



Improving Sentence Style

In the first part of this chapter, you learned some techniques for making smooth sentence combinations. Now you will learn how to style your sentences by making them clear, balanced, and varied.

Using Parallel Structure

When you combine several related ideas in one sentence, it is important to make sure that your combinations are balanced. You create balance in a sentence by using the same form or part of speech to express each idea. For example, you balance a noun with a noun, a phrase with a phrase, and a clause with a clause. This balance is called parallelism, or *parallel structure*.

- NOT PARALLEL I am not much of an athlete, but I like softball, soccer, and playing hockey. [two nouns and a phrase]
- PARALLEL I am not much of an athlete, but I like **softball, soccer, and hockey**. [three nouns]
- NOT PARALLEL Dominic does not have enough time to play soccer, join the debating team, and band. [two phrases and a noun]
- PARALLEL Dominic does not have enough time **to play soccer, to join the debating team, and to participate in band**. [three phrases]
- NOT PARALLEL He said that he would meet you at the soccer field and not to be late. [clause and phrase]
- PARALLEL He said **that he would meet you at the soccer field and that you should not be late**. [two clauses]

SKILLS FOCUS

Identify and use parallel grammatical structures. Use parallelism correctly.

Exercise 7 Revising Sentences to Create Parallel Structure

Bring balance to the following sentences by putting the ideas in parallel form. You may need to add or delete some words. If a sentence is already correct, write *C*.

1. Paris, the capital of France, is famous for its history, culture, and eating in excellent restaurants.
2. The Seine River runs through the city and supplies water to all Parisians.
3. Visiting the Notre Dame Cathedral, walking through the Louvre Museum, and the Eiffel Tower are all favorite pastimes of tourists.
4. It is interesting that Paris has always attracted artists and refugees have always been welcome.
5. Many famous Americans, including Ernest Hemingway, lived and were writing in Paris during the 1920s.

Revising Stringy Sentences

Linking together related ideas is a good way to bring variety to your writing. If you overdo it, however, you may end up with a *stringy sentence*.

A *stringy sentence* just goes on and on. It usually has too many independent clauses strung together with coordinating conjunctions like *and* or *but*. Since all the ideas are treated equally, your reader may have trouble seeing how they are related.

There are three ways you can fix a stringy sentence. You can

- break the sentence into two or more sentences
- turn some of the independent clauses into subordinate clauses or phrases
- use a combination of the above strategies

STRINGY The fire alarm bell rang, and everyone started to file out of school, but then our principal came down the hall, and he said the bell had been rung by mistake, and we went back to class.

BETTER The fire alarm bell rang, and everyone started to file out of school. Then our principal came down the hall to say the bell had been rung by mistake. We went back to class.

BETTER When the fire alarm bell rang, everyone started to file out of school. Then our principal came down the hall. He said the bell had been rung by mistake, and we went back to class.

SKILLS FOCUS

Revise to refine word choice. Revise to improve organization.