you are perceived as balanced, well-spoken, and ethical, or if you are excitable and prone to rushing to judgment.

Wet Clay Language

Here is a pair of sentences exemplifying the reductive quality of the exclamatory sentence:

The current military action in the Middle East is nothing more than blood for oil.

No Blood for Oil!

While these examples are a similar idea written differently, you can see how the exclamation point can carry with it the connotation of extreme emotion. Your reader may see the second, even if you've written something akin to the first with the addition of an exclamation point. You can imagine the first being a basic thesis statement for a balanced argumentative essay. Sound reasoning and claims could easily follow this statement. The second example seems both too explosive and too inarticulate to function as even a basic thesis statement because it may alienate those it wishes to persuade immediately.

A similar quality of unbalanced emotion can exist in the imperative sentence, but this isn't necessarily true. Here are some everyday examples:

Be careful.

Run away.

Stop it.

Change your ways.

Know thyself.

Now consider the following uses of the imperative in a writing context:

Give up your right to bear arms immediately.

Surrendering the individual's right to gun ownership would decrease gun deaths in the United States by thousands every year.

The second again seems much more balanced. If you've read closely, you'll notice the second, more balanced example does include cause/effect information the first example does not include. This may be because declarative sentences lend themselves to a strong thesis statement and reasoning simply through their style. However, this may not always be true. Still, consider the following:

Give up your right to bear arms immediately and decrease gun deaths in the United States by thousands every year.

Even with the same cause/effect information, this last example still lends the statement a "pushiness" that most readers will notice. Because we have been exposed to so many essays and arguments starting like the first, it is questionable whether or not good cause and effect reasoning at the sentence's end can overcome the unusual imperative start of this purported essay. I would suggest that the imperative in each of these examples feels more like a slogan than an argumentative thesis, and these two types of rhetoric are worlds apart, each with their own goals.

The interrogative sentence, or question, can also provoke thought. Yet this sentence carries with it the risk that a reader will not "answer" your question exactly as you wish. If this happens, you may not have stated your claims and reasoning as successfully as you might wish.

How can anyone think that college is worth the money?

The rising cost of college tuition is not worth the expense.

Each sentence gives the same opinion, but the first allows readers—perhaps *invites* readers—to imagine ways that college is worth the price. The second sentence closes down potential

counterargument by closing down, at least mildly, invitations to the reader's imagination. Yet questions can also be thought-provoking and a way to make a major claim of your argument stand out *because* it is not stated in the predictable declarative sentence. Writers often use questions to sum up an argumentative claim and transition into the next part of their essay in a style more noticeable than all those objective declarative sentences. This dual potential is the unique aspect of using a question to convey your opinions. Why would letting your reader imagine counterarguments not be a double-edged sword?

Interrogatives, like imperatives and exclamatories, can help or hinder your persuasiveness. You should always remember that each sentence type is a tool in your box, and each type can be used effectively, especially when read in relation to many other declarative sentences you will naturally use in your paragraphs. Because declarative sentences are the “default” sentence, you might try noticing how successful writers use imperatives, exclamatories, and interrogatives to enhance their arguments. In time, you will integrate these techniques into your own writing.

Parallelism: Nouns, Verbs, and Clauses

Several issues of correctness, not personal style, remain. One issue is *parallelism*. The other is punctuation. Parallelism is the proper “set-up” for a list of nouns, verbs, or clauses in a sentence. Most lists appear toward the end of a sentence, but lists can appear anywhere in a sentence. To make things easier on readers, writers always start the list with the same grammatical component.

Noun Parallelism:

Nouns are easy to set in parallel order. Simply place them after a verb.

I went to the store to buy cheese, milk, and bread.

The Deep South is comprised of Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

Noun phrases will be the same.

I like chocolate on my ice cream, butterscotch on my yogurt, and whipped cream on my coffee.

Verb Parallelism:

Verbs are trickier than nouns. Some verbs are one word. Others require a preposition to complete their meaning. Still others have helping verbs. Some phrases will have an adverb appearing to modify just one of the list of verbs. You must do your best to align these verbs and choose tenses that match each other. In the following examples, identify what part of language is beginning each list.

The olympic skater started, crashed, and cried.

The olympic skater started fast, finished slow, and came in last place.

He is going to Italy, travelling by bus, and will arrive in Rome next Tuesday.

Christopher Columbus traveled to Spain to see the queen, to the Americas to find the New World, and to the ends of the Earth to see if the Earth was round.

Clause Parallelism:

Clause parallelism can begin with a variety of the parts of speech. You must simply repeat the part of speech for each clause. Identify what part is repeated in each of the following.

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If you know who you are, where you wish to go, and what you want, then you should start your journey.

He is known as a man of good taste, of great talent, of better judgment, and of exquisite values.

He of great talent, of better judgment, and of good taste will be arriving at either ten to ten, ten to eleven, or ten to twelve.

By snow, by sleet, or by hail, the mailman always brings my mail.

Exercise R: Make the following sentences parallel.

1. The expectations were to be good, run with the best, and to go until the finish.
2. The results were to be steadfast, in resolve, and to be sensible.
3. Experts predict that a major quake will hit the Indian Ocean coast again, causing an upsurge in coastal erosion, and it is to be salinizing to the coastal farmland too.
4. His former illnesses include pneumonia, asthma, and the catching of a cold.
5. In this age, actors have to be gorgeous in looks and a great actor.
6. Stan can fix a car like no other and who can fix a television too.
7. The Dow surged to record highs, record lows, and to regain its balance.
8. Early that year, the young poet started school, acting lessons, and began playing musical instruments.
9. It is easier to fly a plane than landing one on the ground.

Punctuation:

I have saved punctuation for last not because it is least important, but because punctuation does not carry information. Punctuation can be the greatest aid to breaking up information sensibly to your reader, but it does not move information around, and “moving information around” (style, choice, and awareness) has been the concept behind this chapter. Punctuation is highly formal, always required, and important to master.

The Comma:

Commas are used for a variety of reasons. They may separate nouns, verbs, and clauses. If you have already worked through this chapter, then you have been exposed to most of the following comma uses.

1. Commas separate items in a series (parallelism). Whether or not the final comma before the conjunction is needed depends upon what editorial style you are using. Please check an appropriate handbook for an answer. I have chosen to include the comma, but this needn't be so.

The burglars stole my bike, my wallet, and my new grill.

To be, to have, and to succeed are all admirable goals.

2. Commas separate parallel adjectives without conjunctions or not in a list.
When I bought my car, it was a cool, bad street racer. Now it is a junky, funky rustbucket.
3. Commas are used with introductory phrases in a sentence. Introductory phrases are always dependent clauses requiring a complete sentence afterward.

Although he ran the race well, he lost by several steps.

Far from the earth, the moon comes out to greet the night.

4. Commas should separate modifying clauses.

With Dave's homework around him, Chuck tried to finish his assignment.

Tragically, he didn't see the sword was dipped with poison.

Sometimes short introductory clauses omit the comma.

From now on I'll walk.

5. Commas are used to divide independent clauses (complete sentences) from each other to avoid run-ons.

The magazine was started in 1942, and it had doubled in size by 1948.

She couldn't get angry, nor could she get even.

6. Commas should not be used in what is known as a restrictive phrase, but they should be used in a non-restrictive phrase.

Restrictive phrases offer information that modifies a noun in the sentence. It is not extra information.

*The streetcleaners need wages **that are livable**.*

Livable directly modifies *wages*. If you remove *livable* from the sentence, we don't know that streetcleaners are paid at all! That is not what the sentence intends to communicate. *Livable* is not extra information.

Non-restrictive:

*The streetcleaners need new uniforms, **which are blue**.*

The color of the uniforms has nothing to do with why they are needed. Thus, the information is extra and is separated from the kernel sentence with a comma.

1) My girlfriend Becky who lives in Minneapolis is also my best friend.

2) My girlfriend Becky, who lives in Minneapolis, is also my best friend.

In the first example, the speaker has more than one girlfriend named Becky—*who lives in Minneapolis* is required information to differentiate her another girlfriend named Becky living in a different city. In the second non-restrictive example, the city she lives in is extra information. The commas serve to remove it from the kernel sentence *My girlfriend is my best friend*. When a clause of this type adds extra information to part of the kernel sentence, the clause is known as an appositive clause.

7. Commas also set off parenthetical expressions, which are similar to appositive clauses.

Parenthetical expressions add extra information as well. Sometimes they add speaker opinion. Other times they modify.

The thirty-five hour work week, it is said, will never find a home in America.

I picked up after last night's party, more or less.

8. Commas separate contrasting information.

I need a 93% on this exam, not an 85%.

He chased his dream, but never caught it.

Unlike his father, he became a banker.

9. Commas should be used to separate your own words and a direct quotation.

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“Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country,” stated John F. Kennedy.

John F. Kennedy stated, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”

However, do not use a comma if you blend your words with the quotation to make a single sentence.

Benjamin Franklin said that “A penny saved is a penny earned.”

Elvis sang that he was “down on the end of lonely street.”

10. Commas should separate the day and year, as well as the year and subsequent information.

Franklin Roosevelt solemnly proclaimed that December 7, 1941, is a day that will live in infamy.

Commas are not required if the date is inverted or if only the month and year appear.
On 7 December 1941 Pearl Harbor was attacked.

December 1941 Pearl Harbor was attacked.

Finally, commas can also be used anytime information is confusing.

That that will be will be

Interestingly, the findings report that those of the legal age that could should.

become

That that will be, will be.

Interestingly, the findings report that those of the legal age that could, should.

The Semicolon:

The semicolon requires an independent clause (a complete sentence) on each side of it. It is used to show a finer or stronger relationship between two sentences than a period would.

Tolerance is noble; forgiveness is divine.

I am returning to my hometown; I will never leave.

Often, a conjunctive adverb (however, thus, moreover, therefore, otherwise, nevertheless, etc.) appears before the second sentence; thus, we see that the sentences are paired by a type of cause/effect relationship. The semicolon marks this.

Tolerance is noble; however, forgiveness is divine.

I am returning to my hometown; moreover, I will never leave.

The semicolon plus a conjunctive adverb emphasizes the speaker's heightened “attitude” toward the topic. We get a weighty attitude about forgiveness and the speaker's hometown in the above examples.

The Colon:

The colon has two basic functions. The first is to introduce a list.

To be a lawyer, one must do the following things: major in pre-law, perform well on standardized tests, and specialize once in law school.

Often, writers misuse the colon in the following way:

Camping requires items such as: a tent, a grill, insect repellent, and firewood.

Such as serves the same function as the colon—to introduce. Both are not required. Furthermore, neither may be required.

Camping requires items such as a tent, a grill, insect repellent, and firewood.

Camping requires the following items: a tent, a grill, insect repellent, and firewood.

Camping requires a tent, a grill, insect repellent, and firewood.

The second use of a colon is to introduce a definition.

Humankind suffers from one great flaw: humanness.

While he walked down the mountain, his feet felt only one sensation: the cold, dull thump of frostbite.

I learned something about myself that day: I am often afraid when I don't need to be.

Late-stage capitalism can be defined as only two things: opportunism and irresponsible growth.

Opportunism and irresponsible growth can be summed up in one idea: Late-stage capitalism.

Notice that each of these “definitions” is not a dictionary definition. Sometimes it is easier to think of these as two perfectly balanced statements rather than an old-fashioned dictionary definition. As mentioned early in this textbook, dictionary definitions often fail to capture large meaning, multiple meanings, and contextual meaning. The colon can help you glue a sentence-length defining idea to a sentence requiring explanation.

The colon has other functions as well, such as separating a greeting from the body of a letter. It is useful to remember that colon usage does not require complete sentences; semicolon usage does.

The Hyphen:

The hyphen serves many of the functions listed above for commas, semicolons, and colons. It can attach fragments to sentences, separate whole sentences, set off lists, and set off appositive information as well. Which type of punctuation the writer selects depends upon style, subject, and emphasis.

I used to run a lot—in high school.

The election of 1984 was one of the most predictable in history—except in Minnesota.

I really wish I had switched my major last year—I would be graduating in three semesters.

John's cousin—who lives in Cambodia—won't be back for two years.

Exercise S:

Rewrite the following sentences using appropriate punctuation. Some sentences may have several potential answers.

1. Should the president pass away the vice-president assumes the presidency.

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2. I am investigating three things the limits of chemistry in botany the effects of mercury on saplings and any research that overlaps these subjects.
3. Talent is not natural, it is earned in private and displayed in public.
4. Consequently the army is becoming a necessary choice for young men and women no matter how much they wish to enroll in college immediately.
5. They serve with honor; pride; and humility.
6. I used to sing a lot. In the church choir.
7. The fountain of youth has never been found for many reasons. Including the impossibility of its existence.
8. Because of plentiful rain. After many years of drought. The Irish Potato Famine eventually ended.
9. Coffee should not be taken by children. Because their growth is stunted.

Closing:

Some errors make communication itself difficult. Other errors may be grammatically correct, but they hurt your ability to persuade your readers that your argument is a good one. Remember that the easiest way to master writing is simply to read as much as possible. All of these ideas are standard fare in our highly literate society, and the communications of your field will provide you with the professional vocabulary and style that allows you to communicate efficiently. Also, you should always remember that, despite all of these suggestions, your writing is first and foremost a *creative* activity. You will always have to make choices. The point of this chapter was not to give you hard and fast rules that guarantee your success as a writer. My goal in this chapter was to give you an awareness of likely difficulties as you transition toward a career based in writing, and I wanted you to have a criteria to begin to judge the potential success of your writing on the word level and sentence level.

Answers to Exercises:

Exercise A:

1. governor, California, time
2. hours, I (pronoun), town
3. I (pronoun), meals, evening
4. springtime, time
5. Johnny, town, weekend
6. Wisconsin, United States, 1848
7. Blink Theory, advertisements, quantity, exposure, quality, exposure
8. Experts, identity, part, images, society

Exercise B:

1. In terms of reciprocity, Chinese environmental policy is a tragedy played out in the weather patterns of neighboring countries.
2. Baseball's steroid policy contramands values of America today and baseball's past.
3. While the Marshall Plan did not cure Europe immediately, Europe's comeback took only several decades.
4. Initial investigations suggested that the senator was guilty of embezzlement for the misappropriation of funds.
5. Half time employees protested for adequate health care consisting of dental care and fair deductibles.
6. The scientific community declared that many minerals found on earth are found in the rest of the galaxy and predate earth's formation.
The scientific community declared that many minerals found on earth predate earth's formation and are found in the rest of the galaxy.
7. Television and radio changed American society forever.
8. The helicopter and the M-16 were first used as weapons in the Vietnam War.
9. The jury debated for two hours. They voted three times before reaching a verdict.
The jury debated for two hours and voted three times before reaching a verdict.

Exercise C:

1. Mercantilism has often existed in societies that traded internationally.
2. High school sports foster responsibility and build self-esteem.
3. Teens are often influenced to use steroids for better performance because their professional role models use them.
4. People are addicted to oil, and we must investigate alternative fuel sources.
5. Agricultural growth cannot sustain population growth.
6. Energy efficient light bulbs and unplugged appliances will make us use "green" priorities.

Exercise D:

1. Acknowledging my learning disability guaranteed me the help I needed for college success.
2. Choosing marketing provided me quality time and a livable salary.
3. Melting ice caps will present a danger to coastal cities within twenty years.
4. Whoever commits a crime should be punished.

Exercise E:

[Other editorial possibilities exist than those I've listed.]

1. The Brooks' commission's inconsistencies were found unforgivable by the public.
The public found the Brooks' commission's inconsistencies unforgivable.
2. Non-curvilinear buildings are eyesores.
3. To investigate late-nineteenth-century crime, I used Sherlock Holmes' methodology.
4. The KGB agent's assassinations were classified within the Russian archives that also recorded trips to China and Cuba during the late 1940s.
5. The agency then offered one million dollars to compensate for illegal activities.
6. Pundits forecasted the economics for each month of the next two years.
Pundits forecasted the month to month economics of the next two years.

Exercise F:

1. While Jerry told his boss he quit, his girlfriend waited in the car.
2. After he relented to the pressure to step down from office, the dictator resigned from his lifelong post.
3. Announcing their fundraiser, the clergy held a carwash and a booksale.
4. His face turning red, he called an ambulance and waited to be taken to the hospital.
5. While his girlfriend waited in the car, Jerry told his boss he quit.
6. Resigning from his lifelong post, the dictator relented to pressure to step down from office.
7. Later holding their car wash and book sale, the clergy announced their fundraiser.
8. Before he called an ambulance and waited to be taken to the hospital, he turned red in the face.

*****It is questionable whether 5-8 are strong sentences when reversed. Sentence 5 may shift the emphasis from Jerry to his girlfriend. Sentences 6-8 may change the sense of time and causation implicit in the original sentences.*

Exercise G:

- a) Trying to break the record
 - b) the man ran a mile
 - c) but failed to do so in under four minutes
- 1.[The schoolboard attempted to block the addendum.
The schoolboard voted without audience discussion.
The schoolboard's choice angered some parents.]

Attempting to block the addendum, the schoolboard voted without audience discussion, angering some parents.

Angering some parents, the schoolboard voted without audience discussion in an attempt to block the addendum.

- 2.[I remember my father wanted me to be an Olympic champion..

I want to be an Olympic champion.]

To honor my father's wishes, I want to be an Olympic champion.

3. [I completed my dream.

I became a teacher.

I wanted to be a teacher my whole life.]

Wanting to be a teacher my whole life, I completed my dream and became a teacher.

[It is questionable whether the third component is needed. Including wanting and dreaming may be redundant.]

Completing my dream, I became a teacher.

4.[I wanted to be a fireman my whole life.

I became a fireman.

I am proud of myself.]

After wanting to be a fireman my whole life, I proudly became one.

Exercise H:

1. What it was was the senate that gave the whistleblower protection.
2. What it was was protection that the senate gave the whistleblower.
3. The senate gave the whistleblower protection.
4. It is a donation that the college president received from the alumni.
5. It is the alumni that gave the college president a donation.

or

It is the alumni that gave a donation to the college president.

6. The college president received a donation from the alumni.

Exercise I:

1. New York is big—like Chicago.
New York is big. Chicago is big also.
2. He ran track back in high school.
Back in high school, he ran track.
3. Eliminating violence from the world will require brotherhood, discussion, and tolerance.
4. Canada's healthcare outranks U.S. healthcare. For example, Canadian healthcare provides cheap pills for seniors, cheap surgery for the ill, and inexpensive doctor's visits.

Exercise J:

1. The computer Deep Blue beat a chess champion, but I can't remember his name.
2. You owe me thirteen quid, or I'll smack you.
3. I like to think that if it came down to it I'd be heroic. I can't say I would be, though.
A better rewording exists. A period or semicolon can still both be used.

I like to think that if heroism was required, I'd be heroic; I can't say I would be, though.

4. The military might often generates a military-industrial complex. Eisenhower warned

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against this situation.

The military might often generates a military-industrial complex; Eisenhower warned against this situation.

5. If you're going to the store, buy me something nice, and I'll pay you back.
6. Spilling oil into the sea is a regular occurrence for some oil refineries, but some people are pressing for stricter laws. (No error.)
7. Officials acted quickly, saving the school program for another year and helping children in need.
8. Because I wanted to oblige the city's public transportation program, I've taken the train everyday this month; I will do the same next month.

Exercise K:

1. am
2. were
3. are
4. were
5. is
6. is
7. was
8. was

Exercise L:

1. became
Abraham Lincoln supported the Emancipation Proclamation during the middle of the Civil War.
2. appeared
(see later examples)
3. appears
The television show won last night.
4. seemed
The Marshall Plan founded post-war European construction.
5. felt
My happiness grew all night long.

Exercise M:

Each verb pertains to the *tense*, the time of the event in relation to the time the sentence is spoken. Instructors should lead a class discussion as to why and how these verb phrases can be modified only the time and duration of the event do not change in a rewrite.

Exercise N:

1. The people down the street anger easily.
2. The people down the street rioted after the soccer match.
3. John makes soap carving.

4. Bob implemented the new program.
5. Stop.
6. The truck delivers for a bread company.
7. Since the last baseball game, Ralph supports the Yankees.
8. Electing a new president requires voter awareness.

Exercise O: (Reporting verbs are in **bold**. Other changes are in *italics*. The substitute verbs I have chosen may not be your own.)

1. It is **reported** that 1.5 million African hospital beds contain AIDS patients. Research **illustrates** that this number will continue to grow without international intervention. Multiple international organizations **conclude** that an emphasis on condom distribution as a deterrent has not met earlier projections.
2. *Louisiana's post World War II oil boom* reached its peak in 1969. My review will *explain* how the oil industry *contributed to* Lafayette's development into a large and successful city.
3. Because of the emphasis on Marxism, some humanities scholars have turned toward older forms of secular humanism. This is **demonstrated** in the work of Harold Bloom. Bloom's work *includes* a combination of historical information and close reading. Bloom may also *utilize* biographical material.

[For the fourth example, you were to find strong verbs, especially reporting verbs, and change them to weaker verbs that complete the sentence but lack specificity and conviction.]

4. Meteorologists have *had* accurate climate changes in the United States for most of the Twentieth Century. While conservative reports **show** slowly rising sea waters, less conservative reports **show** many coastal areas will be threatened by ocean waters within the next several decades. While the United States Government has been slow to **tell** these findings to the public, the international scientific community publicly **says** this information on a daily basis.

[For the second part, you were to choose new reporting verbs.]

4. Meteorologists have **recorded** accurate climate changes in the United States for most of the Twentieth Century. While conservative reports **indicate** slowly rising sea waters, less conservative reports **promise** many coastal areas will be threatened by ocean waters within the next several decades. While the United States Government has been slow to **introduce** these findings to the public, the international scientific community publically **verifies** this information on a daily basis.

Exercise P:

1. boy, vase: active
2. String Theory, laws: active
3. I, money: active
4. British government, treaty: passive
5. British Columbia, promise: active

Exercise Q:

1. *passive*: Active version: Your parents saw him last night.
2. *passive*: Active version: The securities commission audited them for over eight months.

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3. *passive*: Active version: The manager might have evaluated us during the interview.
4. *active*: Passive version: Relief was sent to the victims of the hurricane.
5. *passive*: Active version: The coaches considered him an outstanding player.
6. *passive*: Active version: The social welfare agency should have helped the orphans this year.
7. *passive*: Active version: Our instructor assisted us for two hours in the classroom.
8. *passive*: Active version: The very knowledgeable mechanic tuned up the car.
9. *active*: Passive version: The mechanic was accidentally called a greasemonkey by me.
10. *active*: Passive version: My car was laughed at by the mechanic.
11. *active*: Passive version: Next year's education program was carefully designed by the two parties.
12. *passive*: Active version: She has taught him Spanish for three years.

Exercise R:

1. The expectations were to be good, to run with the best, and to go until the finish.
The expectations were to be good, run with the best, and go until the finish.
2. The results were to be steadfast, to be resolved, and to be sensible.
The results were to be steadfast, resolved, and sensible.
3. Experts predict that a major quake will hit the coast again, causing an upsurge in coastal erosion and salinizing the coastal farmland.
4. *There is nothing technically wrong with this example.*
His former illnesses include pneumonia, asthma, and a cold.
5. *This example should have either two modifiers and prepositional phrases, or two nouns.*
In this age, actors have to be gorgeous in looks and great in their acting.
In this age, actors have to be a gorgeous person and a great actor.
6. Stan can fix a car like no other and can fix a television too.
Stan is someone who can fix a car like no other and who can fix a television too.
7. **Surged** works as a verb for **highs** and **lows**, but a second verb is needed for "balance."
This second verb should be in the same tense as surged.
The Dow surged to record highs and lows, then returned to its balance.
8. *In this example, it may be easiest to add a verb to the second component of the list.*
Early that year, the young poet started school, took up acting lessons, and began playing musical instruments.
9. It is easier to fly a plane than to land one on the ground.

Exercise S: (Other possibilities may exist other than those I've included.)

1. Should the president pass away, the vice-president assumes the presidency.
2. I am investigating three things: the limits of chemistry in botany, the effects of mercury on saplings, and any research that overlaps these subjects.
I am investigating the limits of chemistry in botany, the effects of mercury on saplings, and any research that overlaps these subjects.
3. Talent is not natural. It is earned in private and displayed in public.

Talent is not natural; it is earned in private and displayed in public.

Talent is not natural—it is earned in private and displayed in public.

4. Consequently, the army is becoming a necessary choice for young men and women—no matter how much they wish to enroll in college immediately.

No matter how much young men and women wish to enroll in college immediately, the army is becoming a necessary choice.

5. They serve with honor, pride, and humility.

6. I used to sing a lot in the church choir.

7. The fountain of youth has never been found for many reasons, including the impossibility of its existence.

The fountain of youth has never been found for many reasons—including the impossibility of its existence.

8. After many years of drought—and because of plentiful rain—the Irish Potato Famine eventually ended.

Because of plentiful rain, after many years of drought, the Irish Potato Famine eventually ended.

9. Coffee should not be taken by children because their growth is stunted.

Coffee should not be taken by children—because their growth is stunted.