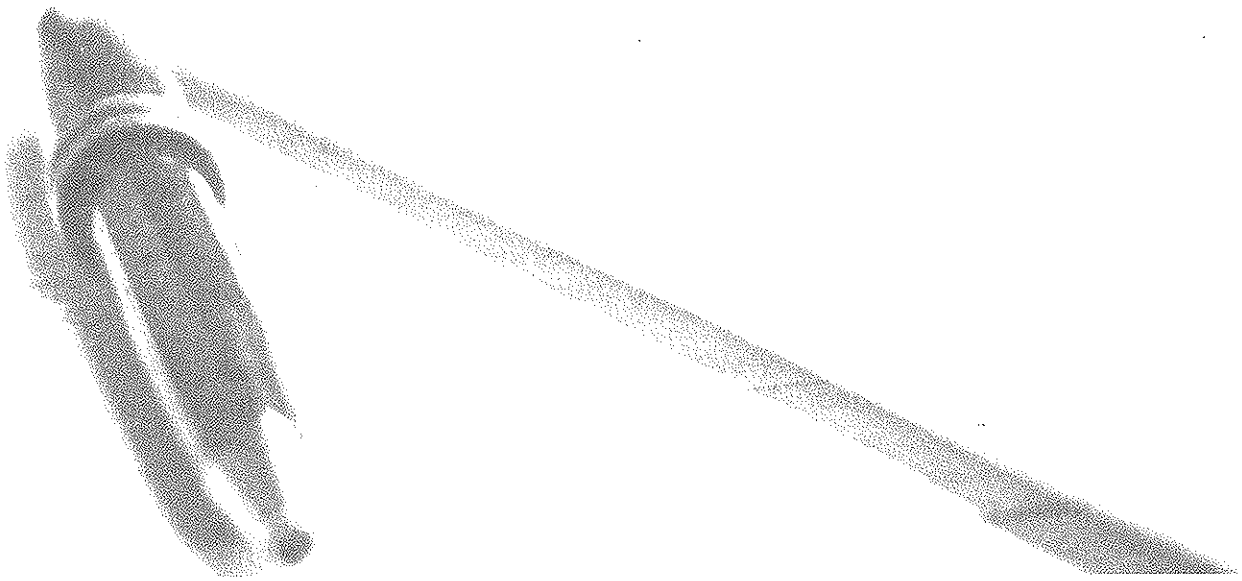
GRAMMAR FOR BUSINESS WRITING

5 & 6 November 2008, 9am to 5pm



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Human Capital Consulting & Training Since 1996

Welcome to the Workshop
A Letter to You

Dear Fellow Learner

We would like to warmly welcome you to this workshop.

The course in which you have chosen is one of the training courses that our organisation provides. Thus, upon completion of this course, it will equip you with essential core competencies in the area of your work.

We would like to encourage you to join the other courses that we provide so that you are fully equipped with necessary perspectives and tools to execute your duties effectively as well as for your future enhancement.

In addition, here are some suggestions on how you can benefit from this workshop:

- Start by asking yourself what you would like to know about the topic. Keep an open mind, try out new ideas and gain *INSIGHT*.
- Ask questions, participate actively and learn through doing. Interact with fellow learners and learning through sharing experiences.
- Recap occasionally by writing down key learning points at the end of each segment
- Be *INSPIRED* by recognising the possibilities and potentials of the perspectives, tools, methodologies and skills that you will learn in this course.
- Develop an Action Plan for application back at the work place. Be bold to *INNOVATE* with new work ideas, processes, methods and targets.



Lets' start the fun!

From
Effective Outsource Networks

Learning Contract

Please take a moment to complete this pre-course attendance learning contract. This is to help you reflect on where you are in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities regarding today's learning topic.

From the reflection, identify what you would want to learn from this course. This will help you focus on what to look out for throughout the duration of the course.

1. What are the challenges you have come across in your experience regarding today's learning topic?

2. What do you hope to achieve from this training session?

3. Do you have any questions you want the trainer to address during the training session?
   (Be as specific as possible)

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Grammar for Business Writing

Introduction

Although using good grammar cannot guarantee your professional success, poor grammar can prevent your career from taking off.

Standard English has become the language of business throughout the world. You should use it – and use it correctly – in your business communications.

People probably know more about grammar than they think they do, although they may need to learn a little more if they want to be sure that their important business email messages and other communications make sense.

Objectives

At the end of this two-day workshop, participants will:

- Have gained an understanding of the parts of speech.
- Be aware of the pertinent points in the use of each part of speech.
- Be aware of the common errors made in grammar, and how to avoid these errors.
- Have a better understanding of sentence constructions.

Programme Outline

The Parts of Speech

- A preview of the parts of speech
- Using the dictionary

Nouns

- Proper and common
- Countable & uncountable
- Possessive nouns
- Nouns - Practice

Pronouns

- Subjective pronouns
- Objective pronouns
- Possessive pronouns
- Intensive and reflective pronouns

Adjectives

- Comparative forms of adjectives
- Compound adjectives
- Frequently misused adjectives

Adverbs

- Adverbs in use
- Mistakes with adverbs

Verbs

- Subject-verb agreement
- Transitive & intransitive verbs
- Tenses
- Active and passive voice
- Conditional clauses

Prepositions

- Position of prepositions in a sentence
- The role of prepositions
- Common mistakes with prepositions

Conjunctions

- Co-ordinating conjunctions
- Subordinating conjunctions
- Correlative conjunctions

Interjections

- What they are
- The use of interjections in business writing

Punctuation

- The comma
- The semicolon
- The colon

The Building of Sentences

- Sentence patterns
- Common errors with sentence construction

The Importance of Correct Grammar

Poorly written messages will make the reader think this - If the staff cannot perform this writing task properly and professionally, are they also going to perform other functions in a sloppy and careless manner?

More seriously, the use of wrong grammar can distort our intended message.

<u>These sentences convey different meanings because of the grammar and sentence construction:</u>

We have started preparations on this project. (present perfect tense) We started preparations on this project. (past tense)

The manager looked through the reports. The manager looked at the reports.

If we have the time, we will attend the conference. (first conditional) If we had the time, we would attend the conference. (third conditional)

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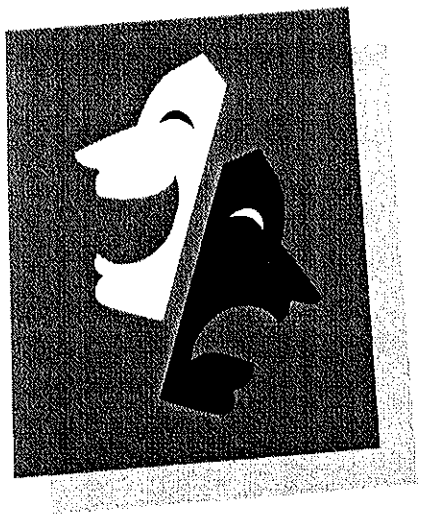
The Parts of Speech



A Preview of the Parts of Speech

Every word that we use can be labelled as one of the eight parts of speech:

1. noun
2. pronoun
3. verb
4. adjective
5. adverb
6. preposition
7. conjunction
8. interjection

The eight parts of speech are simply labels. This label depends on how the word has been used (its function).

Note: A word may be used as more than one part of speech.

	Part of speech:
1. The *bank* was closed on Monday.	noun
2. *Bank* the money as soon as possible.	verb
3. He may not qualify for a *bank* loan.	adjective

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A Preview of the Parts of Speech

1. **Nouns** are names (room, Henry, ability, box, character, noise).
2. **Pronouns** are noun substitutes (you, me, her, who, anybody, we, I, one).
3. **Verbs** express action or state of being (go, work, help, write, listen).
4. **Adjectives** modify nouns and pronouns (short, kind, clear, faster, round).
5. **Adverbs** modify verbs, adjectives, and adverbs (not, clearly, surely).
6. **Prepositions** show relation of objects to other words (in, on, with, to).
7. **Conjunctions** are connectives (and, but, or, nor, if, since, because).
8. **Interjections** simply express feeling (gee, oh, gosh, wow).

The following sentence contains all the parts of speech. It has **two nouns** and **two verbs**, and **one of every other part of speech**. Determine the proper label for each word.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Why, in June he unexpectedly sold both stores and retired.

1. interjection 2. preposition 3. proper noun 4. pronoun
5. adverb 6. verb 7. adjective 8. noun
9. conjunction 10. verb

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Using the Dictionary

A college-level dictionary contains a lengthy explanation of how the book should be used. It is likely to be found just before the main listing of words. Here are just a few general ideas:

1. CHOICE

The best dictionaries for classroom use are abridged; that is, they do not contain every word in the English language. Every student should have at least one college-level dictionary with 150,000 or more entries.

2. PARTS OF SPEECH

Before a dictionary presents definitions for a particular word, it indicates the part of speech. Abbreviations such as *n., vt., vi., pron., adj., conj.,* or *interj.* are normally used.

Many words in the English language may be used as more than one part of speech. The entry for *contract*, for example, includes definitions for both the noun and the verb. Even though those two words are spelled the same, they have different pronunciations as well as different meanings.

3. USAGE LABELS

A dictionary entry may include a label that restricts the use of a word in some way.

The label *Obs.*, which means obsolete, tells us that the definition given is out of date. The label *Informal* (or *Colloq.*) means that the word as defined may not be suitable in situations that call for the use of standard English. Other labels include *Rare, Brit., Illit., Dial., Nonstandard, Slang.*

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Using the Dictionary

4. INFLECTED FORMS

A word that has several different forms is said to be inflected (*do, did, done*, etc.). Most dictionaries include only those inflected forms that are irregular (or unusual).

You are not likely to find common (regular) inflected forms such as *buildings*. An irregular plural form like *women*, though, would definitely appear in your dictionary.

You will become aware of many inflected forms as you study the eight parts of speech.

5. WORDS AND MEANINGS – BRITISH AND AMERICAN DIFFERENCES

Sometimes, British and American English use quite different words to mean exactly the same thing. In these cases, the entry for the British word may show the American synonym, directly after the definition, and vice versa.

Labels such as *AmE* and *BrE* may be used to indicate American and British English, respectively.

Normally British and American pronunciations are separated by two vertical lines (‖), with the British on the left and the American on the right.

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Nouns



The dancers wore beautiful outfits.

Nouns – Practice

Underline the nouns in this paragraph:

Appropriate insulation, properly installed, is one of the simplest ways to lower a home's energy costs. In fact, proper insulation can reduce energy bills up to 40 percent compared to homes with deficient materials and installation. In an effort to maximize energy savings, builders often strive to make a home as "tight" as they can, allowing as little air leakage as possible.

Correct the mistakes in these sentences:

1. The informations you need are in the file.
2. The headquarter is in united states.
3. We have had a lot of troubles with the staffs.
4. That company makes top quality furnitures.
5. These are expensive equipments.

Identify the countable (C) and uncountable (U) nouns in the list below.

money U
furniture U
mathematics U
worker C
debt C
cheque C
machinery U
water U
assets C
spokesman C
news U

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Nouns – Practice

Underline the correct choice.

1. This (companies, company's, companies') problems will not be solved by using new technology.

2. Our (clients, client's, clients') names are never revealed to the press.

3. This month's meeting seems more productive than last (months, month's, months').

4. She wondered about her (secretaries, secretary's, secretaries') strange behaviour.

5. The Lims' computer has more functions than the (Tans, Tan's, Tans').

6. We attended the grand opening of (Lucy, Lucy's, Lucys') and Colin's new store.

7. Put the report on my desk or on (Ms Hengs, Ms Heng's, Ms Hengs').

8. There may be a few (minutes, minute's, minutes') delay before the talk begins.

9. Our service agents deal with (customers, customer's, customers') problems.

10. Have the (Ongs, Ong's, Ongs') made their final payment?

11. This mobile telephone is probably (Mr Lucas, Mr Lucas's, or Mr Lucas').

12. Molly (Tan, Tan's, Tans') resignation surprised most people in her department.

13. These figures help to explain this (companies, company's, companies') turnaround.

14. We decided to close Martin (Yongs, Yong's, Yongs') account.

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Possessive Nouns

Keep in mind two important factors that are involved in the possessive relationship: the **possessor** and the **thing possessed**.

- The **possessor** is represented by a word that is written in a possessive case and that functions as an adjective (Larry's plan).

- The **thing possessed** (plan) is a noun modified by the possessive word.

The possessive case is frequently used to show possession, authorship, brand, kind, or origin:

- the manager's car (possession)
- Stephen Covey's book (authorship)
- Campbell's soup (brand)
- dentists' meeting (type, or kind)
- Murphy's Law (origin)

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Nouns

Nouns can be classified in the following way:

Countable nouns have two forms: (1) a singular form (2) a plural form	**Uncountable nouns** have only one form: – a grammatically singular form **(OR)** – a grammatically plural form

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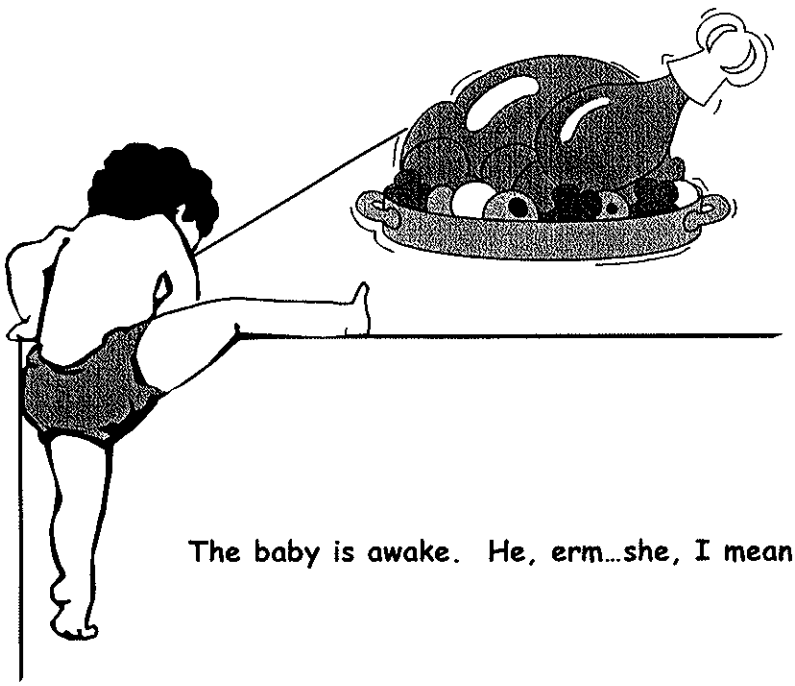
Pronouns



The baby is awake. He, erm...she, I mean the baby is hungry.

Pronouns

Consider this sentence:

Mary prepared Mary's own report for the meeting.

What do you think of it?

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun. It helps to make our language smooth and manageable.

Now consider this sentence:

Mary prepared **her** own report for the meeting.

In this sentence ***her*** is a ***pronoun***, and ***Mary*** is referred to as its ***antecedent***. (The antecedent is simply the word that the pronoun replaces.)

A clause or a phrase may be the antecedent for a pronoun in a sentence, but the reference should be perfectly clear.

Example

Mr Lee is in Vietnam, but his secretary doesn't know it.
*(***Mr Lee is in Vietnam** *is considered the antecedent of* **it**.*)*

Here is a short random list of words that are generally used as pronouns:

I	he	who	that	all	everyone	they	any	you	me
It	him	which	one	some	everybody	their	nobody	we	none

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Use of Case Forms – Subjective, Objective, or Possessive?

Case indicates the relation of a pronoun to other words in a sentence. Pronouns are used in the following cases:

1. Subjective case	-	I, she, he, you, we, they, it, who, which, that, what
2. Objective case	-	me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them
3. Possessive case	-	my, your, his, her, its, our, their (with a noun)
	-	mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs (without a noun)

1. Subjective (Nominative) Case Form

a. The pronoun functions as the subject of a verb.

- We should have a fax machine.
- The manager and he will look over the proposals.
- Grace told me that she and Susan had read the reports.

b. 'Than' or 'as' precedes the pronoun and a following verb is implied.

- No employee could be more conscientious than he. (Meaning *he is*)
- Mei Lee is about as tall as I. (Meaning *I am*)

c. The pronoun is used as a subject complement, that is, after a linking verb (*eg. am, is, are, was, were*) and all verb phrases that end in *be, been, or being*.

- We found ourselves wishing that we were they.
- It may be she who is causing the disturbance.
- Is it he who first raised the question?
- Mr. Tan was thought to be he.

d. When the pronoun functions as an appositive following a subject or a subject complement.

- The two employees, Albert and I, were interviewed by the press.
- The representatives at the meeting were my fellow employees, you and he.

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Use of Case Forms – Subjective, Objective, or Possessive?

2. Objective-Case Form

a. The pronoun is the direct object of a verb.

- Several of our members congratulated her.
- A committee of five selected us.
- He questioned Mr. Tan and me about the copyright.

b. The pronoun is the indirect object of a verb.

- We gave him an unusually large order.

c. The pronoun is the object of a preposition. (except 'than' and 'as')

- Mr. Loh gave copies to Sheila and me.
- Ms. Wee talked with him about the report.
- Most of the work was done by us secretaries. (The word *secretaries* is in apposition with *us*.)

d. When a pronoun follows an infinitive that has a subject.

- I am surprised that you thought him to be me. (A noun or a pronoun that precedes the infinitive to be is considered its subject. That subject and any pronoun that follows the infinitive must both be in the objective case.)

e. When the pronoun functions as an appositive following a direct object, an indirect object, or an object of a prepositions.

- He resented his group leaders, James and me. (The direct object is *group leaders*; the appositives are *James* and *me*.)
- I spoke with the authors, Mark Chapman and her. (Authors serve as the object of a preposition; therefore, the appositives that follow it must be in the objective case.)

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Use of Case Forms – Subjective, Objective, or Possessive?

3. Possessive-Case Form

This case form shows possession, authorship, brand, kind, origin, or any similar relation. Possessive forms of personal pronouns such *as hers, its, yours, ours* and *theirs* are always written **without** apostrophes.

- The final decision will be yours (**NOT** your's).
- This notebook is mine, and that is hers (**NOT** her's).
- The portfolio with the green cover is mine (**NOT** my).
- The training school may lose its best students.
  (Bear in mind that *it's* is always a contraction of *it is*.)
- Mr. Lim is unaware of their new policy.

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Intensive and Reflective Pronouns

A few of the personal pronouns are made compound by the addition of *self* (singular) or *selves* (plural) to the simple form.

Person	**Singular**	**Plural**
first	myself	ourselves
second	yourself	yourselves
third	himself, herself, itself	themselves

These compound personal pronouns, which have the properties of person, number, and sometimes gender, serve two main purposes:

1. **Intensive Pronouns** intensify, or add emphasis.
   - I will install the software myself.
   - The distributor himself commented on a possible shortage.

2. **Reflective Pronouns** reflect the action of the verb back upon the subject.
   - She worried herself into a state of anxiety.
   - He knew at the time that he was endangering himself.

DO NOT use a compound personal pronoun if the shorter (simple) form of the pronoun could be used without awkwardness.

Don't use: The new assistant expected help from Sharon and myself.
Use: The new assistant expected help from Sharon and me.

Don't use: James and myself will deliver the documents.
Use: James and I will deliver the documents.

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Practice

In the space provided, write the pronoun that should be substituted for the word(s) underlined

Example: Henry felt that his employees did not respect Henry. him

1. Sally felt that Sally and the others were being observed. she
2. All the accountants except Jimmy were present. him
3. E-mail accounts will be set up if we can afford e-mail accounts. them
4. The recipients, according to Victor, will be Victor and Rahim. he
5. Benny Tan says that Benny Tan and his consultant examined the documents. he
6. Lucy Hoffman has asked that we refer all applicants to either Sandra Lim or Lucy Hoffman. her
7. We have kept the secret from Wendy that Wendy and Peter are to be promoted. she
8. Star Services claims that the idea was really Star Services'. theirs
9. Henry's exact words were these: "Please be patient with my staff and Henry." me
10. Tom agrees that I am better informed on the matter than Tom. he

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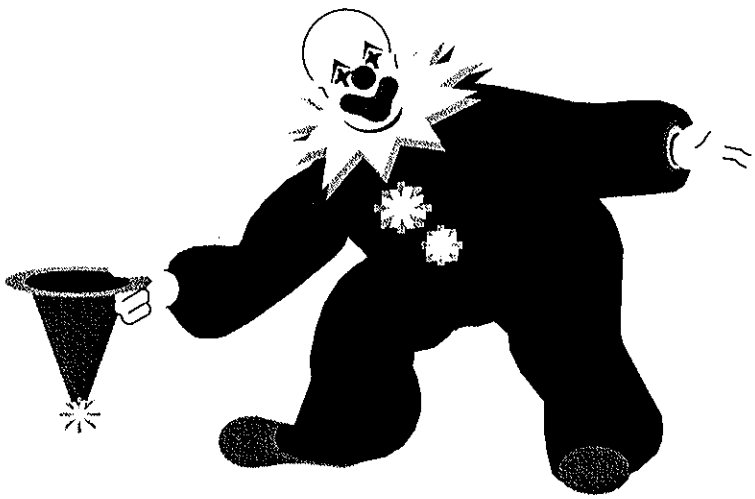
Adjectives



He was a funny man, and his shows were funnier.

Adjectives

An adjective tells you more about a noun.

- A tall building.
- A high fence.
- An excellent plan.
- A hardworking worker.
- Advanced technology.

Most adjectives have endings which show that the words are adjectives.

-y	muddy, stony, funny
-ful	beautiful, faithful, sinful
-less	tireless, worthless, lawless
-en	wooden, golden
-able	payable, desirable
-ible	irresistible, edible
-ive	excessive, constructive
-ous	nervous, marvellous
-ish	selfish, Spanish, boyish
-al	optional, vocational
-ic	metric, artistic
-ary	secondary, elementary
-some	tiresome, lonesome
-ly	lovely, friendly

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Compound Adjectives

When using two or more words as a single adjective before the noun it modifies, use a hyphen to show the close association.

By combining words in this way, writers can coin their own modifiers and, even more importantly, clarify the intended meaning.

Examples

- my worn-out suitcase
- their often-discussed plans
- his never-say-die attitude
- Mr. Tan's happy-go-lucky attitude
- a 50-foot frontage
- a well-to-do client

The only purpose of a hyphen in a compound adjective is to make the writer's meaning perfectly clear.

You should not use a hyphen to connect an adverb ending with *-ly* (carefully, nearly, etc.) with a following adjective, as the function of the adverb is readily understood.

Correct the errors in the use of compound adjectives in these sentences.

1. Hands-on training must be implemented at the plant.
2. The participants consisted of two, three, and four-persons teams.
3. I read the hastily typed report.
4. The 45 years old Malay Customer Relations Executive won the Best Workplace Mandarin award.
5. The plan will be implemented by the eight person Steering Committee.
6. They have made a fairly reliable estimate.

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Adjectives – Practice

Underline the adjectives in the following sentence:

> *The Food Control Department plays an important role in ensuring that only foods that are safe and free from harmful additives and contaminants are available to the nation.*

Underline the word that would make the sentence correct.

1. James is excited about his (recently opened, recently-opened) restaurant.
2. Mary is a faster worker than (anyone, anyone else) in her office.
3. Ms. Lemon has no reason to be (self conscious, self-conscious) about her name.
4. Until now Tommy's promotion was a (well-kept, well kept) secret.
5. Sally lives closer to the plant than (any, any other) employee of this firm.
6. Gary is probably the (more, most) intellectual member of the staff.
7. I found Stanley working in a (small, crowded; small crowded) cubicle.
8. (Thirty three, Thirty-three) of the figurines have been slightly damaged.

If the expression underlined is incorrect, put in the correct form in the answer space. If it is correct, put a tick (✓) in the space.

1. Dave is the best of the two applicants. ___better___
2. We had completed less than five booklets when the copier jammed. ___fewer___
3. Of planning and coaching skills, the later is more important for our manager. ___latter___
4. Some software doesn't work as good as others. ___well___
5. Among the four recommendations, Simon's is more unique. ___most___
6. Thomas is more public-spirited than any member of the committee. ___other___
7. Our sales manager's never-to-be-forgotten accident resulted in a remarkable discovery. ___✓___
8. Twenty-one of the crates have been unloaded and opened. ___Twenty-one___
9. Either a one or two-story building will be built on the property. ___one-___
10. We had less complaints when Ms. Ling was in charge of operations. ___fewer___

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Adverbs





Balancing the food carefully, she skated competently
to the customers, who were waiting hungrily.

Adverbs

An adverb is a word that modifies a verb form, an adjective, or another adverb (or adverb substitute). Don't be surprised if you cannot find a particular adverb in the main listing of your dictionary.

An adverb is likely to answer the following questions - How? When? Where? To what degree?

- The typical adverb is formed by adding *ly* to an adjective.

  (Eg: completely, sadly, greatly, secretly, busily)

- A number of common adverbs do not end in *ly*.

  (Eg: well, never, always, very, not, indeed, nevertheless, notwithstanding, seldom)

Adverbs used to modify verbs:

- Mr. Tan worked *slowly* and *carefully*.
- The officer *hurriedly* signed the contract.
- The proofreader did his job *well*.

Adverbs used to modify adjectives:

- Our systems analyst is *too* slow.
- Mr. Heng is an *extremely* cheerful man.
- This *very* old cabinet should be replaced.

Adverbs used to modify other adverbs:

- The applicant accepted the position *somewhat* hesitantly.
- He was transferred to another department *surprisingly* soon.
- The new computer performs *exceedingly* well.

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Adverbs - Practice

Underline the correct choice.

1. The President's remarks were (real, very) informative.
2. It's important to communicate (respectfully, respectively) to customers.
3. Anne has done (good, well) in her extremely challenging position.
4. The defendant remained (calmer, more calmly) than his attorney did.
5. Mr. Low will (sure, surely) cooperate with us in this matter.
6. I was (real, really) disappointed when Jim turned down the offer.
7. Jacky seems more (capable, capably) than the other candidates.
8. The attorney felt (good, well) about the postponement.
9. We hope you find the merchandise (real, very) useful.
10. We noticed that the new scanner was not functioning (proper, properly).
11. You must proceed (extreme, extremely) cautiously.
12. Taylor's plan worked just (perfect, perfectly).
13. The new copywriter is doing (real, very) well.
14. The prosecutor presented his case (clearer, more clearly) than the defense lawyer.
15. The delegate from China spoke (brilliant, brilliantly) for 25 minutes.

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Verbs





Verbs

Every sentence must have a verb. It is a word, or word group, that expresses action or state of being.

In the following sentences, each of the verbs (underlined) expresses ***action***.

1. The food safety programme involves inspection, sampling, and analysis.
2. Our managers appreciate the time-saving features of this machine.
3. Did you ask the refuse collector for help?
4. The project leader should have been informed.
5. The secretary frowned as she read the letter.
6. Relax, work slowly, and concentrate on what you are doing.
7. Seven new strategies have been identified for the Singapore Green Plan.

Verbs (underlined) in the following sentences do not express action.
They express ***state of being***.

1. Ms Lee has been with the Ministry for more than ten years.
2. The officer is not happy with his new job.
3. The Clean Air Standards have been in force since 1978.
4. At the start of the meeting everybody seemed friendly.

NOTE

A single sentence may have two or more verbs.

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Subject and Verb Agreement

Every sentence must have a verb. Verbs are words that express action or state of being. They are used to make statements, ask questions, give commands, and make requests.

Agreement of Subject and Verb

1. The most basic rule of grammar is that a verb must agree with its subject in number. If the subject is singular, the verb must be singular. If the subject is plural, the verb must also be plural. Do not be misled by intervening phrases or clauses.

   Example

   Singular: The young woman with five excellent recommendations is being considered for the position.

   Plural: Two young women with excellent recommendations are being considered for the position.

   Singular: Mr. Low, as well as his staff members, has been informed.

   Plural: The staff members, as well as Mr. Low, have been informed.

2. If *many a, each,* or *every* is used to modify a subject, that subject is singular even though it may have more than one part.

   Example

   Singular: Every man and woman has the opportunity to give.

   Plural: All men and women have the opportunity to give.

   Singular: Many a person is likely to be disappointed.

   Plural: Many people are likely to be disappointed.

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Subject and Verb Agreement

3. The subjects *none, some, any, all, most*, and fractions, such as *half*, may be singular or plural. The noun or pronoun to which the subject refers will determine its number.

   Examples

   Singular: A third of the shipment has been stolen.
   (The subject refers to shipment, which is singular.)

   Plural: A third of the boxes have been stolen.
   (The subject refers to boxes, which is plural.)

   Singular: Most of the building is made of brick.

   Plural: Most of the offices are painted gray.

4. The name of one book, song, magazine article, or company is singular even though the name itself may be compound or plural in form.

   Examples

   Singular: Twelve Angry Men is a great film.

   Plural: Twelve angry men are waiting to see you.

   Singular: Justin, Ben & Benson, Inc., has submitted a bid.

   Plural: Justin and Ben are capable managers.

5. An amount (money, length, distance, time, etc.) is singular when it is expressed as a single unit.

   Examples

   Singular: Four hundred dollars is a fair price.

   Singular: Forty feet of cord is still on the shelf.

   Singular: Thirty minutes is more time than we need.

   Plural: Four hundred chairs have been ordered. (400 units)

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Subject and Verb Agreement

6. Collective nouns may be singular or plural.

   If the noun refers to a group as a single unit, a singular verb should be used.

   If the sentence suggests that members of the group are acting independently of one another, a plural verb should be used.

   Examples

   Singular: The audience is quiet and attentive.

   Plural: Members of the audience are going their separate ways.

   Singular: The staff is dedicated.

   Plural: Members of the staff are dedicated.

7. If *or* or *nor* is used to join two singular subjects, a singular verb should be used. If a singular subject and a plural subject are joined by *or* or *nor*, the plural form should be placed closer to the verb and a plural verb used.

   Examples

   Singular: Neither Martin nor his supervisor is willing to cooperate.

   Plural: Neither Martin nor his supervisors are willing to cooperate.

   Singular: John or Paul is probably responsible.

   Plural: John or his two associates are probably responsible.

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Subject and Verb Agreement

always singular.

8. When used as subjects, these pronouns are singular: *anyone, anybody, everyone, everybody, someone, somebody, one, nobody, either, neither, each*. Use them with singular verbs.

   Examples

   Singular: Nobody has seen the manager for several days.

   Singular: Everybody seems pleased with the results.

   Singular: Each of our products has been accepted by the public.

   Singular: Neither of his comments was understood.

9. Some singular subjects end in s. Be careful to use them with singular verbs.

   Examples

   Singular: Mathematics is an interesting subject.

   Singular: Politics has played an important role in her life.

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Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

Transitive Verbs

A transitive verb is one that requires an additional word, usually an object, to complete its meaning.

Which three of the following six verbs are transitive verbs?

- The custodian locked
- Jimmy hesitated
- The assistant spilled
- I listened
- She stated
- The meeting ended

The verbs _____, _____, and _____ (as used here) are transitive. They become more meaningful when we add the necessary direct objects:

Intransitive Verbs

An intransitive verb requires no additional word to complete its meaning. Words may follow such verbs, but they will be used simply as complements or modifiers – not as objects.

Note the intransitive verbs in these sentences:

- I listened to his problems.
- Wong talked for an hour.
- The agent walked slowly to his car.
- The visitor did not wait.

None of these sentences have direct objects. The prepositional phrases – *to his problems, for an hour*, and *to his car* – are used as modifiers of verbs.

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Simple Past, Present Perfect, and Past Perfect

The Simple Past Tense

To talk about something which happened in the past.

(The overseas delegates went home last Friday.)

The Present Perfect Tense

To talk about something which happened in the past, but which effect you are feeling or discussing now.

(The overseas delegates have gone home, but their suggestions are still being reviewed.)

The Past Perfect Tense

To talk about something which happened before a past incident.

(The overseas delegates had visited the site on Thursday before they left on Friday.)

Correct these sentences:

1. We ~~had~~ have heard about the incident, and we will investigate it soon.
2. According to our staff on duty, you had refused (2nd event) to produce your identity card when he requested (1st event) had requested (past perfect) it.
3. The CEO ~~has~~ announced the financial results last Monday.
4. She had started looking for a new job, as she plans to resign from her current job in two months' time.

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The Present Perfect Tense - Practice

Complete the following extract by choosing the correct form of the verb in brackets.

(Use either the ~~past simple~~ simple past or the present perfect simple.)

can't use present perfect simple as there is a time frame stated.

Last year our company reported (report) a small increase in profits. This year we have seen (see) continued improvement and our turnover have risen (rise) by 15 per cent.

This is very good news in a difficult world market. In fact internationally, the market has fallen (fall). Naturally, our costs have gone up (go up) and so the rise in profits is not so great.

It is true that our domestic performance was helped (be helped) by the collapse of our competitor, Alliance Corp., which went out of business (go out of business) in January.

2 because of the time reference, can't use present perfect tense.

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Active vs. Passive Voice

The main verb in a clause may be in either the active voice or the passive voice.

If it is in the active voice, the subject is the doer of the action. If it is in the passive voice, the subject is acted upon.

The active voice is considered to be the stronger of the two and is recommended for most business writing.

Consider this sentence:

Active voice:	We received your order on January 20.
Passive voice:	Your order was received by us on January 20.

Note

Even though the passive voice is not generally favoured, it has its place in business writing.

The occasional use of verbs in the passive voice lends variety to one's writing.

Also, there are times when a writer should favour a *lack of directness*.

Consider the following:

1. You made two errors in this report.

2. Two errors were made in this report.

(The second sentence is ordinarily recommended to avoid an accusing tone.)

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Active vs. Passive Voice - Practice

Rewrite the following sentences so that each verb (underlined) is in the active voice.

Example: A detailed report will be submitted by us on Friday. (passive)
We will submit a detailed report on Friday. (active)

1. The necessary papers were signed by Mr. Wee on 10 March 2008.

   mr wee signed the necessary papers on 10/3/08.

2. Yours questions concerning our budget will be answered by Henry at our meeting today.

   Henry will answer your questions concerning our budget at our meeting today.

3. Work on the Sun Building has been completed by a local contractor.

   A local contractor has completed work on the Sun Building.

4. No more furniture will be manufactured by this firm until next year.

   This firm will not manufacture furniture anymore until next year

5. The contract was signed by the general manager, Peter Lim.

   The general manager, Peter Lim signed the contract.

6. The loan will be approved by Citibank only if adequate collateral can be furnished by the borrower.

   If the borrower can furnish adequate collateral, Citibank will approve the loan only if the borrower can furnish

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Conditional Clauses

A conditional sentence comprises two clauses:

the if clause (conditional clause) + the main clause

There are four types of conditionals.

First Conditional

if + present simple + present simple

Rule

When you are talking about something that is generally true, or happens often, you use a *present simple in the main clause and the conditional clause.*

Examples

- If people lose weight during an illness, they soon regain it.
- If the new girl is quiet, she is probably shy.
- If the company loses money, it is likely to be due to the poor customer service.
- If they break any diskettes, they report it to their supervisor.

Warning

Do not use the present continuous in both clauses.

- If they are losing money, they are getting angry. **X**

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Conditional Clauses

Second Conditional

if + present simple + future (*will...*)

Rule

When you are talking about something which may possibly happen in the future, you use a *present simple in the conditional clause* and the *simple future in the main clause*.

Examples

- If he starts his own business, he will need the money.
- If you plan to study English, you will need a good English dictionary.
- If he acts in the movie, he will want his friends to watch it.
- If we pay the taxes on time, we won't be liable for further payment.

Warning

Do not use "will" in the conditional clause.

- If I will see you tomorrow, I will give you the book. X

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Conditional Clauses

Third Conditional

if + past (simple or continuous) + "would"

Rule

When you are talking about something that you think is unlikely to happen, you use *the past simple or past continuous in the conditional clause*, and *"would" in the main clause.*

Examples

- If we had the money, we would acquire the factory.
- If he was coming to the meeting, he would inform us.
- If I had good programming skills, I would join the IT Department.
- You would have to pay interest if you didn't settle the bill within 60 days.

Warning

Do not use "would" in conditional clauses.

- If I would do it, I would do it like this. **X**

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Conditional Clauses

Fourth Conditional

if + past perfect + "would have" + past participle

Rule

When you are talking about something which could have happened in the past but which did not actually happen, you use the *past perfect in the conditional clause. In the main clause you use "would have" and a past participle.*

Examples

- If I had realised that he was the CEO, I would have been more polite to him.
- I wouldn't have been so upset if I had known the truth.
- If she had known that he was ill, she would have treated him more gently.

Warning

Do not use "would have" in the conditional clause.

- If I would have seen him, I would have told him. **X**

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Conditional Clauses - Practices

1. If you attend (attend) the meeting we'll discuss it in detail. (2)

2. If we reached (reach) agreement we would sign the contract on the same day. (3)

3. I don't like the blue curtains put up. The office would look (look) better if we had had (have) green curtains. (4)

4. If there had been (be) an easy solution, we would have avoided the problems. (4)

5. I wonder how Lee Yen's interview went. It would be (be) a pity if she did not get (not get) the job. (3)

6. I'm glad we didn't listen to you. If we had taken your advice, we would have spent (spend) more money. (4)

7. What will you do/ would you do (you do) if you can/ could (can) retire tomorrow? (2)/ (3) ← (low possibility)

8. I had a lot of free time yesterday. If you had not been (not be) so busy, I would have showed (show) you how to configure the system. (4)

9. If we had (have) some clay, I would make (make) you a figurine, but we don't have any clay here. (3)

10. Don't worry, Mary's very helpful. I'm sure she will help (help) you if you ask (ask) her. (2)

11. If she comes (come) late again, she'll lose her job. (2)

12. If we lived (live) near the airport, life would be easier. (3)

13. Let's go now. I'm sure he wouldn't mind if we arrived (arrive) early. (3)

14. If I live (live) to be seventy, I'll learn to paint. (2)

15. If everybody given (give) ten per cent of their income to charity, life would be a lot easier for the less fortunate. (3)

16. If everybody thought (think) like me there would be chaos around here. (3)

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Prepositions



He pointed <u>at</u> the stars and whispered sweet nothings <u>in</u> her ear.
She was thinking <u>of</u> dinner.

Prepositions

A preposition **shows the relation** of its object to another word in the sentence.

Example

- Put the computer **near** the printer.

The preposition near marks the relationship between the *computer* and the *printer*.

Here are some examples of prepositional phrases. The prepositions are underlined.

- in the meantime
- from Malaysia
- under his breath
- after the meeting
- before Wednesday
- concerning the merger
- without delay
- by a prominent writer
- since January
- about the audit
- on Tuesday
- of the errors
- at the end
- with the brown cover
- for several minutes
- in that direction

go by myself

go by yourself.

The team is comprised of / comprised

We regret any inconvenience caused.

Congratulations on

proof of

translate into Japanese.

responsible for

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Position of Prepositions

A preposition can occur *at the beginning*, *in the middle*, or *at the end* of a sentence.

- **From** where did you get this information?
- Where did you get this information **from**?
- I got it **from** the software suppliers.

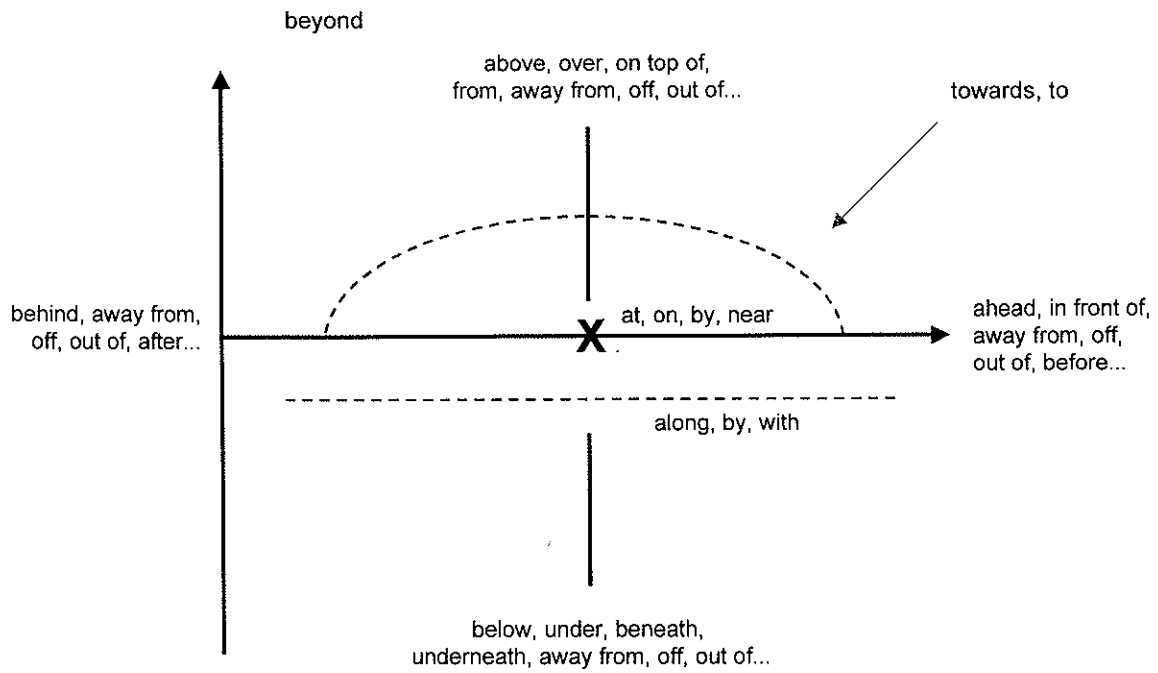
Some grammarians advise against ending a sentence with a preposition, but sometimes it is unavoidable. In fact end-prepositions are becoming more and more common and acceptable.

- It depends on what you are looking for.
- That's what I'm thinking of.
- What are they talking about?

Diagrammatic Indication

The diagram below shows some indication of prepositional meanings. **X** is taken as the constant point.

(Note that among others, notions of time and place can be indicated as in this diagrammatic representation.)



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Prepositions - Practice

Fill in the blanks with the correct preposition. If no preposition is needed, write -

1. Don't approach ___-___ the bank for another loan.
2. I arrived ___at___ the station at six.
3. If you don't know, ask ___for or -___ the secretary.
4. Congratulations ___on___ your promotion.
5. The bus crashed ___into/against___ a tree.
6. It all depends ___on___ the weather.
7. Let's discuss ___-___ your plans.
8. I divided the task ___into___ three parts.
9. Why is she dressed ___in___ black?
10. Nobody entered ___the___ the room.
11. This is an example ___of___ his work.
12. There is no increase ___in___ price.
13. I'm interested ___in___ most sports.
14. He was very kind ___to___ the new staff.
15. The plan lacks ___- ~~of~~___ a time frame.
16. Sally is married ___to___ a technician.
17. She married ___-___ last year.
18. He wasn't very nice ___to___ me.
19. Have you paid ___for___ the photocopies?
20. We need proof ___of___ his story.
21. What's the reason ___for___ the change?
22. You remind me ___of___ a former colleague.
23. Who's responsible ___for___ security?
24. I didn't participate ___in___ the meeting.
25. Could you translate this ___into___ Japanese?
26. That's just typical ___of___ you.
27. ___In___ my opinion you're wrong.

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Prepositions - Practice

Fill in with: *at, in, on, or –*

1. _____At_____ Christmas
2. _____on_____ Tuesday
3. _____In_____ 1997
4. _____In_____ the evening
5. _____On_____ Friday evening
6. _____In_____ May
7. _____–_____ next Wednesday
8. _____at_____ dinner time
9. _____–_____ this Sunday
10. _____–/On_____ that afternoon
11. _____On_____ Sunday afternoon
12. I don't know _____at_____ what time.

Fill in the blanks with *between* or *among*:

1. I saw something _____among_____ the wheels of the car.
2. We'll come and see you some time _____between_____ Christmas and the New Year.
3. This is just one problem _____among_____ many.
4. Switzerland lies _____among_____ France, Germany, Austria and Italy.
5. I couldn't see Ms Tan _____among_____ the visitors.
6. The lift got stuck _____between_____ two floors of the building.
7. She stood there _____among_____ piles of suitcases looking for a taxi.
8. She always reads _____between_____ the lines.

↑ try to imply other meaning.

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Conjunctions

Conjunctions

A conjunction is simply a connective (or linking word). It may be used to join words or groups of words (phrases, clauses).

Examples

1. Mr. Tan *and* Mr. Lee did not report for work.
2. The new accountant is slow *but* accurate.
3. Pay now *or* pay later.
4. You should seek medical attention immediately if you develop a fever.
5. We approved the plan *because* it is serves our objectives.

Even though it is a connective, a conjunction may be used at the beginning of a sentence:

Examples

1. *Because* the price was right, we made the purchase.
2. *As* he was leaving, his officer asked him to write a report.
3. *Before* he wrote the report, he checked all the data.

Here is a list of words that often function as conjunctions:

and	because	if	since
but	unless	while	before
or	as	when	although
nor	so	provided	after

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Two Kinds of Conjunctions

1. Coordinating Conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions such as *and, but, or* and *nor* join words, phrases and clauses of equal rank, or are grammatically independent of each other.

- Sheila had fish and chips for lunch. (and joins two words)
- Our Jurong plant produces these parts, and a local wholesaler distributes them. (and joins two clauses)
- The file could be on the shelf or in the cabinet.
  (or joins two prepositional phrases)
- They can't meet our deadline, so we cancelled our order.
  (so joins two clauses)

2. Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions join a subordinate clause (a clause which cannot stand alone to form a sentence) to a main or independent clause (a clause which can stand alone to form a sentence).

- I'll phone you when I arrive.
- He told us that he likes his job.
- It's a question which nobody can answer.
- If you switch on the current, the room will be bright.

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Correlative Conjunctions

Correlatives are mostly co-ordinating conjunctions used in pairs to join coordinate words, phrases, and clauses. Occasionally an adverb and a conjunction are used as a pair to accomplish the same purpose.

Here are a few common correlatives:

both . . . and	neither . . . nor
either . . . or	not only . . . but also

A pair of correlatives should be placed so that the sentence elements following them are parallel in form.

DON'T USE: He was asked either to buy supplies from the Lansing Corporation or the Boyston Company.

USE: He was asked to buy supplies from either the Lansing Corporation or the Boyston Company.

DON'T USE: Ms Keiko is not only experienced but also has had five profitable years of college.

USE: Ms Keiko is not only experienced but also well educated.

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Conjunctions and Their Indications

Here are some examples of conjunctions expressing or indicating specific meanings:

Contrast of ideas: but; and yet; though; although

- He is intelligent but lazy.
- I offered him a very high salary and yet he refused to be employed.

Choice or absence of choice: or; either...or; neither...nor; or else.

- We will either give you cash or send you a cheque.
- John is neither here nor there.

Time: when; while; as; before; until; after; till; since; whenever.

- John read the report as he walked to his office.
- Before you leave for the airport, you must collect your tickets.

Manner of comparison: as; as...as; as if; as though

- Do the job as efficiently as he does.
- She looks as if she is discouraged by the bad news.

Place: where; wherever

- I will sit where I like.
- Wherever you go, he will keep in touch.

Condition: unless; if

- Unless you work hard, you will not get a promotion.
- I will prepare this report if I can obtain the data.

Reason: because; as; since

- He can do what he likes because he is rich.
- We will start work since the plan has been approved.

Purpose: in order that; so that

- I work so that I may live, but Tom lives so that he may work.

Result: so...that; such...that

- He was so intelligent that he could design an operating system in a week.
- There was such a demand that we had to increase our production level.

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Problems with the Use of Conjunctions

1. One Conjunction for Two Clauses

Do not use two conjunctions to join clauses when one is enough.

WRONG: Although the product was damaged but they tried to sell it. **X**

CORRECT: Although the product was damaged, they tried to sell it. ✓

CORRECT: The product was damaged but they tried to sell it. ✓

WRONG: Because the company made profits so the staff received good bonuses. **X**

CORRECT: Because the company made profits, the staff received good bonuses. ✓

CORRECT: The company made profits, so the staff received good bonuses. ✓

2. Misuse of Adverbs as Conjunctions

Care should be taken to avoid the mistake of using **adverbs** such as *also, however, consequently, still, furthermore, hence, therefore, accordingly, nevertheless, etc.* as conjunctions.

WRONG: He has always worked hard however he remains poor. **X**

CORRECT: He has always worked hard but he remains poor. ✓

CORRECT: He has always worked hard; however, he remains poor. ✓

WRONG: Computers are now cheaper than before, hence are used by many students. **X**

CORRECT: Computers are cheaper than before and hence are used by many students. ✓

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Conjunctions - Practice

In the space provided, write the connective that would be used logically in the sentences.

(Some are conjunction some are not).

and	therefore (adverb)	furthermore (adverb)	but	however (adverb)	otherwise (adverb)

1. Our office can claim a 20% improvement, ___and___ this achievement will be recognised by headquarters.
2. The names had not been filled in; ___therefore___, I refused to sign the contract.
3. The software is colourful and interesting; ___however___, it is not user-friendly.
4. The conference call feature is convenient, ___but___ it is too expensive.
5. The agreement contains one minor typographical error; ___otherwise___, it has been prepared perfectly.
6. Her degree is in accounting; ___furthermore___, she has experience as a CPA.
7. Your contract is about to expire, ___and___ the department needs to know if you intend to negotiate a new one.
8. Chee Keong has no need for an insurance policy; ___therefore___, he will not buy one.
9. The exercise will begin tomorrow; ___furthermore___, it will involve all departments.

so that	as long as	while	until	though	as if	and

1. You can have my laptop ___as long as (provided)___ you bring it back tomorrow.
2. I'm staying here ___until___ I get my money back.
3. It was very dark in the corridor, ___and___ I couldn't see where I was going.
4. Joe was patient and careful, ___while___ his assistant was the exact opposite.
5. You look ___as if___ you've seen a ghost.
6. He won't get any money ___until___ he finishes the work properly.
7. It looks ___as if___ it's going to rain.
8. You can cancel the ticket ___as long as___ you tell the airline 48 hours in advance.
9. ___Though/while___ I think his technical skills are good, his management skills aren't up to much.

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Interjections



Wow! That was a great presentation.



Whew! It's hot filming in the Sahara Desert.



Oh gosh! I'm really late.

Interjections

An interjection is a word used to denote strong feeling or sudden emotion. It is generally followed by an exclamation mark or a comma.

A pure interjection does not contribute to the basic meaning of a sentence. It simply suggests surprise, fright, confusion, wonderment, or any other such emotion.

Interjections are common in spoken English as it gives emotion to our speech. The use of interjections in business writing is generally limited.

Examples

1. Ouch! Something bit me.
2. Oh, do you really believe her story?
3. Hurray! We won the bid!
4. Whew! That was close.
5. Wow! What an impressive presentation.

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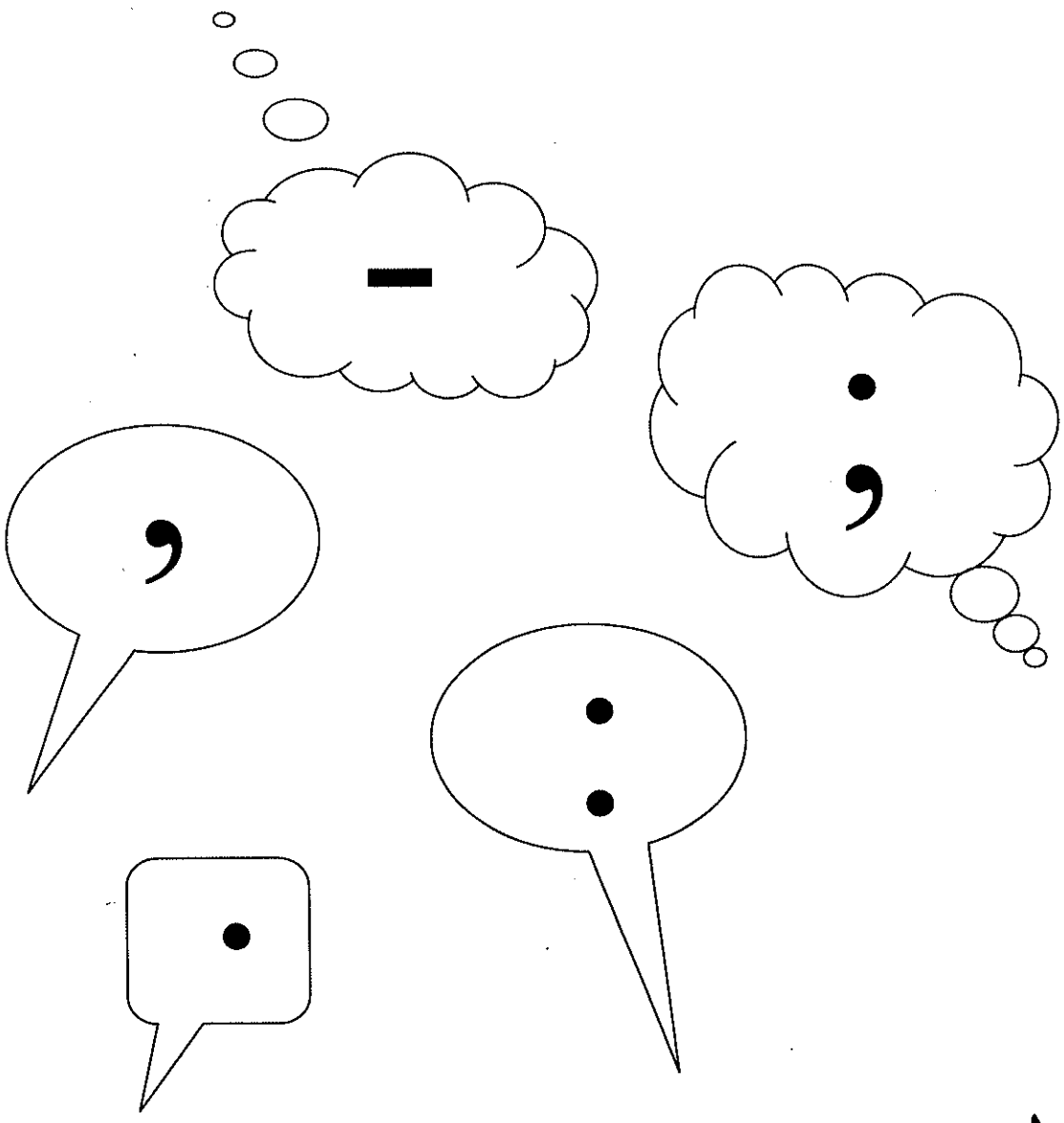
Punctuation



Punctuations – The Comma

Anyone who guesses about the use of commas may convey a meaning that was not intended.

Note how the comma affects the meaning in these sentences:

- If you agree to help Mei Ling, we will not pursue the subject.
- If you agree to help, Mei Ling, we will not pursue the subject.
- All committee members favouring the change met to discuss the cost.
- All committee members, favouring the change, met to discuss the cost.

These examples suggest that the meaning of a sentence often depends upon its punctuation.

No one should rely on guessing when using punctuation.

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Punctuations – The Comma

There are four common rules to observe for the use of the comma:

RULE 1 – Use commas to separate three or more items in a series.

The items may be words, phrases, or clauses of equal grammatical rank.

Examples

- We were impressed by his poise, his understanding, and his honesty. (nouns in a series)
- The work was done quietly, quickly, and satisfactorily. (adverbs in a series)
- In his leisure time he swims, reads, and plays golf. (verbs in a series)
- The young man seemed enthusiastic but uninformed, energetic but untrained, willing but not able. (pairs of words in a series)
- We cannot complete this project in an hour, in a day, or even in a week. (phrases in a series)
- She favoured Model C, I favoured Model A, but the department purchased Model B. (short clauses in a series)

NOTE eg). This report was written by Sally, Susan and Amy.

The use of a comma before the conjunction in series such as these is optional, but its absence may confuse a reader.

- The CEO reviewed the proposals written by Larry, Michael, Benny and Benson.

  (Did Benny and Benson write separate proposals, or did they co-write a single proposal?)

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Punctuations – The Comma

RULE 2 – Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction that joins two main (independent) clauses in a compound sentence.

The most common coordinating conjunctions are *and, but, or* and *nor*.

Examples

- The accident occurred in the busy atrium, but no one claimed to have seen it.
- The final session came to a close, and the legislators left for their homes.

NOTE

When applying this rule, make certain that a clause (which must contain both a subject and a verb) follows the conjunction.

- We reported our findings to Ms. Lee, and went on to our next job. ✗
- We reported our findings to Ms. Lee and went on to our next job. ✓
- We reported our findings to Ms Lee, and we went on to our next job. ✓

- Sally recognised the three delegates, but could not recall their names. ✗
- Sally recognised the three delegates but could not recall their names. ✓
- Sally recognised the three delegates, but she could not recall their names. ✓

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Punctuations – The Comma

RULE 3 – Place a comma after an introductory verbal (word or phrase).

An introductory element (word, phrase, or dependent clause) that is placed before the main clause of a sentence should generally be followed by a comma.

Examples

- Looking to the future, he purchased an insurance policy.
  (Introductory phrase contains the verbal *looking*.)
- Driven for only 730 miles, this tank truck is practically new.
  (Introductory phrase contains the verbal *Driven*.)
- Before leaving, speak to the senior project engineer about your plans.
  (Introductory phrase contains the verbal *leaving*.)
- To make matters worse, Lee Seng was unable to repair the computer.
  (Introductory phrase contains the verbal *to make*.)
- Agitated, he stomped out of the conference room. (The verbal Agitated, a participle, modifies *he*.)

NOTE

A verbal used as a subject is, of course, an essential part of a clause and should not be set off with a comma.

- To complete the project on time, is not easy. ✗
- To complete the project on time is not easy. ✓
- The directors and managers will meet, to discuss the project. ✗
- The directors and managers will meet to discuss the project. ✓

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Punctuations – The Comma

RULE 4 – Use commas to set off parenthetical expressions.

A parenthetical expression (which may be a word, a phrase, or a short clause) tends to interrupt the natural flow of a sentence because it is somewhat abruptly inserted.

Here are some expressions that are often used parenthetically:

as a consequence	I believe	moreover
as a result	if necessary	nevertheless
as a rule	in addition	of course
as well as _____	in brief	on the contrary
as you know	in fact	on the other hand
by the way	it has been said	therefore
for example	it seems	to be sure
however	I understand	together with _____

Unless such expressions blend in very smoothly with the sentence it interrupts, it should be set off with commas.

- He was told, it seems, that no more money will be available to fund the project.
- Bee Leng, by the way, has some good ideas for improving our service.
- The new computer, together with twelve boxes of thumb drives, will be delivered to you on Wednesday.
- If you want to sell your company now, however, you may experience some difficulty.
- Our firm has, I believe, the industry's most efficient quality control.

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Punctuations – The Semicolon (;) stronger than the comma and weaker than a full stop

The break, or pause, that a semicolon represents in a sentence is somewhat greater than the break indicated by a comma. In some of its functions the semicolon could be considered a "weak period".

RULE 1 – Use a semicolon to separate the main clauses of a compound sentence if a coordinating conjunction does not connect them.

Sometimes closely related coordinate clauses are not joined by a comma and a conjunction like *and, but, or, nor* or *so*. In such cases, use the semicolon.

- The raw materials were supplied by our China plant; the finished product was made in our London branch.
- The brochures have already been printed; they have not yet been distributed.

RULE 2 – Use a semicolon to separate items in a series when the items themselves contain commas.

- We will present awards to Katherine, the human resource manager; Betty Lim, the marketing director; and Henry Lew, the loans officer.
- We were visited by people from Smithville, a suburb of Chicago; Troy, a small town in Georgia; and Austin, the capital of Texas.

NOTE

The semicolon is an excellent mark of punctuation if used sparingly.

Don't use a semicolon when a period would be more logical, and don't let it tempt you into writing long, tangled sentences.

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Punctuations – The Colon (:) ← (can replace "as follows")

The function of a colon, which directs a reader's attention to what follows, is quite different from that of a semicolon, which acts as a separator.

RULE – Use a colon after a formal introduction to the words that follow.

- We hope to open a branch office in each of the following estates: Tampines, Bedok, and Jurong.
- Only three pieces of furniture remain in our showroom: a sofa, a writing desk, and a bookcase.
- I have one very serious objection to your project: it may prove to be very expensive.
- He seems to have forgotten this rule: Never discuss company policies at social gatherings. (If a sentence that follows a colon is to be emphasised, it should begin with a capital letter.)
- Only one kind of work would ever make him happy: teaching. (The use of a comma or a dash would be informal.)
- The money collected during the campaign was distributed thus: $2,000 for administrative help, $5,000 for publicity, $7,000 for stationery and printing, and $87,000 for the children's home.
- You will be pleased to hear the good news: May Ling has passed the bar examination.

NOTE

Do not place a colon after a verb or preposition that is followed by a series:

- Our equipment will include: a tractor, a large crane, and a ditch digger. ✗
- Our equipment will include a tractor, a large crane, and a ditch digger. ✓

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Punctuations – Practice

– – → highest impact

( ) → least impact

Which sentence places the most emphasis on the fact that the man who helped him was a security guard?

1. The man, a security guard, helped him to configure the system.

2. The man - a security guard - helped him to configure the system.

3. The man (a security guard) helped him to configure the system.

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Punctuations – Practice

Insert punctuation marks where appropriate:

1. In opening the carton, Mr. Lee hurt his hand.
2. The lost notebook must be replaced before ~~next~~ the next meeting.
3. Unless the plant remains open on Saturday, we will not be able to meet their deadline.
4. Repair rates vary from one company to another; as a result, a customer may pay more than is necessary for repair services.
5. SunCorp Industries will provide the steel, Tech Industries the lumber, and GDE Industries the concrete.
6. ~~Two~~ Three of the candidates – Tan Siew Lin, Betty Lim, and Goh Yu Yong – have never done marketing work. (punctuate for emphasis)
7. The guest claims that she has never telephoned anyone in Fargo Steel Industries; therefore, she refuses to pay for the call.
8. He called me at 8:10 A.M.; our conversation ended at 9:05 A.M.
9. The three major clients on this list (Yong Seng Trading, Sammy Pte Ltd and Boston Import & Export) should be given more attention by our marketing people.
10. The staff lounge is tastefully decorated, but few people make use of it.
11. The finance department will be open only on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of next week.
12. She graduated in Australia – or maybe it was England – in 1996.

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The Building of Sentences

Common Sentence Patterns

There are many ways to combine words to form sentences, and the first combination that comes to mind may not be the most effective.

Variety is important in mature writing. Use a combination of simple, compound and complex sentences of varying lengths to hold the interest of readers.

A series of short, choppy sentences can be just as dull and uninspiring as a series of long, involved compound sentences.

Consider a few ways in which we can combine two closely related ideas:
(1) Henry graduated from NUS in June. (2) He now works for a New York trading firm.

Here are several alternative:

1. **Simple sentence with participial phrase**
   - Having graduated from NUS in June, Henry now works for a New York trading firm.

2. **Simple sentence with appositive**
   - Henry, a June graduate of NUS, now works for a New York trading firm.

3. **Compound sentence with coordinating conjunction**
   - Henry graduated from NUS in June, and he now works for a New York trading firm.

4. **Complex sentence with adverb clause.**
   - Since Henry graduated from NUS last June, he has been working for a New York trading firm.

5. **Complex sentence with adjective clause**
   - Henry, who graduated from NUS in June, now works for a New York trading firm.

     OR
   - Henry, who now works for a New York trading firm, graduated from NUS in June.

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The Four Sentence Structures

Any sentence falls into one of four structures, each communicating a different logical relationship of ideas.

Simple sentence	Has one independent clause.
Compound sentence	Has two or more independent clause.
Complex sentence	Has one independent clause and at least one dependent clause.
Compound-Complex sentence	Has two or more independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

Note

Independent clauses, expressing main ideas, are stronger.

Dependent clauses, expressing secondary ideas, are weaker.

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The Simple Sentence (The One-Idea Sentence)

A simple sentence:

(1) is made up of an independent clause

(2) contains a subject and a verb

(3) makes a single statement

(4) explains key points simply and effectively and can be quite powerful

subject	***verb***	***object***
The production manager	reorganised	the production schedule.

Simple sentences can also have more than one subject or verb.

subject	***subject***	***verb***	***object***
The production manager	and his assistant	reorganised	the production schedule.

subject	***verb***	***verb***	***object***
The production manager	reorganised	and streamlined	the production schedule.

subject	***subject***	***verb***	***verb***	***object***
The production manager	and his assistant	reorganised	and streamlined	the production schedule.

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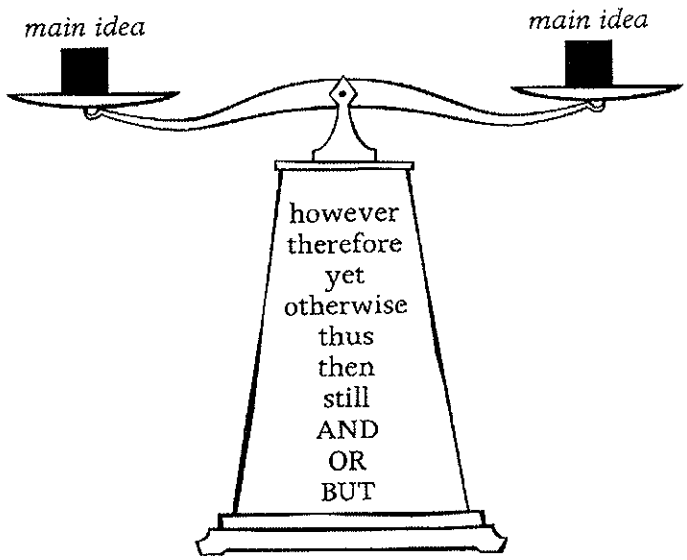
The Compound Sentence (The Equal-Rank Sentence)

The compound sentence expresses one thought through two or more equally strong, related ideas of equal importance.

The Balanced (Equal-Rank)
Sentence Shows Objectivity



You can join two related sentences in the following ways to make a compound sentence:

(1) with a comma plus a coordinating conjunction

(2) with a semicolon

These ways of joining sentences give equal weight or emphasis to the point each sentence makes.

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The Compound Sentence (The Equal-Rank Sentence)

(1) Comma Plus Coordinating Conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet)

Sentence, [coordinating conjunction] sentence

- I prefer the HP printer, but Mr Lee doesn't like it.
- I prefer the HP printer, so that's what I'm ordering.
- I prefer the HP printer, yet I'm open to other models.

(2) Semicolon

Without the coordinating conjunction, the comma is inadequate; a semicolon is then required.

A semicolon can be used instead of a period between two closely related sentences.

Sentence; sentence

- I prefer the HP printer; Mr Lee doesn't like it.
- I prefer the HP printer; that's what I'm ordering.
- I prefer the HP printer; I'm open to other models.

Remember that a semicolon doesn't add much meaning. It suggests that the two parts are closely related, but it doesn't say how (as opposed to coordinating conjunctions.)

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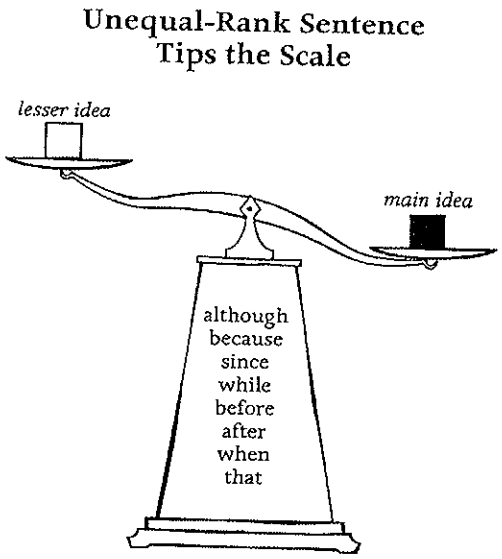
The Complex Sentence (The Unequal-Rank Sentence)

A complex sentence doesn't mean a complicated sentence; it merely means one part of the sentence is strong enough to stand alone and one part isn't.

A complex sentence has two parts:

- A main clause – a complete sentence that can stand alone
- A subordinated clause – a sentence introduced by a subordinating word and which, therefore, cannot stand alone.

[Subordinating word] sentence, sentence
Sentence [subordinating word] sentence



Subordinating Words – because, although, if, whereas, when, before, after, while

- We discovered a more efficient way to fluoridate water when we researched the water filtration problem.
- When we researched the water filtration problem, we discovered a more efficient way to fluoridate .

Note that when the subordinating word is in the middle, no comma is necessary.

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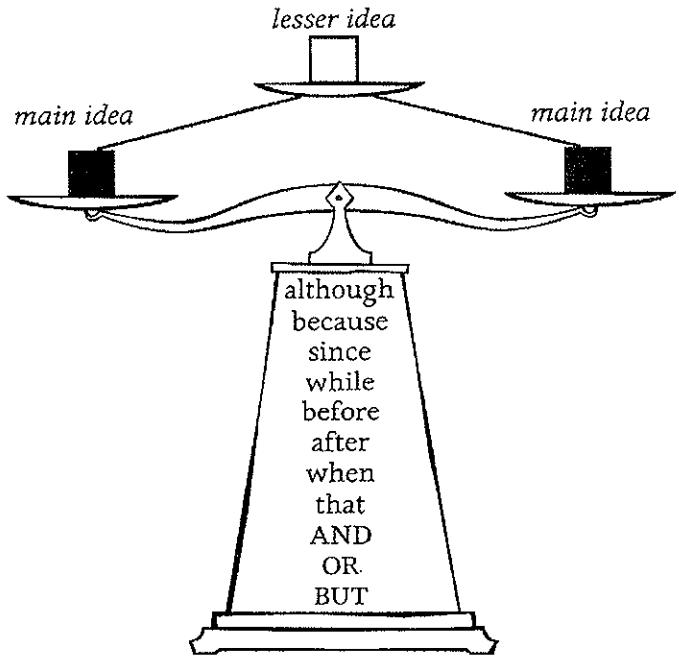
A Compound-Complex Sentence
(A Combination – Equal and Unequal)

The compound-complex sentence is similar to the complex sentence.

- The complex sentence has an independent clause and a dependent clause.
- The compound-complex sentence has two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

The Combination Sentence
Adds Bulk



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A Compound-Complex Sentence
(A Combination – Equal and Unequal)

There are two main uses of the compound-complex sentence:

(1) To show two results of one action or condition.

Example

When the factory has reached its target output, the management will review the operations processes, and the production lines will be optimised for higher output targets.

(2) To show two benefits / consequences that outweigh a contrasting idea.

Example

Although Plan A is workable, Plan B is more cost-effective and Plan C is the most profitable.

Note

Compound-complex sentences can develop into the biggest monster of all sentence types, as it invites cramming ideas into one long, involved structure. It often obstructs clarity and logic, and carries a greater risk of grammatical errors.

The overuse of this structure can tire and annoy readers, as it requires the most concentration from readers.

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Use of Sentence Structures in Your Writing

Only simple sentences used:

The manager knew his market. He also knew his customers. He did not decrease prices. He chose items which made an impact. In some places, the competitors were weak. He held on to these margins. Some market segments were keenly fought over. He cut his margins in these segments.

Only compound sentences used:

The manager knew his market, and he also knew his customers. He did not decrease prices, but he chose items which made an impact. In some places the competitors were weak, and he held on to these margins. Some market segments were keenly fought over, so he cut his margins in these segments.

Only complex sentences used:

The manager knew his market and his customers. He did not decrease prices but chose items which made an impact. He identified places where competitors were weak and held on to these margins. Where market segments were keenly fought over, he cut his margins.

A mixture of compound, and complex sentences used:

The manager knew his market; he also knew his customers. He did not decrease prices, but he chose items which made an impact. He identified places where competitors were weak and held on to these margins. Where market segments were keenly fought over, he cut his margins.

A mixture of simple, compound, and complex sentences used:

The manager knew his market. He also knew his customers. Instead of decreasing prices, he chose items which made an impact. He held on to markets in which competition was weak, and he cut his margins where competition was keen.

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Mixed Sentence Patterns

Sometimes you start with one way of getting to a point, but one of the words slides you into a different way of saying it. The two patterns then get mixed up.

Correct a mixed pattern by using one pattern or another.

Consider these:

Avoid: (mixed):	By using our innovative program allows smooth integration of email and office files.
Use:	Using our innovative program allows smooth integration of email and office files.

Avoid: (mixed):	In the Republic of Cameroon has over 200 local languages.
Use:	The Republic of Cameroon has over 200 local languages.
OR:	In the Republic of Cameroon, over 200 local languages are spoken.

Note that most often, these problem sentences begin with ***by*** or ***in***.

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Sentence Fragment

We know that a sentence is made up a group of words containing a subject and a verb. However, there is an exception.

It is possible for a group of words to contain a subject and a verb and still not be a complete sentence.

Sam writes the report. (complete simple sentence)

When Sam writes the report. (sentence fragment)

In the second sentence we have added the subordinating word ***when***, and turned a perfectly good sentence into a fragment.

Here is a list of subordinators.

W who, what, where, when, why, which, whether, while
I if
S since, so that
H how

A as, after, although
B before, because
O once
U unless, until
T than, that, though

A fragment is a serious error in sentence structure.

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Sentence Fragment

A sentence may be incomplete (a fragment) for three different reasons:

(1) No verb	Ruth, a human resource executive.
(2) No subject	Wrote the report.
(3) A subordinating word attached to the only subject and verb	When Ruth, a human resource executive, wrote the article.

Example of Sentence Fragment

We will be evaluating the Payroll module (for HR), Jobs and Resources modules (for R&D) in phase two. ×

We will be evaluating the Payroll (for HR), Jobs, and Resources (for R&D) modules in phase two. ✓

We will be evaluating the Payroll module (for HR), as well as the Jobs and Resources module (for R&D) in phase two. ✓

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Sentence Run-On

Just as a fragment is not enough to be a complete sentence, it is also possible to put too much into a sentence. The result is called a run-on.

A run-on occurs when two sentences are combined without using one of the four sentence patterns.

Example: Mr Tan dictated the letter Sally transcribed it.

To correct a run-on, we have several choices:

S	V	;	S	V
Mr Tan	dictated	the letter;	Sally	transcribed it.

OR

S	V	,	coordinator	S	V
Mr Tan	dictated	the letter,	and	Sally	transcribed it.

OR

S	V		subordinator	S	V
Mr Tan	dictated	the letter	before	Sally	transcribed it.

OR

subordinator	S	V	,	S	V
After	Mr Tan	dictated	the letter,	Sally	transcribed it.

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Post Learning Action Plan

List down the key learning objectives you want to acquire from this course.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

List down the key learning points you have acquired from this course.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Action Plan
List down the actions you will take at the workplace to apply the learning points that will enhance your ability and work output.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____ _____
6. _____ _____
7. _____ _____
8. _____ _____
9. _____



I am committed to complete the above actions by _____ *(date)*

_____
Signature / Date