

Strategies for Revising Sentences

- ✓ Use parallelism.
- ✓ Use a consistent point of view.
- ✓ Use specific words.
- ✓ Use active verbs.
- ✓ Use concise words.

What is Parallelism?

- Parallelism: The consistent and logical use of the same grammatical construction –word, phrase, or clause— in a series.
- Uses of parallelism
 - To coordinate elements in a series.
 - To pair ideas.
 - To enhance coherence.
 - To organize lists.

- A sentence may contain a series of **words, phrases, or clauses**. To make it parallel, be consistent within the series: use nouns with nouns, verbs with verbs, subordinate clauses with subordinate clauses, and so on.

Original: ***This infernal substance is a terror to imagine, a pleasure to behold, and it is highly flammable.***

- This sentence is NOT parallel because the three characteristics listed do not match up grammatically:
 - terror to imagine (noun phrase)
 - pleasure to behold (noun phrase)
 - it is highly flammable (clause)

Revision: ***This infernal substance is a terror to imagine, a pleasure to behold, and a breeze to inflame.***

- By changing the odd man out, “it is highly flammable” into a noun phrase, we make the sentence parallel.
- Remember, a sentence may contain more than one idea. If so, you must make the ideas grammatically parallel.

Point of View: Consistency Counts!

- Pronouns that stand in for a person or group of people should be consistent with the dominant point of view.

Example: ***I love unsolved mysteries. During the summers, you visit Scotland, the home of Nessie, the Loch Ness monster. They take pictures, collect any physical evidence present, and hob knob with other “fans”. Most of all, I look forward to a glimpse of the infamous beast.***

- Point of view in this paragraph is inconsistent. That could confuse readers, who cannot be sure whether they are being told about the writer's interests, their own interests, or those of other people.
 - The first sentence is a statement from the "I" (first-person) point of view. This shows that the writer is telling about him- or herself.
 - The second sentence switches to the "you" (second-person) point of view, making it seem that the writer is saying something about the reader.

- The third sentence switches to the "they" (third-person) point of view, suggesting that the writer's subject is the interests of others.
- In the final sentence, the writer switches back to the first person.

Specific Words: The RENNS Model

- To be an effective writer, you must use specific words rather than general words.
- Use the **RENNS** model to help you add specific, concrete details to your sentences.
 - **R**easons
 - **E**xamples
 - **N**ames
 - **N**umbers
 - **S**enses
- Examine how the following sentence becomes clearer and more specific by using the RENNS model.

"The boy ate a burger in his car."

1. Use exact names. (Not "the boy," but "Vince.")
2. Use lively verbs. (Not "ate," but "devoured.")
3. Use descriptive words. (Not "his car," but "his rickety old Buick.")
4. Use sense descriptions. ("Vince devoured his juicy, triple-decker with the "works" cheeseburger while sitting on the squeaking front seat of his rickety old Buick.")
5. Provide reasons/examples ("Because he was running late for work, Vince devoured his juicy, triple-decker with the "works" cheeseburger while sitting on the squeaking front seat of his rickety old Buick.")

Active Verbs

- Keep your sentences active, not passive!
- When the subject receives the action, the verb is in the *passive voice*.
Original: ***Mina was bitten by Count Dracula.***
- When the subject of a sentence performs the action of the verb, the verb is in the *active voice*.
Revision: ***Count Dracula bit Mina.***

What's One Sure Fire Way to Make Your Professor's Hair Stand on End? Wordiness!

- Always be concise.
Wordy: ***It is the Bride of Frankenstein, who had recently been reanimated, who screamed in extreme terror due to the fact that the really hideous monster seemed to take particular interest in her.***
Better: ***The recently reanimated Bride of Frankenstein screamed in extreme terror because the hideous monster took an interest in her.***
- What causes wordiness?
 - You may have been struggling to think ideas through as you wrote, and piled up alternative wordings.
 - Or you may have fallen into the habit of using more words than necessary just to use up space.