Sentence Style

Why is Sentence Style Important?

Sentence Style is crucial in clear and effective communication. It helps in conveying ideas, emotions, and clarity in writing. Good sentence style can make a text more engaging and easier to understand.

Parallelism

Parallelism is the use of similar grammatical structures to create a balanced and rhythmic effect in sentences. It involves using the same grammatical structure in a series of words or phrases.

Design

Effective design can enhance the readability and visual impact of a document. It involves choosing the right layout, font, and color scheme to make the text more appealing and easier to digest.

Sentence Clarity: Common Errors

- Run-on Sentences
- Contractions
- Unclear Pronouns

Sentence Emphasis

Emphasizing important parts of a sentence can guide the reader's attention and highlight key points. This can be done through the use of punctuation, capitalization, or choice of words.

Adding Sentence Variety

Using a variety of sentence structures can make writing more engaging and dynamic. It helps in avoiding monotony and keeps the reader interested.

Sentence Variety Examples

- Simple Sentences
- Complex Sentences
- Compound Sentences

Sentence Clarity: Common Errors

Exercise 1: Identifying sentences that need revision.
Why is Sentence Style Important?

The purpose of writing is to convey a message; how you craft your sentences affects how the reader will interpret your ideas.

Sentences should be clear and interesting so as not to confuse or bore the reader.

Objective: Students will identify techniques to enhance clarity, brevity, emphasis, and variety in sentence writing in order to develop their ability to keep the reader engaged.
Clarity

Communicating your ideas clearly is the most important aspect of business writing.

Poorly written sentences distract the reader from the message you are trying to deliver.
Parallelism

Repeated sentence elements such as nouns, phrases, pronouns, and verbs often appear in parallel form in order to emphasize meaning and to promote sentence fluency.

By balancing single words with single words, phrases with phrases, and clauses with clauses, the reader can grasp ideas more easily.
Parallelism

Balance parallel ideas in a series. Balance parallel ideas presented as pairs. Repeat function words to clarify parallels.

*Example (series): Children who study music also learn confidence, discipline, and they are creative.

How would you revise this?

*Example (pairs): Emily Dickinson’s poetry features the use of dashes and capitalizing common words.

How would you revise this?
Sentence Clarity: Common Errors

- Faulty Parallelism
- Needed Words
- Dangling or Misplaced Modifiers
- Distracting Shifts
- Mixed Constructions

*See handout for examples.
*Exercise 1: Identifying sentence clarity issues/error correction.
Sentence Emphasis

Explore techniques to emphasize important words and phrases in your sentences.

Three ways to vary sentence emphasis are: Word Order, Coordination, and Subordination.

Word Order
The arrangement of words in a sentence can determine which ideas receive the most emphasis.

- Emphasize a word or phrase, place it at the end of the sentence or the beginning of the sentence.
- Murder was Colonel Mustard's only solution.
- Colonel Mustard is the only solution: Murder.

Coordination
This can emphasize two closely related ideas equally by coordinating them.

- In coordination, two sentences are joined by a coordinating conjunction:
  - for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.
- Example: The most popular game today is Codex. The next popular game today is Odyssey.

Subordination
Some sentences contain one main statement and one or more less important elements. The less important ideas are subordinate to, or dependent upon, the sentence's main ideas.

Subordinating conjunctions (see below) are examples to introduce dependent clauses.

- WithoutSubordination: Superman stopped changing his clothes, he realized the phone booth was made of glass.
- WithSubordination: When he realized the phone booth was made of glass, Superman stopped changing his clothes.
The arrangement of words in a sentence can determine which ideas receive the most emphasis.

To emphasize a word or phrase, place it at the end of the sentence or at the beginning of the sentence:

Murder was Colonel Mustard’s only solution.

Colonel Mustard knew only one solution: Murder.
**Coordination**

You can emphasize two closely related ideas equally by coordinating them.

In coordination, you join two sentences with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS – For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So).

Choppy: The most popular girl’s name today is Emily. The most popular boy’s name today is Jacob.

How would you coordinate this sentence?

Coordinated: The most popular girl’s name today is Emily, and the most popular boy’s name is Jacob.
Subordination

Some sentences contain one main statement and one or more less important elements; the less important ideas are subordinate to, or are dependent upon, the sentence's main idea.

Subordinating conjunctions (See handout of examples) introduce dependent clauses.

Without Subordination: Superman stopped changing his clothes. He realized the phone booth was made of glass.

With Subordination: When he realized the phone booth was made of glass, Superman stopped changing his clothes.
Combining Choppy Sentences

Short sentences demand attention, so you should use them primarily for emphasis.

Too many short sentences, one after the other, make for a choppy style.

Choppy: I have fond memories of Central Park. My husband and I met there.

How would you revise this?

*See handout for: Ineffective Coordination, Ineffective Subordination, and Excessive Subordination.

*Exercise 2: Using coordination and subordination to combine clauses, and/or choppy sentences.
Adding Sentence Variety

A document full of identically constructed sentences is monotonous. Using the same subject + predicate pattern is a guaranteed way to lose your reader.

To achieve sentence variety:

1) Use a variety of sentence structures by experimenting with a mix of sentence types (simple, compound, complex, etc.) *See sentence types handout.

2) Use a variety of sentence beginnings. Begin your sentences with adverbial modifiers, adjectives, participial phrases. *See A WHITE BUS handout.

3) Try inverting sentences occasionally. (Predicate —— Subject).

*Exercise 3: Improve Sentence Variety based on previously mentioned techniques.
Now what?

Book appointments in the Student Success Center for more tips on how to improve your sentences and your writing in general!
Sentence Style

Sentence Clarity: Common Errors
- Faulty Parallelism
- Repeated Words
- Unrelated or Misplaced Phrases
- Emphasizing Links
- About Contractions

Sentence Emphasis
- Explore sentence emphasis in your text to highlight important points.

Parallelism
- Improved sentence structure with more emphasis on parallelism and repetition.

Sentences
- Simple, compound, or complex sentences.

Adding Sentence Variety
- A variety of sentence structures can enhance your writing.

Sentence Variety
- Use a variety of sentence structures to maintain interest and variety.