

SENTENCE COMBINING: Part Two

Sentences can also be combined by using modifying words, prepositions and prepositional phrases, infinitives or infinitive phrases, participial phrases, gerunds, appositives, and absolute phrases.

A. Modifying words can combine sentences. **Adjectives** describe or modify nouns (the *new* downtown, *city* government) or pronouns (*thrifty* one). **Adverbs** describe the actions of verbs (*almost* mailed, *carefully* walked), modify adjectives (*very* thrifty) or other adverbs (*too* carefully), and whole groups of words (*Steadily*, the nurse wheeled the patient). **Nouns** and special **forms of verbs** may sometimes serve as modifiers of other nouns. In combinations such as *fire* hazard, *campus* buildings, and *Christmas* holidays, the first noun modifies the second. In combinations such as *running* horse, *wrapped* presents, and *broken* finger, the first word is a verb form modifying the following noun.

Example:

San Antonio offers tourists food. San Antonio offers food proudly. The food is delicious.
San Antonio *proudly* offers tourists *delicious* food.

B. Prepositions are connecting words that can be used to combine sentences.

Prepositions express relationships—in space, time, or other senses—between nouns or pronouns and other words in a sentence.

Common prepositions:

about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, as, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, near, of, off, on, onto, out, over, past, regarding, since, through, toward, under, until, up, upon, with, without

Common Compound prepositions:

according to, as well as, because of, by way of, due to, except for, in addition to, in front of, in place of, in spite of, instead of, next to, out of, with regard to

Example:

Women in some countries are not allowed in the streets. The countries have strong religious laws.
Women who walk in the streets must have a male chaperone.

Because of strong religious laws, women in some countries are not allowed in the streets **without a male chaperone**.

The large dog chased the cat. The cat and dog ran across the street. The cat went over the fence.
The large dog chased the cat **across the street** and **over the fence**.

C. Sentences can be combined with infinitives or infinitive phrases. An **infinitive** is the base form of a verb preceded by **to** (*to walk, to sit, to talk*). An infinitive can serve as a noun, an adverb, or an adjective. An **infinitive phrase** consists of an infinitive together with its modifiers, objects, or complements (*to be sad, to go out to eat tonight*).

Example:

Your purpose is becoming a liberated woman. You do not need to act as a man is supposed to act.
To become a liberated woman, you do not need **to act** as a man is supposed **to act**.

D. Sentences can be combined using participial phrases. A **participial phrase** is formed of a **present participle** (the -ing form of the verb, for example, *skating* or *running*) or **past participle** (for most verbs the form that ends in -ed, for example, *walked* or *buttoned*, but for some verbs an irregular form like *been, seen, hidden, slept, set*) and any modifiers, objects, or complements. **Participial phrases** always function as adjectives

(for example, *Excited by the news, Julia jumped up and down* or *A cat scratching at my back door wakened me*).

Example:

I carried the cumbersome bass drum in front of me. I burrowed and jostled my way through the crowd.
I carried the cumbersome bass drum in front of me, **burrowing and jostling my way through the crowd**.

- E. Sentences can be combined using gerunds.** A **gerund** has the same form as a present participle (again, the -ing form of a verb) but functions as a noun (Our school encourages studying).

Example:

The dog howled and whined all night long. This kept the whole neighborhood awake.
The dog's howling and whining all night long kept the whole neighborhood awake.

- F. Sentences can be combined using appositives.** An **appositive** is a noun or noun phrase used to identify another noun or noun phrase, or a pronoun. All appositives can replace the words to which they refer. Set off appositives with a comma or commas when they contain information that does not restrict the meaning of the word being referred to (that is, if the information is not necessary for you to understand the word's meaning). A nonrestrictive appositive is sometimes set off with a dash or dashes, especially when it contains commas. If the appositive restricts the meaning of the word it refers to—in that it is necessary in the sentence for understanding that word—do *not* set it off with punctuation.

Examples of nonrestrictive appositives:

Michele bought a new toy, **a Triumph Spitfire**.
Three dogs—**Thisbe, Ditto, and Axel**—were always there to greet me at the door.

Examples of restrictive appositives:

The verb **howl** comes from the Old English verb **houlen**.
My son **Henry** always made good grades.

- G. Sentences can be combined using absolute phrases.** **Absolute phrases** consist of a noun or pronoun and a participle, plus any modifiers. Absolute phrases are always set off from the rest of the sentence with punctuation, usually a comma or commas.

Example:

Many ethnic groups, **their own place established**, are making way for new arrivals.
Their native lands left behind, an uncertain future looming ahead, immigrants face many obstacles.

Unlike participial phrases, absolute phrases always contain a subject.

Example of a participial phrase modifying *immigrants*:

For many immigrants **learning English**, the language introduces American culture.

Example of an absolute phrase having its own subject, *immigrants*, and modifying the rest of the sentence:

The immigrants having learned English, their opportunities widen.

We often omit the participle from an absolute phrase when it is some form of *be* such as *being* or *having been*.

Example:

Two languages at hand, bilingual citizens in fact have many cultural and occupational advantages.

EXERCISES: (note that some items have more than one possible answer).

A. Combine the following sentences into a single sentence using modifying words.

1. The fish are hungry. The fish are koi. The fish are beautiful.
2. The customers give the waiters tips. The customers are departing. They give tips gratefully. The tips are large.
3. Teachers instruct the children. The children are eager to learn. The teachers are enthusiastic.
4. The garage is messy. We are embarrassed by the garage. We clean up the garage quickly.
5. The doors are brass. They finally open. They open inward.

B. Combine the following sentences using prepositions or prepositional phrases.

1. There was no second to the motion. The motion died.
2. We complied with local law. We paid a five dollar fine. The reason was that we had eaten a bag of peanuts in a public street.
3. Some fifty million Americans have become the legal owners of one-third of corporate America. Their pension funds made this possible.
4. There are traffic jams. There is a lack of parking space. The administration has banned all cars. You can no longer drive into the central campus area.
5. You want to keep your transportation costs down. Fill your gas tank at a self-serve pump.

C. Combine the following sentences using infinitives or infinitive phrases.

1. The campaign wanted to reach large numbers of people quickly. The campaign focused on mass immunization techniques.

2. The hijackers wanted to attract the attention of the American public. The hijackers tried to force a major network. The network was to broadcast the hijackers' political demands.
3. You want to be approved for a proficiency examination. You must convince the department. You have a reasonable chance of passing the examination.
4. The aim of the school was helping students understand death as the natural end of a life cycle. The school introduced a noncredit course. The title of the course was Death.
5. The purpose of many Americans is overcoming their fear of unknown assailants. The unknown assailants stalk city streets. Many Americans take instruction. They are instructed in some sort of Asian self-defense.

D. Combine each set of sentences below into a single sentence with at least one participial phrase.

1. Prosecutor, judge, and jury were convinced of the defendant's guilt. They twisted the facts to support their prejudgment.
2. She was born in Atlanta, Georgia. She now serves as the corporation's chief legal officer. She was educated at Duke University.
3. Mandy was mud-covered. Mandy was shivering. Mandy sat hunched over a cup of cocoa.
4. Policemen and firemen combed the smoking rubble. They found guns. They found spent cartridges. They found a charred corpse.
5. Strip mining completely alters the topography. It destroys all original vegetation. It also destroys most of the animal life. It leaves barren rubble behind.

E. Combine the sets of sentences below into a single sentence using gerunds.

1. One cheats on tests repeatedly. This is risky. This is self-defeating.
2. She pretended to be one of us. She took part in all our pranks. This helped hide her identity. She was a policewoman.

3. You bury a dead cat at midnight. Or you rub the spot with grasshopper spit. This might cure warts as effectively as medical treatment
4. You reduce your weight. It is not just a matter of this. You clip a diet out of a magazine.
5. You can slight the value of early detection programs for cancer. But this invites disaster and defeat.

F. Combine the sentences in each of the following pairs into one sentence that contains an appositive.

1. Two great artists began their work at age four. They were Paul Klee and Gustav Mahler.
2. Could I ever get to the summit of Mount Everest? I am a weekend backpacker.
3. She transfixed the class. She was a born actress.
4. The horse was a beautiful, leopard-spotted Appaloosa. The horse came up to me and nudged me with its forehead.
5. Some people are naturally gifted craftspersons. These people show unusually good hand-eye coordination at very early ages.

G. Combine the sentences in each of the following pairs into one sentence that contains an absolute phrase.

1. Franklin dozed. His chin was on his chest.
2. Representative Barbara Jordan spoke at the national Democratic convention. Her voice thundered throughout the auditorium.
3. I gripped the wheel of the skidding car. My knuckles were white. My hair was standing on end. My stomach was heaving.
4. Luis studied the problem. His forehead was wrinkled. His mouth was pursed. His watch was ticking.

5. Nicky Boboli withdrew in his race for putt-putt king of the universe. His plans had changed.

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

A. Combine the following sentences using modifying words.

1. The beautiful koi are hungry.
2. The departing customers give the waiters large tips gratefully.
3. The enthusiastic teachers instruct the eager children.
4. We quickly clean up the messy, embarrassing garage.
5. The brass doors finally open inward.

B. Combine the following sentences using prepositions or prepositional phrases.

1. The motion died with no second.
2. Because we had eaten a bag of peanuts in a public street, we paid a \$5 fine in order to comply with local law.
3. Some 50 million Americans have become the legal owners of one-third of corporate America due to their pension funds.
4. Because of traffic jams, a lack of parking space, and the fact that the administration has banned all cars, you can no longer drive into the central campus area.
5. In order to keep your transportation costs down, fill your gas tank at a self-serve pump.

C. Combine the following sentences using infinitives or infinitive phrases.

1. The campaign focused on mass immunization techniques to reach large numbers of people quickly.
2. To attract the attention of the American public, the hijackers tried to force a major network to broadcast the hijackers' political demands.
3. To be approved for a proficiency examination, you must convince the department you have a reasonable chance of passing the examination.
4. A noncredit course titled Death was introduced to help students understand death as the natural end of a life cycle.
5. To overcome their fear of unknown assailants stalking the city streets, many Americans take instruction in some sort of Oriental self-defense.

D. Combine each set of sentences below into a single sentence with at least one participial phrase.

1. Convinced of the defendant's guilt, the prosecutor, judge, and jury twisted the facts to support their prejudgment.
2. Having been born in Atlanta, Georgia, and educated at Duke University, she now serves as the corporation's chief legal officer.
3. The shivering and mud-covered Mandy sat hunched over a cup of cocoa.
4. Combing the smoking rubble, policemen and firemen found guns, spent cartridges, and a charred corpse.
5. Strip mining completely alters the topography, destroying all original vegetation and most of the animal life, and leaving barren rubble behind.

E. Combine the sets of sentences below into a single sentence using gerunds.

1. Cheating on tests repeatedly is risky and self-defeating.
2. Pretending to be one of us and taking part in our pranks helped hide from us her identity as a policewoman.
3. Burying a dead cat at midnight or rubbing the spot with grasshopper spit might cure your wart as effectively as medical treatment.
4. Reducing your weight is not just a matter of clipping a diet out of a magazine.
5. Slighting the value of early detection programs for cancer invites disaster and defeat.

F. Combine the sentences in each of the following pairs into one sentence that contains an appositive.

1. Two great artists, Paul Klee and Gustav Mahler, began their work at age four.
2. Could I, a weekend backpacker, ever get to the summit of Mount Everest?
3. A born actress, she transfixed the class.
4. The beautiful, leopard-spotted Appaloosa horse came up to me and nudged me with its forehead.
5. Some people, naturally gifted craftspersons, show unusually good hand-eye coordination at very early ages.

G. Combine the sentences in each of the following pairs into one sentence that contains an absolute phrase.

1. His chin on his chest, Franklin dozed.
2. Representative Barbara Jordan, her voice thundering throughout the auditorium, spoke at the national Democratic convention.
3. I gripped the wheel of the skidding car, my knuckles white, my hair on end, my stomach heaving.
4. His forehead wrinkled, mouth pursed, watch ticking, Luis studied the problem.
5. His plans changed, Nicky Boboli withdrew in his race for putt-putt king of the universe.