

**20.2**

# Improving Your Sentences (Sentence Combining) • Practice 1

**Sentence Combining** Combine short sentences by using compound subjects or verbs; phrases; or compound, complex, or compound-complex sentences.

Separate Sentences	Combined Sentences
Otis is a very talented guitarist. Alice also plays the guitar very well.	Otis and Alice are both very talented guitarists.
He lost control of his car. It spun around and slammed into a tree.	When he lost control of his car, it spun around and slammed into a tree.
The game had ended. Some of the fans moved quickly toward the exits. Others remained in the stands to celebrate their team's victory.	Once the game had ended, some of the fans moved quickly toward the exits while others remained in the stands to celebrate their team's victory.

**Exercise 1** **Sentence Combining.** Combine the sentences in each item into a single, longer sentence.

**EXAMPLE:** Chuck received an athletic scholarship. He accepted it gratefully.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
*When Chuck received an athletic scholarship, he accepted it gratefully.*

- Elizabeth Fox is now a district attorney. She is a former congresswoman. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Fred is a gifted athlete. He is also a good student. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Sandy waited in line for eight hours to buy tickets for the concert. All the tickets were sold before she reached the front of the line. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Ron slipped and fell into a puddle. He ruined his best pair of pants. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- The school's football team won easily. The soccer team was defeated. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 2** **More Work with Combining Sentences.** Follow the directions in Exercise 1.

- Violet Snodgrass won the talent competition. She is an excellent actress. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Tim raced through the airport. He was trying to locate the gate his parents would be coming through. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Mr. and Mrs. Franklin returned from their vacation. They discovered that their house had been broken into. Nothing valuable had been stolen. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- The wind whistled through the trees. The sound of thunder echoed through the air. The rain steadily pounded the ground. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- School was canceled for the day. There had been a major snowstorm the previous night. Most of the students spent the day playing in the snow. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_



**20.3**

**Vary Sentences (Expanding Short Sentences, Shortening Long Sentences) • Practice 1**

**Expanding Short Sentences** Eliminate short, choppy sentences by adding details or combining ideas.

Short Sentences	Expanded Sentences
Frank walked down the street.	Frank walked at an accelerated pace down the dark, deserted city street.
The skydiver jumped out of the plane.	Without hesitating to look down at the ground hundreds of feet below, the skydiver jumped out of the plane.

**Shortening Long Sentences** Eliminate long, rambling sentences by regrouping ideas into two or more simpler sentences.

Long, Complicated Sentence	Shorter, Clearer Sentences
Almanacs, which dealt at first only with agricultural affairs, attracted interest early in the Colonial Period and really became an institution with the publication of Benjamin Franklin's <i>Poor Richard's Almanac</i> in the Revolutionary Period.	Almanacs, which dealt at first only with agricultural affairs, attracted interest early in the Colonial Period. They really became an institution with the publication of Benjamin Franklin's <i>Poor Richard's Almanac</i> in the Revolutionary Period.

**Exercise 1 Expanding Short Sentences.** Improve each of the sentences by adding details.

**EXAMPLE:** The team won the game.  
*The visiting team won the game decisively.*

- Todd's research paper had many faults.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The business district is congested.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Men are repairing the main highway.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Fran drove through the snowstorm.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Dave and Bridget watched the sunset.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 2 Shortening Long Sentences.** Divide each long sentence into two or more sentences.

- Colorado, a state which produces sugar beets and potatoes as well as coal and silver, really boomed with the discovery of gold in 1859 although it wasn't admitted to the union as the thirty-eighth state until 1876.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- For the annual spring picnic, the senior class voted to have a barbecue at Closter Lake, where there are facilities for swimming, a softball field, and a volleyball court, and a committee was formed to organize the event, but no one could agree on a date for the picnic.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20.3

# Vary Sentences (Expanding Short Sentences, Shortening Long Sentences) • Practice 2

**Exercise 1 Adding Details.** Rewrite each of the following sentences, adding details to make them longer as well as more interesting. Underline and label your additions.

**EXAMPLE:** The cat meowed.  
*PREP. PHRASE ADJ. ADJ. ADV. PREP. PHRASE*  
For three hours, the lost tiger cat meowed loudly on our doorstep.

1. Selma looked at each of her friends.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. We wore purple caps and gowns.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Confusion as well as excitement filled the air.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. We filed in.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. The principal called the first name.

\_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 2 Adding Details and Combining Ideas.** Rewrite the passage to correct a series of short, choppy sentences. Add details and join ideas to make longer sentences.

(1) The race was over. (2) Sally stumbled to the post. (3) It had been a long five miles. (4) No one had expected her to finish, or even "place." (5) She had shown them. (6) She had worked out for weeks. (7) She had used her training. (8) She had depended on her confidence. (9) She had given all of her energy to this goal. (10) She had now won a personal victory as well as a public one.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 3 Simplifying Long Sentences.** On the back of this sheet, rewrite the following passage by eliminating the rambling sentences. In some of the sentences, separate the thoughts to form sentences with fewer clauses. In others, separate and regroup the ideas. Make sure that the lengths of sentences are varied.

(1) In moving, almost everything that is familiar to a child, except of course members of the family, disappears, leaving the child with a feeling of loss and perhaps without a sense of identity in the new surroundings, and many children at such times attach themselves to certain objects such as a blanket, stuffed animal, or favorite toy, which they have carried with them, because it can serve as a source of comfort and security.

(2) Such attachments can be sensitive stages in a child's development because when the child has become dependent on one particular object, he or she may then resist new things, often holding desperately to the familiar old ones, fearing the type of loss first felt during the move to a new home.

## 20.3

## Vary Sentences (Using Different Sentence Openers and Structures) • Practice 1

**Using Different Sentence Openers and Structures** Avoid monotony in your writing by varying sentence openers and sentence structure.

### DIFFERENT SENTENCE OPENERS

*Adjectives:* Tired and depressed, she burst into tears.  
*Participial Phrase:* Crossing the finish line, he raised his arms.  
*Infinitive Phrase:* To find a route, she consulted a map.  
*Adverb Clause:* Since they left, nothing is the same.  
*Subject/Appositive:* Mrs. Greene, our counselor, led the discussion.  
*Transitional Phrase:* For that reason, we decided to stay.  
*Inverted Order:* Around and around whirled the dancers.

### DIFFERENT SENTENCE STRUCTURES

*Simple:* The game was canceled.  
*Compound:* The game was canceled, so we went to the movies.  
*Complex:* Since the game was canceled, we went to the movies.  
*Compound-Complex:* When the game was canceled, we went to the movies, but we did not enjoy the show.

**Exercise 1** **Writing Sentences with Different Openers.** Rewrite each sentence below so that it begins with the construction given in parentheses.

**EXAMPLE:** Bob left the office; he was finished for the day. (participial phrase)

Finished for the day, Bob left the office.

- Marni checked the telephone directory to get the number. (infinitive phrase)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- My new CD player is a compact model, but it has superb stereo speakers. (appositive)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The committee approved the plan although I disagreed. (adverb clause)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Mary accepted the award; she was smiling happily. (participial phrase)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- The weary hikers trudged up the hill. (inverted order)  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 2** **Varying Sentence Structure.** Rewrite each set of simple sentences below to create the sentence structure given in parentheses.

**EXAMPLE:** Joey tied the boat to the dock. Anna cleaned the fish. (complex)

While Joey tied the boat to the dock, Anna cleaned the fish.

- The crowd was small. It inspired the team. (complex)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- We knocked several times. No one answered. (compound)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- I'm baby-sitting for Emma. She is a charming child. We have fun together. (compound-complex)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Meet me at my locker. We can walk home together. (complex)  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 20.3 Vary Sentences (Using Different Sentence Openers and Structures) • Practice 2

**Exercise 1** Using Different Sentence Openers. Rewrite the beginning of each sentence below. Use as many different openers as you can, and label the type of opener in each case.

1. Many new houses in the West, in contrast, do not have attics or basements.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The child got lost in the crowd at the fair.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. He sprained his ankle, dashing for a bus.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. They felt that they could not leave the place until they had fulfilled their obligations.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The Red Cross in its Basic First Aid Course teaches three methods to stop bleeding.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Mavis was careful not to overwater the begonia to avoid rotting the plant's roots.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. A six-cylinder engine uses less fuel, not surprisingly, than does one with eight cylinders.  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. The dog, lonely and sad, watched me through the window.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Antique jewelry and furniture are smart investments because they appreciate in value rather than depreciate.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. A faint glimmer appeared through the window.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 2** Using Different Sentence Structures. Rewrite the following passage so that it contains simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentence structures. After each sentence, identify its structure in parentheses.

(1) I entered the forest as the sun began to set. (2) The shadows were long. (3) I followed a seldom-used path. (4) I felt restless. (5) I had started walking. (6) The forest was cool. (7) The dark branches dropped with the weight of green summer foliage. (8) The leaves fluttered. (9) The brush crackled beneath my feet.

(10) I turned to the left. (11) I walked into a clearing. (12) The grass was short and peppered with dark-colored flowers. (13) I climbed onto a rock. (14) I faced the west. (15) The sun was disappearing into a honey sunset swirl. (16) The clouds shimmered orange. (17) A cool breeze blew the leaves, my hair, and grass. (18) The sun melted into the trees and soon dropped out of sight. (19) My restlessness was gone. (20) I was at peace.

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## 20.3

**Vary Sentences (Using Different Types of Sentences)****• Practice 1**

**Using Different types of Sentences** Consider using different types of sentences to achieve special kinds of emphasis for your ideas.

DIFFERENT SENTENCE TYPES		
Type	Characteristics	Example
Loose	Main idea is presented at the beginning; follows the regular subject-verb-complement order	The manager <i>explained</i> the proposal to his staff.
Periodic	Main idea is presented at the end	After an unusual two hour delay, the <i>train finally arrived</i> .
Balanced	Main ideas are presented in parallel phrases or clauses	<i>Our first option is to begin building at once; our second option is to wait for an additional loan.</i>
Cumulative	Main idea is surrounded by layers of detail	<i>If the senator decides to run again, he will be elected with one of the largest pluralities on record.</i>

**Exercise 1** **Identifying Different Types of Sentences.** Label each sentence below *L* for loose, *P* for periodic, *B* for balanced, or *C* for cumulative.

**EXAMPLE:** Early the next morning, the rescue began.  P

- Foreign cars get better mileage, but American cars ride better. \_\_\_\_\_
- When the votes were tabulated, Mrs. Lester was elected with a higher total number of votes than her managers expected. \_\_\_\_\_
- My parents intend to visit Central America next summer. \_\_\_\_\_
- At the height of his power and popularity, he resigned. \_\_\_\_\_
- I shower in the morning; my sister showers at night. \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise 2** **Writing Different Types of Sentences.** Follow the directions below.

- Write a loose sentence.

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- Write a periodic sentence.

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- Write a balanced sentence. Punctuate it with a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

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- Write a balanced sentence. Punctuate it with a semicolon.

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- Write a cumulative sentence.

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