

## Ideas

### Focus

Vague-----Clear, well defined

### Content

Inaccurate, boring, predictable-----Accurate, original, interesting

### Details

Useless-----Meaningful

### Support

Sporadic, tossed in, fragmented -----Thoughtful, developed, connected

## Organization

### Order

Random, confusing-----Logical, purposeful

### Connections

Lacking, reader is lost-----Useful, guide the reader subtly

### Pacing

Unbalanced, unnecessary----- Effective balance when needed

### Leading in and out

Abrupt, without meaning-----Effective, meaningful

### Level Three Writes

Purpose: To give students practice with the entire writing process, writing for wider audiences, and polishing writing.

Process: These assignments could be built toward during the whole term or they could be separate units within the course, as long as students have adequate time to work through the entire writing process.

- **Autobiography**
  - Teaches writing in a variety of patterns and prevents plagiarism issues.
  - Challenges? Avoid too-personal topics
  - See handouts. If you've had students writing on prompts that will contribute to this project, have them select a specific number of them—you can always require two or three topics and leave the rest up to them—to revise for final versions. Require students to compile the pieces into a booklet, with graphics if possible.
  - "Publish" to the rest of the class. Have students read each others and write memos to the authors about the parts they found particularly interesting or informative.
- **Business Letters—Letters of Complaint, Compliment, or Request**
  - Teaches audience and format; at the same time emphasizes correctness
  - Challenges? Possible cultural issues
  - See handouts for details
  - Because it's important for these letters to actually be sent, spend some time making sure the purpose for the letter is real
- **Movie or Book Reviews**
  - Teaches analysis and evaluation as well as summarizing
  - Challenges? Easily plagiarized
  - See handouts for details
  - Again, it's important for these to have a wider audience, so they can be sent to magazines or newspapers. Book reviews (if they're short) can be posted on Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble.com. Both sites also provide models for students to analyze.
- **Brochures—For tourists of upcoming Olympics or informative about major**
  - Teaches about a variety of text types (paragraphs that describe and explain as well as lists, graphs, charts, and images); teaches how to work collaboratively, if students complete the project in small groups
  - Challenges? Issues of plagiarism related to images on Internet and the fact that brochures don't require students to generate a lot of written text—but if students write a brochure on the same topic as their research paper, that issue is resolved.
  - Use a variety of brochures as models and have students analyze characteristics before they begin their own. Teach parallel structure.

- Exchange brochures with another class and have them vote on the top two. If possible, submit brochures to programs or government.
- Research Papers
  - Teaches about research, citing, using sources, and providing evidence in well developed writing. Allows students to gain knowledge at the same time as they practice and improve writing.
  - Challenges? PLAGIARISM.
  - Teach note-taking, summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting. Teach about ethos, voice, and style.
  - To get a wider audience for these, some students can submit them to journals. Most of the time, however, the wider audience is the larger class—have them read two peer research papers and write a letter to you or to the writers about what they learned from the research paper.

Peer Review—Teach it and give prompts

Revising—Teach grammar as part of revision

- Prepositional phrases: anywhere a mouse can go; treasure hunt; stories that have prepositional phrases taken out—put them back in.
- Appositives
- Sentence Work—sentence combining
- More subtle transitions
- Comma crazy

Proofreading—Give practice: How many errors did you find?

Grading: Since Level Three papers have been revised, they should be graded for all traits. I suggest designing a grade sheet ahead of time so that students will know your expectations (See Movie Review grade sheet) and can plan to meet those expectations. Such a grade sheet also saves some time for you as a grader (once it's developed).

How to avoid being overwhelmed?

- Set time limits per paper or per class.
- See handout
- Look at general patterns over specific conventions errors.

# AUTOBIOGRAPHY

LIFE NOT RECORDED OR REMEMBERED  
BECOMES AS THE RIPPLES  
WHEN THEY REACH THE EDGE OF THE POND...  
UNSEEN AND FORGOTTEN.

-Laura Homer-

## GRANDPARENTS/PARENTS

names  
where they were born  
how they met  
what they did for a living  
something about their lives

## YOUR BIRTH

day/time/place  
hospital or home  
who was with the mother  
what kind of day it was  
anyone else you know born that day  
doctor/midwife  
easy or hard birth  
hair/weight/looks (resembled anyone in family)  
brothers or sisters at home  
your name/special meaning/who gave it  
good baby/fussy  
when walked & talked  
first words

## EARLY LIFE

who raised you  
what kind of clothes you wore  
what kinds of things you liked to do  
did you live in one place or move around  
what kind of stories you liked  
pets  
what was your home like  
what was your village like  
who were your friends  
did you go to nursery school  
funny/sad things that happened  
what did you look like  
what did you like to eat  
toys/entertainment

## PRIMARY SCHOOL

when did you start school  
did you have a best friend  
what did you enjoy most

what kind of things did you learn  
 what did you wear to school  
 did you take a lunch/what did you eat  
 how did you get to school  
 exciting/terrible experiences  
 what did you do after school  
 what were your teachers like  
 what did you do for fun  
 what kind of building was your school  
 who helped you with schoolwork  
 what did you do at vacation time  
 what kind of student were you  
 how did you look

#### MIDDLE SCHOOL/SENIOR MIDDLE SCHOOL

how did you get placed in your school  
 what subjects did you learn  
 what subjects were hardest/easiest  
 what kind of relationship did you have with the teachers  
 when did you start to notice boys/girls  
 relationship with your parents/siblings  
 your looks/size  
 books you liked/movies/sports  
 favorite foods  
 holidays and traditions  
 parties/birthdays  
 working experiences  
 what did you do best  
 illnesses  
 friendships  
 what did you do for fun  
 what did you do after school/weekends  
 what did you wear  
 Black July

#### UNIVERSITY LIFE

placement/major/disappointed/happy  
 feelings leaving home  
 parental advice  
 first meeting roommates  
 feelings about university  
 dorm conditions/food  
 your biggest concern  
 how your university education is financed  
 military training  
 romances  
 classes/teachers  
 free time  
 vacations  
 special projects/organizations/responsibilities  
 clothing  
 good/bad/sad times  
 work experience

## WRITING IDEAS THAT WORK!

### AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Grandparents/parents/birth/first years  
Grade school years  
Middle School  
Senior Middle School  
University Life

where born  
how you got your name  
easy birth/on time/feelings of parents  
sisters/brothers at home  
what kind of day  
hair/looks/disposition  
who took care of you  
first word  
walking/talking  
family circumstances  
what happening in China/town  
funny incidents/stories  
toys/friends/food/clothing  
pets  
nursery school

### WRITING TOPICS

My Hero  
Hometown  
Controversial News Article (College Is Not A Nursery)  
Critiques  
News Articles  
Photo Captions  
Directions  
How To  
Summaries  
Letter to parents  
Pen Pal  
Chinese Folk Tale  
Letter of application  
Letter of Acceptance  
Resume  
Correction of consumer product labels  
Autobiography

Life not recorded or remembered is as the ripples when  
they reach the edge of the pond; unseen and forgotten.  
- Laura Homer

## Sample Business Letter

### Heading

Monroe Chamber of Commerce  
105 East Bay Road  
Monroe, LA 31404-1832  
October 19, 2000

Four to Seven Spaces

### Inside Address

Ms. Charlotte Williams, Manager  
Belles Lettres Books  
The Delta Mall  
Monroe, LA 31404-0012

Double Space

### Salutation

Dear Ms. Williams:

Double Space

### Body

Welcome to the Monroe business community. As the Chamber's executive director, I'd like to thank you for opening your store in the Delta Mall. Belles Lettres Books is a welcome addition to the town's economy, especially with the store's emphasis on Southern authors. I wish you success.

I would like to invite you to join our Chamber of Commerce. Membership gives you a voice in your community and access to promotional materials.

If you decide to join, I could set up a ribbon-cutting ceremony, which would provide some useful news coverage. Call me at 944-0645 or e-mail me at <alein@chamber.org> if you have any questions.

### Complimentary Closing

Sincerely,

Double Space

### Signature

Ardith Lein

Four Spaces

Ardith Lein

Double Space

### Initials Enclosures Copies

AL:nk  
Encl. membership brochure  
cc: Peter Sanchez, Membership Chairperson

## WRITING GUIDELINES

## Business Letters

### ■ PREWRITING

1. **Considering Your Audience . . .** Who is your reader and how will he or she feel about your message?
2. **Determining Your Purpose . . .** Jot down your reason for writing or what you want your reader to know or do.
3. **Gathering Details . . .** Collect the information you will need for your letter. Think about the best way to organize and present it.

### ■ WRITING AND REVISING

4. **Organizing the Details . . .** Organize your letter into three parts.

**Beginning:** Introduce the message by stating the subject and purpose of your letter.

**Middle:** Present whatever information is appropriate for the kind of letter you are writing—a letter of *request, complaint, information, persuasion, application, or thank-you*.

**Ending:** Focus on the outcome. What do you want the reader to do, and when, and how? Is there an action that you will take?

5. **Improving Your Writing . . .** Revise your first draft, checking for the following:

- ⊗ accurate, interesting details that answer the reader's questions
- ⊗ paragraphs that each develop one main idea
- ⊗ a polite and respectful tone (See "Using Fair Language," pages 529-531.)

### ■ EDITING AND PROOFREADING

6. **Checking for Style and Accuracy . . .** Check your letter for the following traits or qualities:

- ⊗ smooth-flowing sentences
- ⊗ clear, natural word choice (See pages 85-88.)
- ⊗ correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and usage
- ⊗ correct letter form

**[HOT LINK]** Use "Assessment Rubric," page 308, as a helpful revising and editing guide.

7. **Preparing a Final Copy . . .** Neatly type or keyboard your letter. Center it on the page and keep the margins even on both sides. Address the envelope, add correct postage, and mail your letter. (See page 307.)

## Sample Complaint Letter

355 Hutchinson Road  
Pascoag, RI 02859  
November 5, 2000

Ms. Anne Cline, Head Cook  
Bay High School  
4562 Birch Road  
Pascoag, RI 02859

Dear Ms. Cline:

**Beginning  
State the  
problem.**

Last summer I became a vegetarian. After visiting my uncle's farm in Iowa, I couldn't bear the thought of eating meat anymore.

**Middle  
Supply  
details and  
possible  
solutions.**

When school started, I thought I could eat school lunches by simply staying away from meat dishes. My plan worked for a few weeks, but it got tough to eat peanut-butter sandwiches and applesauce every day. The school lunch program is great for most students, but it doesn't work well for vegetarians.

After talking with other vegetarian students, I believe that the lunch program can work for everyone. Some options are to have a greater variety of side dishes and a salad bar every day that even nonvegetarians could enjoy. The school lunch program would then provide something for everyone.

**Ending  
Be polite.**

I was happy with the school lunches before I became a vegetarian, and I hope that now you will be able to offer meals that I can enjoy just as much. Please respond to my request via school mail or e-mail <kkobe@aol.com>.

Sincerely,

*Karin Kobes*  
Karin Kobes

## Sample Request Letter

245 Oak Street, NE  
Savannah, GA 31408  
February 11, 2000

Director of Tourism  
Colombian Embassy  
P.O. Box 783  
New York, NY 10023

Dear Director:

**Beginning  
Introduce  
yourself and  
tell why you  
are writing.**

I am a sophomore at Washington High School in Savannah, Georgia. For my World Cultures class, I'm working on a research paper and visual presentation about Colombia, and I need more information.

**Middle  
Supply the  
details and  
state your  
specific  
request.**

In my presentation, I'm taking on the role of a travel agent explaining why tourists should visit Colombia. Because your agency is in charge of Columbia tourism, I thought that someone there could provide the information I need. Please send me whatever booklets, pamphlets, or Web-site addresses you can.

If possible, please send the information by March 3. Then I will have time to finish the project by my March 25 deadline.

**Ending  
End with a  
thank-you  
and closing  
thought.**

Thank you for considering my request. If you would like I'll send you a copy of the finished paper that will go along with the visual display.

Sincerely,

*Nick Davis*  
Nick Davis



## Movie Review Scoring Guide

We have been reading some movie reviews and discussing them, their purpose and how they achieve it. You have chosen a movie and started to draft the summary portion of a review of it. Here are the criteria by which the final will be graded. Be sure to consider these aspects (which we discussed and practiced in class) in your drafting and revision.

Rough draft due \_\_\_\_\_ Final draft with process due \_\_\_\_\_

1. Ideas (30) \_\_\_\_\_
  - provide an opinion about the quality of a movie, supported with specific evidence and examples in the analysis
  - provide a concise summary (shape of movie and details selected to match focus of the review) that leads into the analysis
  - balance summary and analysis appropriately for the purpose and audience
  - provide, overall, a thorough knowledge of the movie and sufficient opinion and evidence so that audience can make a decision based on the review
2. Organization (20) \_\_\_\_\_
  - begins interestingly and ends effectively
  - shows appropriate pacing in summary and analysis
  - has analysis paragraphs with clear topic sentences (generally) and focus
  - reflects thoughtful consideration of order of ideas
  - contains a thesis statement that summarizes opinion and main reason stated one way in the introduction and another way in the conclusion (weakness *and* strength)
3. Word Choice (8) \_\_\_\_\_
  - uses two vocabulary words effectively
  - uses precise adjectives and adverbs in expressing opinion
4. Voice (5) \_\_\_\_\_
  - reflects opinion but with a tone of reasonableness
  - is appropriate for the purpose and audience
5. Sentence Fluency (10) \_\_\_\_\_
  - uses subordination and coordination elements effectively to enhance meaning
  - uses appositives to add content and reduce wordiness
6. Conventions (7) \_\_\_\_\_
  - titles are punctuated correctly
  - general spelling, grammar and punctuation are correct.

TOTAL (80) \_\_\_\_\_

## Individual Movie Review

1. Choose a movie you have seen and remember well. It should have been in a theater or on videotape or cable. (Movies shown on commercial television are edited so much they often have little resemblance to the original.)
2. Write a critical review, modeling it after some of the professional reviews you have read.
3. DO NOT SUMMARIZE THE FILM. You tell parts of the story only as they apply to your critical elements. Short paragraphs, with supporting examples from the film, usually work best.
4. Deal with specific characteristics of the film:
  - a. Why did you or didn't you care about or become involved with the characters?
  - b. Was the scenery and filming technique a positive or a negative addition to the film?
  - c. How did the film "move"--was it too slow? too fast?
  - d. Were the actors and actresses convincing and appropriate for their roles? Why or why not?
  - d. What was the intent of the film and how well did it fulfill it? Did it want to amuse? enlighten? frighten? entertain? make its viewers think?
  - e. Was anything in the film controversial? Did those elements help or hurt the film?
5. You need an original opening and a good clincher for the end. You also need an original title (not the title of the film). The title reflects in some ways your attitude as a critic toward the film.
6. The review should not exceed one page, typed, single-spaced within paragraphs, double-spaced between paragraphs. (That is for the final draft.) UNDERLINE THE TITLE OF THE FILM WHEN YOU USE IT IN THE REVIEW.
7. Sign your name at the bottom of the typed draft. Give your movie a rating of from 1 to 5 stars (one is awful; five is wonderful). The stars will be provided.
8. All reviews will be on display for other students to read. Final drafts will need to be mounted on construction paper. Final drafts must be error-free.

**'Finding Forrester' Well-Performed and Deeply Inspirational.**

**FINDING FORRESTER**

☆☆☆ (out of four stars)

**Starring** Sean Connery, Rob Brown, Anna Paquin,  
F. Murray Abraham, Busta Rhymes and April Grace  
**Director** Gus Van Sant  
**Canadian Rating** PG

**Released by** Columbia Pictures - 12/00



Buy this Poster!

As a writer, I know inspiration is the key to triumph. The words of a poet, author (or even novice movie critic) must splash across the page with some inspired thinking. Otherwise, the writer lacks dedication and passion. *Finding Forrester* is about honing on personal inspiration, and the film itself manages to inspire, boasting fine performances and an admirable message about pursuing your passion in life. It's all been done before. And we don't care.

Director Gus Van Sant covered similar terrain in the Oscar-decorated *Good Will Hunting*, and here revisits the concept of a talented youth in jeopardy of remaining undiscovered. Newcomer Rob Brown (who auditioned for this part to finance a cell phone fund) is Jamal Wallace, a 16-year old basketball player and aspiring writer from the Bronx. Jamal is offered a scholarship to a local Prep school based on his superior skills on the court, but inside the athletic shell exists an eager bookworm. Jamal likes to write but, like many of us, hasn't found his inspiration. A jump-start comes in the form of elusive Pulitzer-prize winning author William Forrester (Sean Connery), a man who penned "the great American novel" in the 1950s but never published a second book. Forrester now barricades himself in a Bronx apartment, peeking through curtains with

inquisitive binoculars to watch the high school ballers (who've come to call him 'Window') and other passers-by.

After pulling a little stunt, Jamal comes into contact with Forrester, who initially seems like nothing more than a stubborn, cranky old coot who is absolutely dead to the world. This is all true, but Forrester also possesses the wisdom to further Jamal's writing abilities. He shows him how to approach the creative process ("Don't think - just write," the old man advises, loading paper into his archaic typewriter) and Jamal consumes the information with relish. There is, of course, a developing friendship between the two. It's actually a moving and effective one, reinforced by the enjoyable chemistry of these two perfect strangers and the amazing authenticity of Rob Brown, who makes acting look like his natural calling in his film debut. Impressive? You bet.

As both a writer and lover of fine performances, *Finding Forrester* appealed to me greatly. The Academy might even recognize Sean Connery's deeply affecting portrayal of the J.D. Salinger-esque writer, which is nuanced and brilliant during his better moments and still gratifying throughout boggy elements of the script. The film does feel slow and intrusively familiar at times, but Van Sant knows how to whittle something genuine out of a wooden premise seen in dozens of other allegedly inspirational dramas. This is a return to the safety netting established with *Good Will Hunting*. After the vexing outcome of his controversial shot-for-shot remake of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* in 1998, Van Sant is, like many directors do at some point in their career, merely returning to what he does best.

A wise decision. *Finding Forrester* is a rehash, generally predictable and trite, but it works wonders due to the unusual compatibility of the two lead performances. With this casting, Van Sant has struck gold, and Mike Rich's screenplay looks even more intelligent and inspirational. Supporting credits are beneficial, including the active Anna Paquin as Jamal's newfound Prep school chum, F. Murray Abraham as a conniving professor and rapper Busta Rhymes as Jamal's older brother. Ultimately, at the core of *Finding Forrester* is that uplifting old-fashioned message of pursuing what appeals to us most. It's a message that has, without a doubt, set this writer at ease.

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## Finding Forrester (2000) (PG-13)



Directed by Gus Van Sant (*Good Will Hunting*)

Written by Mike Rich

Cinematography by Harris Savides (*The Game*)

Starring Sean Connery (Forrester), Rob Brown (Jamal), F. Murray Abraham (Crawford), Anna Paquin (Claire), and Busta Rhymes (Terrell)

*Finding Forrester* is a feel-good movie about overcoming obstacles and standing up for what you believe. While it doesn't necessarily offer anything new, it is interesting, if only for the actors involved. Jamal is a black kid in the Bronx whose two loves are writing and basketball. Everyone knows he's great at basketball, but he hides his writing talent from his friends. They play on a court where a mysterious man known as "the Window" watches them. On a dare, Jamal enters the Window's apartment. Startled by the old man, he runs off, leaving his backpack containing his journals. The old man returns them, edited, and Jamal returns to the apartment. The old man turns out to be William Forrester, a J. D. Salinger-like recluse who wrote the Great American Novel and then disappeared.

Meanwhile a prep school, officially interested in his test scores, grants him a scholarship. He meets several people: Claire, the daughter of a major contributor to the school; Hartwell, the captain of the basketball team who fears Jamal will steal the spotlight; and Professor Crawford, his English professor, a failed writer who delights in destroying the dreams of aspiring writers.

Jamal and Forrester become friends. Forrester teaches the younger man about writing as Jamal helps him face the world again. As Jamal's writing improves, Crawford feels threatened and accuses Jamal of plagiarism. This sets the stage for not one, but two showdowns, as he must face Crawford's machinations as well as

the school's attitude that he only has basketball skills to offer.

Astounding newcomer Rob Brown plays Jamal. He vividly expresses the tensions the character feels, first when he conceals his intelligence from his friends in the Bronx, then when he chafes at the patronizing attitudes of nearly everyone in the prep school. Sean Connery plays William Forrester as a cross between Robin Williams in *Dead Poets Society* and his own grizzled beat cop in *The Untouchables*.

Most of the supporting characters are poorly drawn. Professor Crawford, played by F. Murray Abraham as if he could sprout horns, is a cardboard cutout. Initially, he reminded me of one of my high school English teachers. As the film wore on, I realized that he reminded me more of what that teacher had become in my memory than the actual person. Seeing him onscreen, I was struck by how artificial he was; a caricature of a real person with real insecurities. Anna Paquin plays Claire, whose purpose is to introduce an element of interracial romance that the film promptly drops. A fellow student named Coleridge exists solely to introduce a set piece later in the film where Jamal confronts Crawford. Busta Rhymes plays Jamal's brother Terrell, and I kept wondering who told him he could act.

The most disconcerting thing about the film is its obvious borrowing. Most references were to *Good Will Hunting*, which had a similar storyline and was also directed by Van Sant. This film even features a cameo by Matt Damon. Both are about kids from the wrong side of the tracks who make it big at elite schools, facing adversity from people who don't want them to succeed. More than that, though, are scenes where it is painfully obvious that we've seen them before. In *Good Will Hunting*, Will confronts some snobs in a bar who condescendingly ask him questions, and he embarrasses them by answering in detail they could not provide themselves. That scene, which was borrowed from Thomas Hardy's novel *Jude the Obscure*, is repeated twice in this film, one about the history of BMWs and the second concerning literary quotations.

The best scene in the film is one where Jamal takes Forrester to a deserted Yankee Stadium, and we learn why he stopped writing. The worst scene is the big finale, when Forrester has to deliver a

powerful speech. The film doesn't show us the speech, drowning it out with sappy music while we see reaction shots from his audience. Van Sant and cinematographer Harris Savides shot the film in soft focus, with an overwhelming use of green tones that give it a sickly look. Overall, the film has a patched-together feel, and is only saved by the considerable talent of the two leads.

## Parallel Structure

Parallel structure, fully understood and put to use, can bring about such a startling change in composition that student writers sometimes refer to it as "instant style." It can add new interest, new tone, new and unexpected grace to even the most pedestrian piece of writing.

Unfortunately, a great many students (particularly those who were frightened by a grammar book early in life and

have never fully recovered) never master parallelism simply because they are scared off by the definition. It's a definition cast in grammatical terms because it deals with a grammatical structure. The grammar-shy student takes one look at it and falls into a faint, sure that he has met the evil eye itself.

The irony of this is that the definition of parallel structure is actually a good deal harder to understand than parallel structure itself. The sensible thing to do, therefore, is to ignore the definition for the time being and to learn parallel structure the way you learned to talk—by listening to it.

### Look for the Common Denominator

Parallelisms range all the way from the very simple to the extremely complex, but they all have one thing in common. You should have little difficulty finding this common denominator in the following examples:

1. He was the kind of man who knew what he wanted, who intended to get it, and who allowed nothing to stand in his way.
2. He wanted to walk out, to get in his car and drive forever, to leave and never come back.
3. They went to London, to Paris, to Rome.
4. He felt that Mary had changed, that she had moved into another world, and that she had left him behind.
5. If we are to survive, if we are to have even the hope of surviving, we must end the nuclear race.
6. To know you are right is one thing; to prove it, quite another.

The common denominator, of course, is the repetition of some element in the sentence. It is *not*, you will notice, the repetition of an idea.

*A parallelism does not say the same thing in different words. The repetition is a repetition of structure.*

Look at #1. In this, the *who* clause is repeated: the man *who knew*, *who intended*, *who allowed*. Each clause makes a separate point, but each has the same structure.

In #2, the infinitive (*to* plus verb) repeats itself: *to walk*, *to get*, *to leave*.

In #3, it's the prepositional phrase: *to London*, *to Paris*, *to Rome*.

In #4, it's the *that* clause (commonly called a noun clause):

## PARALLEL STRUCTURE

*that Mary had changed, that she had moved, that she had left.* Notice that the tense of the verb remains the same, although the verb itself changes.

In #5, the repetition is an *if* clause. This is an economical method, by the way, of setting up all the *if*'s in any kind of proposition—rather a handy thing to have around if you are working with an "iffy" sort of thesis, particularly as you sum up an argument: "If, then, such-and-such is true, if so-and-so is right, if the situation is thus, then . . ." The repeated structure lends grace to logic, and the sentence resolves itself into a triumphant final flourish.

The last one, #6, is an example of a "balanced sentence." The infinitives *to know* and *to prove* are parallel, and the two clauses are balanced on either side of a semicolon. Since both clauses deal with the same idea (rightness), it is not necessary to repeat the first clause in its entirety. In fact, the abruptness of the second clause adds emphasis.

Balance, of course, is always inherent in parallelism. Various parts of the sentence balance themselves against each other, weight for weight. Phrase balances with phrase, clause with clause, idea with idea, thus creating a strong and satisfying sense of interior wholeness in a sentence.

The foregoing examples represent only a fraction of the parallels possible with the English language. The more you practice, the more ways you will discover. You can, for example, use a doubtful parallel:

If we are to survive, if we are to have even the hope of surviving, we must end the nuclear race, and we must end it soon.

Or you can place whole sentences in parallel position, even whole paragraphs. You can use parallels within parallels, in patterns of increasing intricacy. The main thing is to begin.

### ASSIGNMENT

1. Complete the unfinished sentence below with a series of *who* clauses:

He always made trouble. He was the kind of boy who . . .

2. Complete with a series of infinitive phrases, using a different infinitive for each phrase:

To be popular, she thought, she needed only to . . .

3. Using *to* as your preposition, complete this sentence with a series of prepositional phrases:

In desperate search for a cure, he went to . . .

4. Using *of* as your preposition, complete this sentence with a series of prepositional phrases:

She was afraid of everything, of . . .

## Writer's Review

### Parallel Construction, Part II:

# The Balanced List

By Ethel Grodzins Romm

What's the matter with the following list?

*There will be no football playing*

1. *in the corridors*
2. *the stairways are off bounds*
3. *never throw a football around a classroom*

The items on that list are not written in *balanced* (also called *parallel*) structure. Instead, each one is grammatically different, making the notice confusing. See how much clearer the same list reads when every item begins with a preposition:

*There will be no football playing*

1. *in the corridors*
2. *on the stairs*
3. *in the classrooms*

Whenever you write a list, balance the elements. If you do, the list will read more smoothly.

Here's another example of a list that has one unbalanced item:

*What to look for in a personal computer:*

- A. *a memory of at least 64K*
- B. *a minimum 40-column display*
- C. *a comfortable keyboard*
- D. *having lots of available programs is important*

Did you catch the lopsided item? You've got it. To balance with the others, the last one should read:

- D. *a wide variety of available programs*

*Infinitives (to be, to make)* are a good way to present a list. Check the list below; one line needs editing.

*The responsibilities and duties of a cheerleader:*

- a. *to be present at all rehearsals and home games*
- b. *to make every effort to attend away games*
- c. *to buy all costumes and equipment*
- d. *to behave with decorum before, during, and after all games*
- e. *make your school proud of you, wherever you are*

The last item (e) should begin with an infinitive, like the others:  
*e. to make your school proud of you, wherever you are*

There are many ways to write a list: in rows, columns, or running prose. When you finish any list, reread the first words of each item and change those that are not parallel. Then help your readers keep track of complicated items by signaling them:

- with numerals or numbers

(*first, second, third; 1, 2, 3; I, II, III*)

- with letters (*a, b, c; A, B, C*)
- with bullets (•), as I have done here. (Make a small o on your typewriter, and then fill it in with a fine pen.)
- with other signs, such as # or \*

□

### Write Now . . .

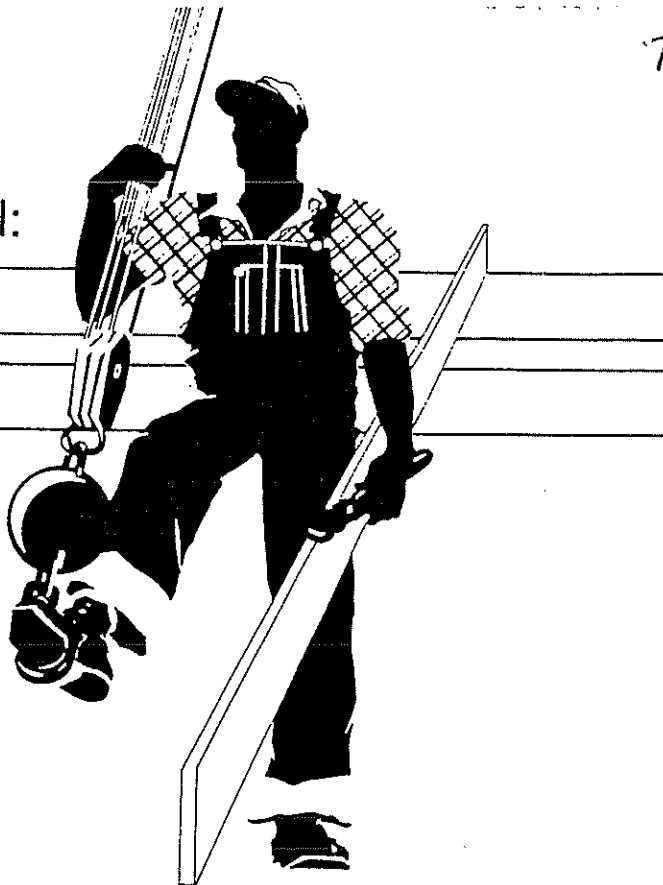
In each list below, one item is different from the rest. Rewrite that item so that its structure is in balance with the others in the list. Answers are in the *Teacher's Edition*.

#### 1. How to Boil Water:

- a. *Pour water into a pot*
- b. *Place the pot on the stove*
- c. *Turn the stove on*
- d. *If you watch the pot, it won't boil*

#### 2. Seniors should remember

- A. *to order their graduation announcements*
- B. *those who don't get measured won't have caps and gowns*
- C. *to choose their yearbook photos*
- D. *to pay all fees promptly*



- ❖ Punctuation marks go inside quotation marks. For example, Mary replied, "Let's go!"
- ❖ A comma ( , ) separates a quotation from the said clause (see examples 1, 2, and 3 below) unless a question mark ( ? ) or exclamation point ( ! ) is used in the quotation and the said clause follows the quotation (see examples 4 and 5 below). It is important to note that the quotation does not end the sentence when followed by a said clause, so the said clause does not have a capitalized letter (see examples 1 and 5 below). Examples:
  1. "Let's go," she said.
  2. Mary replied, "Let's go!"
  3. She asked, "Should we go?"
  4. "Let's go!" Mary replied.
  5. "Should we go?" she asked.

### A Meaningful Title

The title is an important part of an essay. An essay without a title is like a child without a name. Not only is the title important in giving a name to an essay, it also serves other important purposes:

It catches the reader's attention.

- It gives readers their first impression of the essay.
- It makes the general topic of the essay known.
- It prepares the reader for what is to come.
- It helps the essay seem thoughtful and orchestrated.

Here are some guidelines for choosing a title for an exposition essay:

- ❖ Possible sources for a title
  - A pertinent phrase from the essay
  - An adaptable quotation from another source
  - A variation of the thesis statement
  - A relevant question addressed in the essay
- ❖ Use somewhat ambiguous words to allow for reader curiosity.
- ❖ Use alluring words that both challenge familiar beliefs and encourage curiosity.
- ❖ Other considerations-a catchy title still must balance with the content of the essay. If the essay is strictly informational, a humorous title might not be appropriate. Finally, the writer must also consider the readers' feelings. It is not appropriate to catch the readers' attention by offending them.

Good academic writing should, above all, reflect clear thinking. Your goal is to create meaningful writing that logically and clearly argues a point.

**Getting Started:** The first thing you need is something worth writing about. An interesting topic is the difference between an exciting paper and one that leaves the reader bored by the second paragraph. Pick something that is important to you and that is complex enough to incite several different opinions.

**Limiting Yourself:** An essay is not a book, so you need to decide how much you can cover in the allotted space. Some interesting and important aspects of your topic will of necessity be left out of your paper. Decide what is relevant to your argument and what is most important to you. Preparing an outline before writing the essay will help you decide.

**Developing the Thesis:** As you move into the body of the paper, focus each paragraph on relevant and important aspects of your thesis. Carry the conversation from one argument to the next, focusing on the connections that exist between the topics you discuss. Keep your thesis in mind as you link previously discussed material to new ideas, connecting one aspect of the thesis to the next.

**Internal Connections:** Each paragraph must connect to the thesis and to the paragraph before it. The topic sentence outlines what the paragraph is about, and how that idea relates to the overall idea of the whole part. Paragraph transitions make individual paragraphs connect together in a logical and intelligent manner as ideas build on each other.

**Summarizing:** As your ideas evolve and move toward your final point, it becomes important to end the essay before you become stale and repetitious. The concluding paragraph(s) should briefly summarize the main points of the essay and give additional insights, specifically into the significance or application of the concepts you have developed and discussed. End on an interesting note, making your final words the most meaningful you have said in the entire paper.

## Writing Format

A finished college essay should be typewritten on full-size paper, such as A4 or letter-size. The Title of the essay should be centered near the top of the paper. There should be at least one-inch (2.5 cm) margins on all sides. The text should be double-spaced.

Another important point in the format of exposition writing is the spacing around punctuation marks. Please make note of the following spacing requirements:

- ❖ There are no spaces before a period ( . ) and two spaces follow it.
- ❖ There are no spaces before a comma ( , ) and one space follows it.
- ❖ A hyphen ( - ) joins two words and has no space before or after it.



## Preventing Plagiarism

1. Time—Give plenty of time for different aspects of the writing process: time for selecting and narrowing topic, time for inquiry!!!, time for drafting, revision, and editing. Build in time for a return to inquiry after drafting.
2. Process
  - a. Make sure students understand the writing process
  - b. Require some parts to be done by certain dates or in class (draft by xxx or revision in class on Monday)
  - c. Teach note-taking, summarizing, and paraphrasing
  - d. Require an annotated bibliography
  - e. Require internet sources to be printed and attached
3. Assignment
  - a. Make the assignment clear and be specific about your expectations
  - b. Provide a list of specific topics (you can change these from year-to-year or class-to-class). Allow alternates only if selected early in the inquiry process
  - c. Make sure students understand what constitutes plagiarism
  - d. Require specific components in the paper, such as
    - i. Use one or more sources published in the past year
    - ii. Use one or more sources supplied by the teacher or information from class
    - iii. Interview an expert and incorporate information
    - iv. Use a combination of sources specified by the teacher
  - e. Require personal response on or after paper is due
    - i. Oral reports of papers—not read but presented with a poster and a note card
    - ii. In-class essay on due date, responding to such questions as the following:
      1. What problems did you have in writing this paper and how did you overcome them?
      2. What research strategy did you use?
      3. Where did you find most of your sources?
      4. What is the most important/interesting/unusual thing you learned?
  - f. Make assignments in alternate formats not found on the internet.

From "The Art of Paraphrase" by Sue Shirley, *TETYC*, December 2004, pp 186-188.

1. Begin by making a very obvious example of poor paraphrasing. Choose a well known text such as M.L. King's "I Have a Dream" speech and have students suggest synonyms for each word in one sentence. Note how this process often alters the meaning but also sounds silly. "While all men and women may be equal, all synonyms clearly are not."
2. Using a short text (around 100 words), have students
  - a. Identify key words
  - b. Decide on main idea (use who, what, where, when and why)
  - c. Put original out of sight
  - d. Write paraphrase using only the notes on the board.
3. Prepare a bad example without documentation for source and with some misrepresentation of the original source. Have students identify problems and fix them.
4. Prepare another poor example that uses the exact words or syntax without quotation marks. Have students identify problem and fix it.
5. Prepare another example that contrasts the vocabulary and tone between a writer's own words and those of a source that is used exactly but not put in quotation marks. Have students identify the problem and fix it.
6. Have students practice, taking a short passage from a source and write a paraphrase, using the process:
  - a. Identify essential words
  - b. Explain main idea (using 5 W's if necessary)
  - c. Write from notes
  - d. Use appropriate punctuation and acknowledgement of source material
  - e. Compare to source to make changes as needed
  - f. Turn in both source and paraphrase for check.

From *Penguin Handbook* by Lester Faigley

**Paraphrasing:** "original in structure and wording while accurately conveying the meaning of the source" (p. 235)

Examples from pages 234-5:

**Source:** Web surfing and channel surfing are genuinely different pursuits; to imagine them as equivalents is to ignore the defining characteristics of each medium.

**Unacceptable Paraphrase:** Web surfing and channel surfing are truly different activities; to imagine them as the same is to ignore their defining characteristics.

**Acceptable Paraphrase:** Steven Johnson argues that "surfing" is a misleading term for describing how people navigate on the Web. . .

“Quoting others gives writers the opportunity to include multiple voices in their writing and to build upon words of others to illustrate a concept, strengthen a point, introduce a counterclaim. A pertinent quotation can add variety and energy to the texture of writing. Sometimes the words of another cannot be improved upon. Admitting the voices of others into our writing doesn’t have to steal our voices, silence us in deference to another, and make for a numbing kind of academic writing that no one I respect wants to read. . . . Learning to weave quotations seamlessly and substantively into writing is a skill. . . .”

From Tom Romano, *Crafting Authentic Voice*

Follow the strategies of good writers. Romano describes how one writer uses another’s words effectively:

“Kingsolver **foregrounds** the quote with information about the speaker she is citing, then **folds into her text** Gussow’s metaphorical quotation. In a final sentence of her own then, Kingsolver writes of the **common ground** shared”

Choose quotes wisely, then *build a nest* to make sure the quote does what you want it to do – and lets the reader know which ideas are yours and which you are borrowing.

The craft of using quoted bits of text successfully requires writers to become adept at three specific skills:

- selecting relevant text or useful quotations
- cutting the text appropriately
- weaving the text so it blends smoothly into their writing

Not-so-good example:

Award-winning author Thomas Gray stated, “A well-chosen verb makes all the difference in good writing.” This is a good point to consider for a writer.

Better example

Award-winning author Thomas Gray reminds writers to consider a “well-chosen verb” because this “makes all the difference in good writing.”

Or

Concerned writers agree with Thomas Gray’s belief that a “well-chosen verb makes all the difference in good writing.”

Watch your reading for good examples. Listen to the rhythm of better woven quotes and notice the words chosen. Ask yourself these questions:

- What distinctive word(s) in the selected text should I use?
- What word(s) support the point I’m trying to make?
- What word(s) can I omit?

Hint: Try to weave the quote into the point you hope the quote will make!

Ideas and examples from *Tried and True* by Antinarella & Salbu, pp. 92-94.

**PEER REVIEW – COMPARISON / CONTRAST ESSAY**

**TITLE:** Is it interesting and appropriate to the thesis? Suggestions?

**THESIS STATEMENT:** Underline the thesis statement.

Does the thesis statement indicate a comparison / contrast of two things as assigned on the criteria sheet?

Is the thesis statement at the end of the first paragraph?

**FIRST BODY PARAGRAPH:** Underline the topic sentence.

Does the **topic sentence** clearly state (1) how the paragraph develops the thesis and (2) what the paragraph is about?

Is the **topic sentence** clearly a **point on** which two things can be compared?

Is there enough **supporting evidence or explanation** to make the paragraph full and convincing? Does everything in the paragraph support the topic sentence?

What additional **support** can you suggest to strengthen this paragraph?

**SECOND BODY PARAGRAPH:** Underline the topic sentence.

Does the **topic sentence** clearly state (1) how the paragraph develops the thesis and (2) what the paragraph is about?

Is the **topic sentence** clearly a **point on** which two things can be compared?

Is there enough supporting evidence or explanation to make the paragraph full and convincing? Does everything in the paragraph support the topic sentence?

What additional **support** can you suggest to strengthen this paragraph?

*(ADDITIONAL BODY PARAGRAPHS): Finish this sheet and then come back to these as time permits.)*

**CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH:** Underline the thesis statement.

Does the concluding paragraph re-state the thesis at the beginning of the paragraph?

Does the last sentence or two give a sense of finality to the paper?

**THE PAPER OVERALL:**

What **additional points** of comparison or contrast can you suggest?  
Are the points of comparison / contrast in the most **logical order**?

*Donald Murray is Professor of English at the University of New Hampshire, as well as a monthly columnist for The Boston Globe. His editorial writing for the Globe earned him a Pulitzer Prize. A widely admired and deeply respected teacher, Murray is the author of short stories, novels, poetry, and a number of books on writing.*

*In "Repeat to Revise," which appeared in one of his textbooks, A Writer Teaches Writing, Murray shares his thoughts and experiences on the art of revision. Positioning revision not as a separate part of the writing process but a repetition of that process, Murray identifies strategies geared toward helping writers interested in learning how to revise effectively.*

## BEFORE READING

**Connecting:** Have you ever thought of the act of writing as egocentric or arrogant?

**Anticipating:** What does Murray mean by his title "Repeat to Revise?"

Until I started to write the new version of this book I considered revision an integral part of the writing process. . . . Suddenly I realized what was instantly obvious to me, and hadn't been obvious before (and may not be obvious by the time I write about the writing process again). I saw revision as simply that. It is not another step in the process, it is the process repeated as many times as is necessary. . . . I no longer see revision as a separate part of the process but merely as a repetition of the process until a draft is ready for editing.

## THE CRAFT OF REVISION

The writer creates a draft:

COLLECT    PLAN    DEVELOP    =    Draft

Then the writer passes through the same sequence, again and again, emphasizing one stage of the process, or two, or all three—or even

## TEACHING STRATEGY

What does Murray mean by "repeat to revise"? How does Murray see revision? Murray does not see it as a separate, end stage in the writing process, as something that you do to a piece of writing once it has been "finished." Instead, he sees revision as a repetition of the whole process. A writer makes a series of successive passes at the piece of writing, potentially progressing each time from prewriting (collecting) to planning to developing. Ask students, for example, to review the checklist that he offers for the revision process in paragraph 4. Notice that it begins by asking "Do I have enough information?"

Why does Murray move from this to a section titled "Reading as a Writer"? What is the point of transition between the two sections? Murray asserts that our first "reader" is ourselves—that is, in the first draft we are not generally thinking of audience outside or other than ourselves. In successive drafts we must increasingly distance ourselves so that we read not what we think we said, but what we actually said. A crucial part of the revision process comes in this increasingly sophisticated reading with an audience in mind.

In a sense, the selection includes a third section beginning with paragraph 8 that could be headed separately. What is Murray's subject in this section? What subheading might

be written for this section? Here he reminds the reader to focus on what works in a draft, not just on what is wrong. In this section Murray more closely identifies himself with the task at hand, talking about his own problems and linking them to those of other writers (for example, "I'm intrigued by the fact that my students often make the most significant breakthroughs toward meaning where syntax breaks down—and I do too"). You can use the Collaborative Activity to set up this part of the discussion. It is a sophisticated subject, but you might be able to explore with the class what Murray means about syntax breaking down and why that would happen during "significant breakthroughs toward meaning."

Murray's use of typographical devices in the text—white space, capital letters, italics, lists—is also worth discussing. See the Class Activity ways of stimulating discussion about these.

### USING THIS ESSAY TO TEACH STRATEGIES

Murray uses process (paragraphs 2–4), comparison and contrast (6–7), and cause and effect (9–11).

### CLASS ACTIVITY

Murray uses a range of typographical devices to separate sections of his text. Normally college writers do not use such devices in their papers. What would happen if Murray's text were rewritten with those devices removed? Ask students to rewrite a section of Murray's text (for example, paragraphs 2, 4, or 7), converting everything into consecutive lines of prose. What is the difference between the two versions?

part of a stage—doing what is necessary to produce increasingly effective drafts:

<u>COLLECT</u>	PLAN	DEVELOP	= Second draft
COLLECT	<u>PLAN</u>	DEVELOP	= Third draft
COLLECT	PLAN	<u>DEVELOP</u>	= Fourth draft

That might be one sequence, an unusually logical one, in which the emphasis moves from collect to plan to develop as indicated by the underlining. The important thing the writer must know is that there is an inventory of writing tools available to perform the task necessary to make each draft work better than the last one.

- 3 As the writer moves from early draft to late draft, there is an increasing emphasis on the specific. At first the writer pays attention to the global concerns of subject and truth and point of view and organization, but as the larger problems are solved, the writer moves in close, paying attention to detail, picking every nit so that nothing will get between the reader and the subject. This parallels an increasing attention to audience. In the early drafts, the writer is his or her own reader, but as the draft evolves, the writer stands back to see how it will communicate to a reader.

- 4 Students may find it helpful during the revision process to use the following checklist:

- "Do I have enough information? If not, then I will have to COLLECT more information.
- "Do I say one thing? Can I answer the question, "What does this mean?" If not, then I will have to PLAN a new focus.
- "Do I speak in an appropriate voice? Does the writing sound right? If not, then I will have to PLAN how to rehearse so that I will hear an appropriate voice.
- "Do I answer the reader's questions as they occur to the reader? If not, then I will have to PLAN so that I can create a design that answers the reader's questions.
- "Do I deliver enough information to satisfy the reader? If not, then I will have to DEVELOP the piece more fully.

### READING AS A WRITER

- 5 The writer's first reader is the writer. Too often people forget how much reading is involved in the writing course. It is possible to teach a reading or literature course without writing, but it is impossible to teach writing without reading. The writer must be able to

read a draft in such a way that the writer is able to make another draft more effective. This reading while writing is a sophisticated form of reading that is essential to the writing process.

The first problem the student writer faces is achieving enough distance to read what the reader will see on the page, not what the writer hopes is on the page. When young children write they think whatever they put down is wonderful. As they begin to grow, they become less egocentric and more aware of readers. This causes anxiety and, often, paralysis. They go from being proud of everything to being proud of nothing. Writers veer between excessive pride and excessive despair all their lives. It is understandable; writing is a private act with a public result.

The writer must be egocentric to write. It is a profession of arrogance. But then the writer must stand back and become the reader, and that requires an objectivity and distance essential to the craft of writing. Ray Bradbury allegedly puts each manuscript away in a file drawer and takes it out a year after it has been drafted. I don't know any other writer who is organized enough to even consider that technique. Most professionals write the way students write: to deadline. The writer has to develop some methods of distancing that will work in a short period of time. Some ways to achieve distancing include:

- "Role-play a specific reader. Become someone you know who is not knowledgeable about the subject you are writing about and read as that person.
- "Read fast, as a reader will read.
- "Read out loud. Tape-record the piece and play it back, or have a friend read it so that you hear it.
- "Have a friend read the piece, asking the friend to tell you what works and what needs work, what is on the page and what needs to be on the page. Be sure to use a friend who makes you want to write when you return to your writing desk.

It's important for the writer to concentrate first on what works. Too often we concentrate only on what is wrong, ignoring what is right. Yet the most successful revision comes when we identify something that works—a strong voice, a pace that moves the reader right along, a structure that clarifies a complicated subject—and build on that strength.

It is too easy to identify all the things that are wrong and to be discouraged and unable to produce a more effective draft. Of course there will come a time to deal with what is wrong or what doesn't work, but the solutions to the problems in the piece come from the

## COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITY

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To a certain extent there are differences in tone and voice in the two halves of the essay (paragraphs 1–7 and 8–14). Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to focus on those two sections. What differences can they find—especially in tone—between them? Once the groups have had a chance to work on the problem, have a class brainstorm on the differences that they saw.

## LINKS TO WRITING

Murray's inclusion of lists (in paragraphs 4 and 7) provides a good opportunity to show how parallelism works. How does a writer achieve parallelism in writing? What does parallelism contribute to writing? Why is the parallelism particularly effective here?



points of strength. What can we do to make the piece consistent with the good parts? What can we do to bring all parts of the piece up to the level of the best parts?

10 Many pieces of writing fail because the writer does not take advantage of what is already working well in a draft. For example, I may read a draft and feel despair. I'm good at despair. Nothing seems to work. But if I remember my craft I scan the disaster draft and see that, indeed, it is badly organized; that it does include too many undeveloped topics and lacks focus; that its proportions are all wrong—too much description and too little documentation; that the language is uneven, clumsy, stumbling at times and then, yes, there are moments when the language works, when I can hear a clear and strong voice. I read the strong parts aloud and work—cutting, adding, reordering, shaping, fitting, polishing—to make the voice consistent and strong. As I work on the draft line by line, I find I am following the clear sound of the voice I heard in fragments of the draft; I make one sentence clear and direct, and then another, and another. The draft begins to become better organized. I cut what doesn't belong and achieve focus; I pare back the description; I build up documentation. I work on what is most effective in the draft, and as I make that even more effective the writing that surrounds it gets attention and begins to improve.

11 Notice that the writer really looks for what *may* work. As I attacked my disaster draft, the voice was pretty uneven and downright poor most of the time, but I grabbed hold of those few moments of potential success and took advantage of them. They gave me a clue as to how I might improve the draft, and that was enough to get going. It's hard to look through the underbrush of messed up typography, misspellings, tangled syntax, wordiness, and writing that runs off in five directions at once, to see what might work. But that is what the writer has to do. And the writer can best do it by scanning, reading loosely, looking for what meaning lies behind the tangled text.

12 Writers have to keep reminding themselves that a draft is an experiment in meaning. In the early stages it's important to get beyond the etiquette of writing to see where the draft is pointing the writer. I'm intrigued by the fact that my students often make the most significant breakthroughs towards meaning where syntax breaks down—and I do too. We are obviously reaching for a meaning that is just beyond our ability to express. What I have to do and what my students have to do is to identify that potential meaning. Once we know where we are going we may be able to figure out how to get there.

13 The reading writer also has to see what doesn't work: to recognize that the beginning simply delays and the piece starts on page four, that the first-person piece would be more effective in the third

person, that the essay can't say three things of equal importance but has to have one dominant meaning, that the point of view is built on unfounded assumptions, that the draft is voiceless.

The writer reads, above all, to discover the text beyond the draft, to glimpse the potential text which may appear upon passing through the writing process again, and, perhaps, again and again.

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### QUESTIONS ON SUBJECT AND PURPOSE

1. Murray writes, "I no longer see revision as a separate part of the [writing] process but as a repetition of the process" (paragraph 1). What does he mean by that statement?
2. In what sense must a writer be egocentric (7)?
3. How would you characterize Murray's tone in this selection? Check the Glossary for a definition of tone.

### QUESTIONS ON STRATEGY AND AUDIENCE

1. Murray uses a range of typographical devices to break his text apart—spacing, capital letters, lists, italics. Why?
2. What is the relationship between the section "The Craft of Revision" and the section "Reading as a Writer"?
3. In what sort of publication would you expect to find Murray's advice?

### QUESTIONS ON VOCABULARY AND STYLE

1. What devices does Murray use to make his prose "reader friendly"?
2. When Murray notes that the writer must move in close, "picking every nit" (paragraph 3), what does he mean?
3. Be prepared to define the following words: *egocentric* (6), *veer* (6), *pare* (10).

### WRITING SUGGESTIONS

1. For your Journal. Murray implies that as children grow up they become more anxious about their writing, going from being proud of everything to being proud of nothing. Did that happen to you? Try to remember what it was like to write when you were in elementary or middle school, in high

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS: 80 SUBJECT AND PURPOSE

1. For Murray, revision involves all three of the activities—collecting, planning, and developing—that are involved in writing a first draft. Writing a second draft—or a third or fourth—is a repetition of that initial process.
2. The act of writing about either what has happened to us (as in an autobiographical essay) or what we think or believe is an assertion of the self, the ego. Implicit also is the belief that a reader should or would be interested in reading about us or our ideas or opinions.
3. Murray is clear, helpful, patient. His role seems more the writer offering advice than the teacher lecturing his students. You might point out that the book from which this selection is taken is titled *A Writer Teaches Writing*.

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS: STRATEGY AND AUDIENCE

1. Such devices make it easier for the reader to "see" and understand the points that Murray is making.
2. Murray argues that the writer typically begins writing with little or awareness of audience and that as revision proceeds the writer must distance herself or himself, thinking more about the reader. Revision thus involves an increasing awareness of audience. Moreover, a writer must be able to read his or her own draft in a fairly sophisticated way in order to improve the draft (paragraph 5).
3. Given the specialized nature of Murray's subject, we would not expect to find this selection in a maga-

zine, but rather in a textbook about writing.

### ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS: VOCABULARY AND STYLE

1. Murray uses the first person ("I") pronoun to establish a personal tone. He also uses "we" frequently, building a bond between writer and reader in the text. In addition, he uses contractions, another mark of informality.

2. The expression is both a metaphor and a cliché. Literally the expression refers to searching for lice, but it is used metaphorically to mean paying very close attention to every detail.

3. Word definitions:

*egocentric adj.* self-centered  
*veer v.* to shift; to change sides suddenly

*pare v.* to cut or trim away

### RELATED READING

Murray's essay could be paired with any of the selections in this chapter, but an especially good one might be Zinsser's "Simplicity." How do both Zinsser and Murray view the role of audience in the writing process?

### WRITING SUGGESTION

What attitudes toward writing and revising do Elbow, Zinsser, and Murray share? In an essay compare and contrast those attitudes and/or the advice that each offers to the student writer.

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school, now in college. Jot down your memories or impressions. Have things gotten harder?

2. **For a Paragraph.** Go through this selection and make a list of the specific advice about revising that Murray offers to his readers. Select one of the topics that Murray covers and then summarize his advice on that one topic in a process paragraph (see Chapter 6). Assume that the paragraph will be handed out to your classmates as a guide to the process of revising.
3. **For an Essay.** Expand the paragraph you wrote for suggestion 2 into an essay by treating not just one aspect of Murray's advice, but rather all aspects. Write to your classmates in your writing course.

#### *Prewriting:*

- a. Make notes on the specific advice that Murray offers. Do not try to record everything he says but rather focus on his advice about revising.
- b. Think of your audience. Do you need to elaborate or interpret what Murray says? Does everything seem clear enough?
- c. Remember that you do not need to follow the order that Murray uses in his essay. Make a couple of sketchy outlines of the points that you want to include. Try switching around the order of those points.

#### *Rewriting:*

- a. Have you phrased every piece of advice in clear, "here's how to do it" prose? Are the pieces of advice phrased in parallel form. (Check the Glossary if you are uncertain about parallelism.)
  - b. Look again at your title. (You should not use Murray's title.) Is it interesting, provocative? Ask a couple of friends to evaluate your title and listen to their reactions.
  - c. Are you completely convinced that you give the advice in the most effective order? What if you arranged that advice in another way? Try a different order now that you have a complete draft of the essay.
4. **For Research.** Murray writes, "When young children write they think whatever they put down is wonderful. As they begin to grow, they become less egocentric and more aware of readers." Research that observation. Do young children see writing in a different way from older children or young adults? If so, why? If there are changes, why do those changes

## Checklist for Revising a Paragraph

### Purpose and Audience

1. Which sentence or sentences, if any, do not directly fulfill the purpose of the paragraph?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What changes should be made to make every sentence understandable? \_\_\_\_\_

### Topic sentence

3. Should I revise the topic sentence? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What revision would improve the topic sentence? \_\_\_\_\_

### Support, Development, and Organization

5. Which details, facts, examples, or reasons form the strongest support for my main idea? Which sentence or sentences, if any, merely repeat the main idea? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Why is the method of organization used in the paragraph the best possible one? \_\_\_\_\_

### Coherence

7. Which words can I repeat and still give my sentences sufficient variety? What synonyms can I use? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Which pronouns can I use to achieve coherence and conciseness? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What kinds of transitions can I use? \_\_\_\_\_

### Word Choice

10. Which words, if any, are not appropriate to the audience, to the occasion, and to the subject? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Which words or expressions, if any, are inconsistent with the others? \_\_\_\_\_

### Editing, Proofreading, and Publishing

12. Do all verbs and subjects agree? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Is every pronoun in the correct case? Is every pronoun reference correct and clear? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Are all double negatives avoided? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Is each verb tense correct and consistent? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Are all comparisons properly expressed? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Are all clauses complete and properly joined? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Have all dangling or misplaced words been avoided? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Has all redundancy or wordiness been avoided? \_\_\_\_\_
20. Has all proofreading been done? \_\_\_\_\_
21. Have the rules of manuscript preparation been followed? \_\_\_\_\_

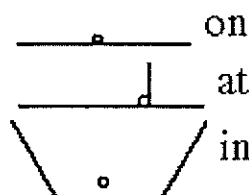
# An Activity for Teaching Prepositions Associated with Time

Lily Vered

[LilyVe \[at\] oumail.openu.ac.il](mailto:LilyVe[at]oumail.openu.ac.il)

The Open University of Israel

- Use:
  - Many language learners have a problem learning the prepositions associated with references to year, month, date and hour. The following activity is based on the explanation of prepositions of place provided in *A University Grammar of English*, as represented by the diagram.



- Teaching:
  - Provide students with the diagram and an explanation regarding the meaning of these prepositions when teaching prepositions of place and direction e.g.
    - I'll meet AT the bus stop ON Main Street.
    - The tickets will be IN and envelope ON my desk.
    - The bus stopped AT the traffic light.
  - When working on references to time use the diagram again, but this time bring a diary or calendar, which has slots for hourly appointments. Ask students to consider the following.
    - A year is a SPACE, and so is a MONTH or a WEEK. Therefore they would require the preposition IN. e.g. IN 1997, IN August, IN the third week of August.
    - Next, you would show that the actual date is a column or line IN that week/month and thus requires ON Monday.
    - The hour would be a point on the day line and thus require AT, as in AT 6 a.m., AT 16:30 IN the afternoon.
- Practice:
  1. Tell students to walk around the class and find out exactly when people were born and see if they can find someone who was born IN the same year, or the same month, or perhaps ON the same day. (at night is, of course, an exception--language not being math).
  2. Students report their findings, who they interviewed, and when that person was born.
  3. Provide a fill-in exercise or cloze passage which makes references to dates (year, month, day and time). You can use an incident such as what happened to the Titanic on the night it sank, or a dialogue between two busy people trying to set up an appointment.

# A Blessing(☺) Or A Curse(☹)?

Many inventions have good points and bad points.

Here are some ways of expressing our approval or disapproval.

Make sure you understand the **bold words**.

**I approve of computers because....**

1. ...they help to **prevent crime**.
2. ...they are **a life-saver for** office workers.
3. ...they are **a time-saver for** designers.
4. ...they are **a better alternative to** using an abacus.
5. ...they can be **a comfort to** lonely people.
6. ...they are **economically beneficial to** the companies that make them.

**I disapprove of computers because....**

1. ...they are **a menace to** children's education.
2. ...they **wreck** family life.
3. ...they are **detrimental to** our eyesight.
4. ...they can be **a time-waster**.
5. ...they are **harmful to** the environment.
6. ...they **encourage young people to** be violent.

Now look at the following inventions. Decide if you think they are a **blessing** or a **curse**.

You must choose four blessings and four curses.

Invention	☺or☹	Your reason(s)
a) cars		
b) cellular phones		
c) fast food		
d) computer games		
e) e-mail		
f) disposable cameras		
g) nuclear power		
h) plastic bottles		
i) air conditioning		
j) sodas (fizzy drinks)		

# Classroom Handout: The Order of Descriptive Adjectives

Yen-Ling Teresa Ting  
yltting [at] yahoo.com  
University of Calabria (Calabria, Italy)

There are six common types of descriptive adjectives.

- age
- size
- material
- shape
- colour
- nationality

## What is the correct order of these adjectives?

Opinion adjectives (e.g. beautiful, fantastic, terrible etc.) precede descriptive adjectives.

Be a deductive language detective and use your deductive reasoning to find out what the correct order of these six descriptive adjectives is: Read the following dialogue where two friends comment on the contents of their rich friend's house. Opinion adjectives are in italics and all descriptive adjectives are in bold print.

- A: David really has a *nice* **big** house!
- B: He sure does. And I like the *beautiful* **red wooden** door with that **old yellow** bell.
- A: Did you see the **big round Indonesian teak** table in his study?
- B: Do you mean that **big old black** table?
- A: Yes, that one. Isn't it *nice*?
- B: No, I think it's just an **enormous old round** thing. I prefer that **small round red** table he has in the kitchen. The **plastic** one.
- A: No, I think **red plastic** looks *cheap*\*.
- (\* cheap in this case is used as an opinion adjective.)
- B: But you can't say that the *elegant* **big crystal** table he has in the dining room isn't *nice*, can you?
- A: Oh, that **round Italian crystal** table? *Beautiful*!
- B: And what a *wonderful* **green Italian leather** sofa!
- A: That **long green** couch? No, I didn't like it - too **green**! But I did like the **small modern red** chairs he has. Adds a very *nice* touch.
- B: Those **round red plastic** chairs? I thought you didn't like **red plastic**.
- A: But those *are* nice. Let's say that it's *wonderful* to have enough money to buy **small red French plastic** chairs, isn't it?

## How good a language detective are you?

What is the correct order of these six categories of descriptive adjectives?

- A. colour - material - size - age - shape - nationality
- B. shape - colour - size - material - nationality - age
- C. size - shape - colour - age - material - nationality
- D. shape - size - colour - nationality - material - age
- E. size - age - shape - colour - nationality - material
- F. age - size - shape - colour - nationality - material

## Additional Notes about Descriptive Adjectives

I) Another way to remember the order of descriptive adjectives is that they usually go from more general to more specific adjectives, or from an adjective which can describe more items to one which describes a more limited number of items.

- For example, another category of descriptive adjectives is function which is more specific than most of the other descriptive adjectives. Where would you put the function of dining in the list of adjectives which describe a table: Italian, antique, wooden,?

II) Now try these, remembering that opinion adjectives come first, then the descriptive adjectives in the order you found above:

1. We bought a [lovely comfortable / comfortable lovely] sofa.
2. She was wearing a [clean nice / nice clean shirt] with [red leather / leather red] shoes.
3. Their house was [big and tidy / tidy and big].
4. Did you see the [Italian new / new Italian] film.
5. She has \_\_\_\_\_ curtains in her living room.  
brown, ugly, polyester.

III) We also place comparative and superlative adjectives before other types of adjectives:

- If you want the most wonderful home-cooked food, you should go to Mark's house. His mother is the best Italian cook I know.

## Now Try These

1. Maria has \_\_\_\_\_ hair  
false, black, beautiful, thick
2. I saw the \_\_\_\_\_ table this morning.  
wooden, most ugly, round
3. She looks so elegant in her \_\_\_\_\_ coat.  
wool, Italian, long
4. That is the \_\_\_\_\_ sculpture in this museum.  
metal, most unusual, modern
5. They bought a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ furniture on the trip.  
Indian, antique, interesting



## The Answers

If you, Language-Sherlock, chose the fifth order, you are right!

Additional exercises:

I. Hopefully, you would say antique, Italian, wooden, dining table.

II. 1. lovely comfortable sofa; 2. nice clean shirt with red leather shoes; 3. big and tidy; 4. the new Italian film; 5. ugly brown polyester curtains

III. 1. beautiful, thick, black, false; 2. most ugly round wooden; 3. long Italian wool; 4. most unusual modern metal; 5. interesting antique Indian.

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<http://iteslj.org/>

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<http://iteslj.org/Lessons/Ting-AdjectiveOrder.html>

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## APPOSITIVES

An appositive is a noun, or some structure that can take the place of a noun, that is set right next to a noun to further explain or define it. It is set in apposition- in the next position in the sentence- to the noun which it will expand on. An appositive can be a single word or a group of words.

### Example

The teacher, Davis, spoke slowly. (word)

Magic Johnson's skill, stuffing a basketball through a hoop, earns him a large salary. (phrase)

In the following sentences, underline the appositive and punctuate properly (with commas).

1. We slept that night in the tent an old piece of canvas with a dozen holes in it.
2. The police arrested two people a pickpocket and a burglar.
3. My aunt who lives in California Rebecca Rose is a movie star.
4. We had to read War and Peace a book by someone named Tolstoy.
5. The cop we liked best O'Reilly treated us like human beings.
6. The fighter we were eager to see Jackson was up against a tough opponent.
7. The author of the book Grace Paley will be autographing copies at the book store today.
8. For Christmas, I got a camera a Kodak Instamatic.
9. He liked my car a '76 Firebird.
10. The doctor Allan Floyd treated me for the flu.

## The Rhythm of Speech

All spoken language, no matter who the speaker may be or what his subject is, has a natural rhythm. You will hear this rhythm wherever you hear talk: in your best friend's conversation, in a salesman's pitch, in a math teacher's explanation of a problem, in an impromptu speech at a club meeting, in your father's reading of the riot act.

Compare the two short paragraphs below:

### Example A:

I want that car back here by ten o'clock. And when I say ten o'clock, I don't mean ten-thirty or ten-fifteen or ten-five. I mean *ten*. You remember that. Because I'm telling you right now, this is the last time you drive that car if you come home late again. And that's *final*.

### Example B:

One of the things that is very important to an actor is a sense of timing. It is more important than a handsome face or a good voice. An actor who does not have a sense of timing can never be very good at acting. A good director can tell him what to do, but he will always be just like a puppet.

As they stand now, the two examples have nothing whatever common. The first is quite obviously *spoken* language. It's completely natural, but it is certainly not suitable for use in an essay. The second example is quite obviously *not* spoken language; you identify it instantly as a written paragraph, probably from a student essay (which it is). You may feel that the second paragraph is more "dignified" than the first. In any case, the two paragraphs are so completely different—in approach, in tone, in subject matter—that it would appear impossible to transfer anything at all from one to the other.

Yet something can be transferred. Perhaps you can discover for yourself what it is by examining the paragraph below. It makes exactly the same point it made originally (in Example B, above) but makes it better. And in one respect it is now exactly like Example A. See if you can detect what it is that the two paragraphs now have in common:

Few things are so essential to an actor as a sense of timing. Without that, nothing else about him matters very much. He may have a handsome face. He may have a splendid voice. But unless he has an innate sense of timing, the finest director in the world cannot make an actor of him. He can never be more than a puppet.

The meaning of the paragraph has not changed. And certainly it is no less "dignified" than before. But it doesn't take a great ear for language to realize that this second version is far more effective as a piece of writing than the first. It is more effective because the sentences now have the *natural rhythm of speech*. In fact, the rhythm of this paragraph is a deliberate repetition of the rhythm of the father's natural speech.

Make a sentence-by-sentence comparison of *sentence length*. The six sentences in both passages are matched for length. The father's speech happened to fall in a pattern of medium-medium-short-short-long-short, so the second paragraph was matched to that pattern. Both paragraphs could now be "graphed" like this:

```

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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The fact that the two passages are now exactly alike in sentence length is unimportant; that was done simply for demonstration purposes. The important thing to remember is that the length of sentences in all speech is always erratic, always changing.

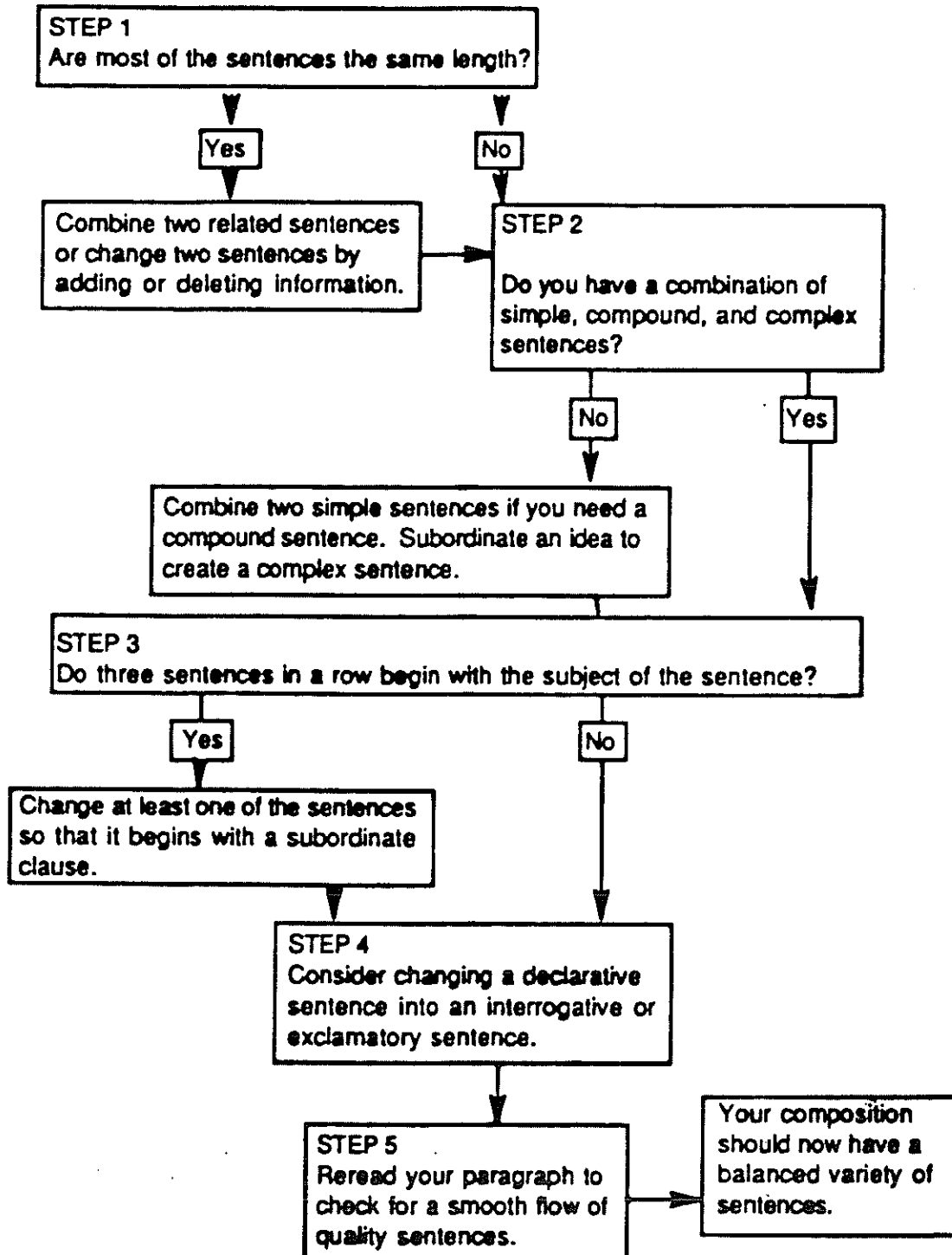
*The first principle of rhythm in writing, to capture the basic rhythm of speech, is variation of sentence length.*

Furthermore, the mere act of forcing yourself to vary the length of sentences will force you simultaneously to change their structure and therefore their wording—always for the better. Glance again at the first version of Example B. Notice that every sentence is almost exactly the same length. And as frequently happens when length does not vary, almost every sentence has the same monotonous structure. These are nothing but Sally-cat sentences, grown up and pretending to be dignified, but nevertheless Sally-cat. And your ear rebels for the same reason it rebelled in the first grade: nobody talks like that.

So write with a talking rhythm, varying the length of your sentences to suit your material. Generally the short, sharp sentence gives emphasis; the long, involved sentence provides depth and color. Together with the medium-length sentence they give writing the tone and rhythm of speech. Put them in any order you like. Any order is right if it sounds right to your own inner ear. Write for that ear.

If you find it difficult at first to "hear" your sentences, just use your eyes. If your sentences are all approximately the same length, vary them arbitrarily. Cut a sentence down here, extend another one there, join two together, or split a long one in half. Gradually you will find your own voice, discover your own particular rhythm.

# SENTENCE VARIETY FLOW CHART



**Subjects and Predicates (II)**

Combine the following subjects and predicates to form ten different sentences.

**Subjects**

- a stray cat
- the people next door
- a group of runners
- a woman wearing a raincoat

**Predicates**

- ran down the street
- watched the fireworks display
- sat on the lawn
- called me

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_

## ***Sentences and Sentence Fragments***

Make the following fragments into sentences.

1. likes loud music

---

2. a movie about teen-agers

---

3. in Honolulu, Hawaii

---

4. painted a self-portrait

---

5. my favorite dinner

---

6. talks on the telephone

---

7. a huge brick building

---

8. every Monday morning

---

9. a popular young actor

---

10. scored well in the game

---

## Cued Sentence Combining

- helps students learn effective sentence constructions
- stimulates discussion about rhetorical effects of sentence constructions
- allows teachers to focus on a particular construction

Combine the following groups of sentences. Eliminate the underlined words and add the word/part of punctuation in the parentheses.

Example: The sunflower may grow from 3 to 10 feet tall.  
The sunflower is a tall plant known for its showy yellow flowers. (commas)

The sunflower, a tall plant known for its showy yellow flowers, may grow from 3 to 10 feet tall.

1. A gym teacher invented the game of basketball. His name was James Naismith. (commas)
2. If you want to taste something delicious, try a tangelo. This fruit is a cross between a grapefruit and a tangerine. (commas)
3. The firefighter rushed into the burning house. She hesitated just a moment at the door. (comma and *-ing*)
4. The man burst into the room. He smiled broadly. He shouted the news of the victory to anyone who would listen. (comma and *-ing*, twice)
5. Here is the novel. Jim said we should read it. (*that*)
6. Scotland Yard is a part of the London police force. Scotland Yard is not in Scotland. (*which* and commas)

A minister's son, Nathaniel Cole was born in Montgomery, Alabama, and grew up in Chicago.

Decombined:

His name was Nathaniel Cole.

He was a minister's son.

He was born in Montgomery, Alabama.

He grew up in Chicago.

Next to one of our side yards ran a short, dirty dead-end alley. We couldn't see the alley from the house; our parent had planted a row of Lombardy poplars to keep it out of sight. I found an old dime there.

High above the darkest part of the alley, in a teetering set of rooms, lived a terrible old man and a terrible old woman, brother and sister.