Packet 9

Sentence Combining Techniques

Sentence combining helps develop efficient and effective sentences. The following are five ways to combine sentences:

I. Using ADJECTIVES

II. Using APPOSITIVES

III. Using RELATIVE PRONOUN CLAUSES

IV. Using PARTICIPLES

V. Using SUBORDINATION

Sometimes students believe that a sentence can contain only one piece of information. As a result, they create simple sentences that are often choppy and incoherent. Read the following sentences:

Billy is an unhappy child. He has many problems. He does poorly in school. He does not get along with other children.

Notice how each sentence adds one more piece of information. This method results in a number of simple sentences that lack coherence. By using sentence combining techniques, these sentences can be written as one coherent sentence.

With his many problems--doing poorly in school and not getting along with other children--Billy is an unhappy child.

or

Billy is an unhappy child because he has many problems, such as doing poorly in school and not getting along with other children.

Both of the above revisions are more effective than the original three sentences because the revisions are coherent and show the relationship of ideas to each other.

Learning the following sentence combining techniques will help you develop efficient and effective sentences.
I. **ADJECTIVES** can be joined in one of two ways.

A. Form a list of adjectives joined by commas.

**EXAMPLE:** The dress was old. **It was also dirty and torn.**
**COMBINED:** The dress was old, dirty, and torn.

B. Place the two adjectives after a noun to modify it, and enclose the adjectives within commas.

**EXAMPLE:** My best friend has a great personality. She is outgoing and energetic.
**COMBINED:** My best friend, outgoing and energetic, has a great personality.

II. **APPOSITIVES** or noun phrases--rename or define another noun. Enclose the appositive within commas because it adds nonessential information.

**EXAMPLE:** Mary is a teacher at Malverne Elementary School. She is also an avid jogger.
**COMBINED:** Mary, an avid jogger, is a teacher at Malverne Elementary School.

** (In the above sentence, the noun phrase, an avid jogger, is an appositive that describes Mary’s hobby. NOTICE THE PLACEMENT OF THE COMMAS.)

or

**COMBINED:** Mary, a teacher at Malverne Elementary School, is also an avid jogger.

** (In the above sentence, the noun phrase, a teacher at Malverne Elementary School, is an appositive that states Mary’s occupation. NOTICE THE PLACEMENT OF THE COMMAS.)
III. **A RELATIVE PRONOUN CLAUSE** can serve in the same way as an appositive. It gives additional information about a noun by renaming it, defining it, or describing it. These clauses, which begin with who, which, that, whose, or whom are dependent clauses. **MAKE SURE THESE CLAUSES IMMEDIATELY FOLLOW THE NOUN THAT THEY MODIFY.**

EXAMPLE: Because of the cutbacks in funds to public education, the new school will not be built until 1995. **The new school will be home to six hundred students.**

COMBINED: Because of the cutbacks in funds to public education, the new school, **which will be home to six hundred students**, will not be built until 1995.

** (In the above sentence, the relative pronoun clause, which will be home to six hundred students, describes the new school. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CLAUSE IS PLACED IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE WORD IT MODIFIES.)

NOTE: Relative-pronoun clauses can be either essential or nonessential modifiers.

AS A GENERAL RULE, if the noun to which the clause refers is a PROPER NOUN, the clause is considered nonessential to the meaning of the sentence and should be set off by commas.

EXAMPLE: The Bronx Zoo, **which is in New York**, is a popular tourist attraction.

** (In the above sentence, the relative-pronoun clause refers to a proper noun, The Bronx Zoo; therefore, the clause is nonessential and must be enclosed within commas.)

AS A GENERAL RULE, if the noun to which to clause refers is a COMMON NOUN, the clause is considered essential to the meaning of the sentence and should not be set off by commas.

EXAMPLE: The zoo **which is in New York** is popular.

** (In the above sentence, the relative-pronoun clause refers to a common noun, The zoo; therefore, the clause is essential to identify which zoo is popular and should not be set off by commas.)
IV. PARTICIPLES (present and past) act as adjectives to modify a noun. (A present participle is formed by adding ing to the base form of the verb. A past participle is usually formed by adding ed to the base form of the verb.) REMEMBER: THESE PARTICIPLES ARE NOT ACTING AS THE VERBS OF A SENTENCE.

EXAMPLE:  Sally was jogging around the block. A dog ran after Sally. The dog wore a muzzle.

COMBINED: While jogging around the block, Sally was chased by a muzzled dog.

** (In the above sentence, While jogging around the block, is a present participle phrase modifying the noun Sally, and muzzled is a past participle modifying the noun dog.)

V. COORDINATION creates a COMPOUND SENTENCE (two or more independent clauses). Create a compound sentence by placing a comma and conjunction or a semicolon between the independent clauses. Sometimes (not always) transitional words are placed after a semicolon to explain the relationship between the independent clauses.

Conjunctions: FANBOYS

For shows cause.
   She was late. She was in an accident.
   She was late, for she was in an accident.
   And show addition.
   I went to the park. I fed the pigeons.
   I went to the park, and I fed the pigeons.
   Nor shows a negative choice.
   He did not do his homework. He did not study.
   He did not do his homework, nor did he study.
   But shows contrast or contradiction.
   I studied for the test. I still didn’t pass.
   I studied for the test, but I still didn’t pass.
   Or shows a choice.
   We may go to the zoo. We may go to the park.
   We may go to the zoo, or we may go to the park.
   Yet shows contrast.
   I drove for eight hours. I wasn’t tired.
   I drove for eight hours, yet I wasn’t tired.
   So shows effect.
   I hadn’t eaten all day. I was hungry.
   I hadn’t eaten all day, so I was hungry.
Main Transitional Words:

**However** shows contrast or contradiction.
I studied for my exam. I failed it.
I studied for my exam; however, I failed it.

**Moreover, Furthermore, and Also** show addition.
Ms. Hill stayed at school until 5:00. She worked at home for another four hours.
Ms. Hill stayed at school until 5:00; moreover, she worked at home for another five hours.

**Nevertheless** shows contrast.
Danger was all around us. We weren’t afraid.
Danger was all around us; nevertheless, we weren’t afraid.

**Therefore** and **Consequently** show result.
She ran quickly. She fell and broke her leg.
She ran quickly; consequently, she fell and broke her leg.

EXAMPLE: Mary’s hard work and determination finally paid off. She won a scholarship to Florida State University.

COMBINED: Mary’s hard work and determination finally paid off, for, she won a scholarship to Florida State University.

or

Mary’s had work and determination finally paid off; she won a scholarship to Florida State University.

or

Mary won a scholarship to Florida State University; therefore, her hard work and determination finally paid off.
VI. **SUBORDINATION** creates a **COMPLEX SENTENCE** (one independent and one or more dependent clauses). Create a complex sentence by placing a subordinate (dependent) word in front of an independent clause, thereby making it a dependent clause. This dependent clause adds information to the independent clause, which is the most important clause in the sentence.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Some subordinate words:</th>
<th>after</th>
<th>although</th>
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<td>while</td>
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**EXAMPLE:**  Bob went fishing at the lake. I decided to clean the attic.

**COMBINED:**  **WHILE** Bob went fishing at the lake, I decided to clean the attic.

**(In the above sentence, While Bob went fishing at the lake is now the dependent clause because of the subordinate word while. I decided to clean the attic is the independent clause because it contains the most important information.)

or

**Since I decided to clean the attic, Bob went fishing at the lake.**

**(In the above sentence, Since I decided to clean the attic is now the dependent clause because of the subordinate word since. Bob went fishing at the lake is the independent clause because it contains the most important information.)

After studying the above examples, you should be ready to try these combining techniques yourself. Combine each set of sentences below to form one sentence. Use whatever sentence-combining method seems most effective. Try two different combinations for each group.

**Keep in mind that in sentence combining, the wording and the order of information can change, but the meaning has to stay basically the same.**
EXAMPLE:  
Bob was upset with Mary.  
Mary forgot to pick him up at work.  
Mary was watching her favorite soap opera.

COMBINED:  
a) Because Mary, who was watching her favorite soap opera, forgot to pick Bob up at work, he was upset with her. 
   or
b) Bob was upset with Mary, who was watching her favorite soap opera and forgot to pick him up at work. 
   or

HINTS FOR COMBINING SENTENCES

Read all the sentences to combine before deciding on a specific technique. Then ask yourself the following questions:

1. Are any words common to some or all the sentences?

If there are common words, you probably can use adjectives, relative-pronoun clauses, appositives, or any combination of these three to create one sentence.

EXAMPLE A:  
The girl bought a car.  
The car was shiny.  
The car was blue.  
The car was expensive.

As you can see, the word car is common to all the sentences. Therefore, you can combine in one of the following ways:

COMBINED USING ADJECTIVES:  
The girl bought a shiny, blue, expensive car.

or

COMBINED USING RELATIVE-PRONOUN CLAUSE:  
The girl bought a car which was shiny, blue, and expensive.
EXAMPLE B: My sister is graduating from college next week.  
She is a history major.  
She is my only sister.

At first glance, you may think that only two of the sentences contain the common word sister, but since she refers to My sister, it is also considered a common word. Therefore, you can combine these sentences in one of the following ways:

COMBINED USING ADJECTIVE AND APPOSITIVE: 
My only sister, a history major, is graduating from college next week.

or

COMBINED ADJECTIVE AND RELATIVE PRONOUN CLAUSE: 
My only sister, who is a history major, is graduating from college next week.

EXAMPLE C: We decided to see a movie. 
It was about a war. 
It was made in 1958.

Again, there are common words because the pronoun it refers to the word movie. Therefore, we can combine these sentences in one of the following ways:

COMBINED ADJECTIVE AND RELATIVE PRONOUN CLAUSE: 
We decided to see a war movie which was made in 1958.

or

COMBINED USING ADJECTIVES: 
We decided to see a 1958 war movie.

2. Is there a cause/effect relationship between two or more of the sentences? If there is, you probably can use a relative-pronoun clause, participle, coordination or subordination to combine the sentences.

EXAMPLE A: Bob went swimming ten minutes after eating a heavy meal.  
He got a cramp.

Since there is a cause/effect relationship between these two sentences, you can combine in one of the following ways:

COMBINED USING PARTICIPLE: 
Swimming after eating a heavy meal, Bob got a cramp.
or
**COMBINED USING RELATIVE PRONOUN CLAUSE:**
Bob, who went swimming after eating a heavy meal, got a cramp.

or
**COMBINED USING SUBORDINATION:**
When Bob went swimming after eating a heavy meal, he got a cramp.

or
**COMBINED USING COORDINATION:**
Bob went swimming after eating a heavy meal; as a result, he got a cramp.

**EXAMPLE B:**
My dog ran into the street.
He got hit by a car.

Again, there is a cause/effect relationship between these sentences. Therefore, we can combine these sentences in one of the following ways.

**COMBINED USING PARTICIPLE:**
Running into the street, my dog got hit by a car.

or
**COMBINED USING RELATIVE PRONOUN CLAUSE:**
My dog that ran into the street got hit by a car.

or
**COMBINED USING SUBORDINATION:**
When my dog ran into the street, he got hit by a car.

or
**COMBINED USING COORDINATION:**
My dog ran into the street; consequently, he got hit by a car.

3. Is there a comparison or contrast between the sentence? If so, you probably can use coordination or subordination to combine them.

**EXAMPLE:**
The novel was superb.
The film disappointed me.

Notice the contrast between these two sentences. To show this contrasting relationship, we can combine the sentences in one of the following ways:

**COMBINED USING COORDINATION:**
The novel was superb; however, the film disappointed me.
or

The novel was superb, but the film disappointed me.

or

**COMBINED USING SUBORDINATION:**
Although the novel was superb, the film disappointed me.

4. Is there more than one step involved? If so, work with only two sentences at a time.

**EXAMPLE:**
The roads were slippery.
Mary had an accident.
The accident was with her car.
She is in the hospital.
The hospital is crowded.

After reading all four sentences, you should notice that the word accident is common to the second and third sentences. Therefore, we can use an adjective to combine these sentences.

**COMBINING SECOND AND THIRD SENTENCES USING AN ADJECTIVE:**
Mary had a car accident.

The word hospital is also a common word, appearing in sentences four and five. Again, we can use an adjective to combine these sentences.

**COMBINING 4TH AND 5TH SENTENCES USING AN ADJECTIVE:**
She is in a crowded hospital.

Let's see what we have now:

**REVISED EXAMPLE:**
The roads were slippery.
Mary had a car accident.
She is in a crowded hospital.

The first and second sentence show a cause/effect relationship. Therefore, we can use either a relative pronoun clause, a participle, subordination, or coordination to show the relationship. Let's use subordination.

**COMBINED USING SUBORDINATION:**

Because the roads were slippery, Mary had a car accident.

Let's see what we have now:
REVISED EXAMPLE: Because the roads were slippery, Mary had a car accident. She is in a crowded hospital.

We can now use coordination to combine the above two sentences because the two ideas, Mary had a car accident and She is in a crowded hospital are ideas of equal importance. Using and indicates that in addition to having had an accident, Mary is also in the hospital.

COMBINED USING COORDINATION: Because the roads were slippery, Mary had a car accident; she is in a crowded hospital.

Combine the following sentences in two different ways:

1. The boat had plenty of seats
   The seats were comfortable.
   The seats were leather.

   a)
   ________________________________________________________________
   __________________
   __________________
   __________________

   b)
   ________________________________________________________________
   __________________
   __________________
   __________________

2. My daughter is a graduate of Florida State University.
   My daughter is a kindergarten teacher.

   a)
   ________________________________________________________________
   __________________
   __________________
   __________________

   b)
   ________________________________________________________________
   __________________
   __________________
   __________________

3. Sarah left to visit her friend.
   Her friend lives in Ohio.

   a)
   ________________________________________________________________
   __________________
   __________________
   __________________
4. They listened to the radio.
   They did their homework.
a) ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________

5. Terry will go to a four-year college.
   He will go to graduate school.
a) ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________

6. The dog ran into the street.
   The owner followed him.
a) ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________

7. The baby was very ill.
   The parents took her to the hospital.
a) ________________________________________________________________
8. The conductor raised his baton. The eyes of the band members were on him.

9. At the convention, I saw many old friends from college. The convention was a medical one.

10. The teacher looked at the frightened child. The child knew he was in trouble. He had cheated on the test.

11. New York is an exciting, fascinating town. It offers many Broadway shows and museums.
b) 

12. Many students failed the midterm exam in English. The English teachers are holding self-help classes after school.
a) 

b) 

13. Some children have a difficult time completing their school work. These children work after school. Teachers try to give extra time in school for homework.
a) 

b) 

14. The ambulance quickly made a left turn onto U.S. 1. It raced to the hospital. The hospital was nearby.
a) 

b) 

15. The water was in the old boat The captain did not want to go in it.
a) 

b)
16. Many youngsters get addicted to drugs. The drugs cause death. The United States is waging a war on illegal drug use.
   a) ________________________________________________________________
   b) ________________________________________________________________

17. The Titanic sank on its maiden voyage. The Titanic hit an iceberg.
   a) ________________________________________________________________
   b) ________________________________________________________________

18. The typical American family inspired Norman Rockwell. Norman Rockwell was an artist. He produced many heartwarming paintings of American life.
   a) ________________________________________________________________
   b) ________________________________________________________________

19. The dancers started to move on to the floor. The audience clapped in anticipation.
   a) ________________________________________________________________
   b) ________________________________________________________________
20. Mrs. Terry Blanchard has had an interesting life.  
   She has taught school.  
   She has held public office.  
   She has started a self-help group.  

   a) ________________________________________________________________  
   b)  

21. Mother and Father prepared the holiday dinner.  
   My brothers and I sat and played games in the kitchen.  
   The kitchen was warm and cozy.  

   a) ________________________________________________________________  
   b)  

22. Some countries formed a coalition and declared war on Iraq.  
   They opposed the invasion of Kuwait.  
   Two countries are the United States and Canada.  

   a) ________________________________________________________________  
   b)  

23. Americans are forever trying to lose weight.  
   Diet books are making enormous profits.  
   Fitness experts are making enormous profits.  
   The experts give advice on the best type of exercise.  

   a) ________________________________________________________________  
   b)  

24. The child was reciting the Gettysburg Address. The child forgot the words of the speech.
   a) ________________________________________________________________
   b) ________________________________________________________________

25. The house is on the lake in North Carolina. The house is our favorite getaway.
   a) ________________________________________________________________
   b) ________________________________________________________________

26. Her amnesia had resulted from an emotional breakdown. The emotional breakdown was caused by the death of her mother. It was also caused by her husband’s request for a divorce.
   a) ________________________________________________________________
   b) ________________________________________________________________

27. Two football teams were practicing before a game. The teams were from King’s Island, Alaska. They were getting ready for the 1938 New Year’s Day Ice Bowl Game.
   a) ________________________________________________________________
   b) ________________________________________________________________
28. The actress had checked into the spa under an assumed name. She used the name of her maid. She was recognized by people. They had seen her picture in the paper.

a) ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________

29. John went out to practice. The time was 3:00. He couldn’t find the rest of his teammates. Practice was at 4:00.

a) ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________

30. In 1890 a postseason baseball series was played. It was a best-of-seven series. It was between New York of the National League and St. Louis of the American Association.

a) ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________
31. The child received a bicycle.
The bicycle was new.
The bicycle was shiny.
The bicycle was blue.

a) ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________

32. The child was lazy.
She did not do her chores.
She watched television all evening.
Her parents scolded her.

a) ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________

33. The two dogs stared at each other.
One dog was a poodle.
One dog was a boxer.
The staring was from opposite sides of the street.

a) ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________
34. The parents walked into the principal’s office. 
Their son started to cry.  
Their son admitted he had cheated.  
a) ________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________  
b) ________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________  

35. The priest tried to console the victim.  
The victim was crying.  
They walked to the chapel.  
The chapel was in the hospital. 
a) ________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________  
b) ________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________  

36. Carol was shopping at the mall.  
She saw her high school sweetheart.  
He was fat.  
He was bald.  
a) ________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________  
b) ________________________________________________________________  
________________________________________________________________  

37. Three days ago Mr. Smith’s body was found.  
It was floating in the lake.
The lake was near my house.
Friends believe that Mr. Smith committed suicide.

a) ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________

38. Karen Schmidt’s life has been very successful.
    She has written many popular exercise books.
    She owns three fitness centers.

a) ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________

39. Carol talked on the phone.
    She cooked her dinner.

a) ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________

40. Lynn Doonan is a first grade teacher.
    She teaches at Lindner Place School.
    It is in Malverne, New York.
    She has written many articles on important issues.
    The issues are about childrearing.

a) ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________

41. The woman cleaned the house.
The house was dirty.
The man went hunting.
The hunting was for deer.

a) ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

42. Lucy had a wonderful childhood.
    Her memories are filled with happy thoughts.
    Her thoughts are about good friends.
    Her thoughts are about a loving family.

a) ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

43. Joanna buckled her seat belt.
    She started her car.

a) ________________________________________________________________

b) ________________________________________________________________

44. Barbara and Rose walked into the abandoned building.
    They sensed danger.
    That feeling of danger caused them to leave as quickly as possible.

a) ________________________________________________________________
45. The girl moved to a town.
The town was quaint.
The town was old-fashioned.
The town was in New England.

46. Brad received an A on his term paper.
He called his parents.
They were proud of him.

47. Ken had a job.
The job was part-time.
He didn’t have time to devote to his studies at college.

48. Penny is a member of the cheerleading squad.
She is a freshman at college.
She is president of her class.
49. I got caught in the rain.  
My hair got wet.  
My hair was clean.  
My hair was shiny.

50. The student tried to complete the assignment.  
The assignment was complicated and confusing.  
He needed help.  
The teacher gave him help.  
The teacher was kind.  
The teacher was patient.
WRITING SECTION

Now that you have become an expert in sentence combining, you need practice in creating sentences that contain combining techniques.

Write at least ten sentences on one of the following topics:

- Your hobbies
- Your career goals
- Your family
- Your favorite book or movie

Before beginning, review the general guidelines and do not use linking verbs. Of the ten sentences,

- Two must contain relative-pronoun clauses.
- One must contain a list of adjectives.
- One must contain an introductory participle phrase.
- Two must be compound – one with a semicolon, one with a comma and conjunction.
- Two must be complex.

Each of the remaining two sentences must use two different combining techniques (for example, adjectives and relative-pronoun clauses).