

SENTENCE EMPHASIS

Emphasizing means “give special importance or value to (something) in speaking or writing.” (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary) .

Techniques for Emphasizing

1. Emphasizing by position

The initial and terminal positions of sentences are inherently more emphatic than the middle segment. Postponing a major point to the end of the sentence, however, is more formal and literary. The final position is more emphatic than the opening.

2. Emphasizing by Order of Climax

In composition and speech, climactic order is the arrangement of details or ideas in order of increasing importance or force: **the principle of saving the best for last.**

3. Emphasizing by repetition of important words

Repetition as a rule should be avoided, but **occasionally** key words can be repeated for the sake of emphasis. Repetition of a word, phrase, or clause emphasizes the repeated structure and focuses the reader's attention on its meaning.

Read the sentence given below. It is a quote from Abraham Lincoln.

‘You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time.’

This sentence is a classic example of the power of repetition.

4. Emphasizing by Sentence length and structure:

(i) **Length** : **Short sentences** are often emphatic, especially after longer ones.

(ii) **Structure**: *Periodic sentences, balanced sentences, the active voice, and subordination.*

- **Periodic sentences**: A **periodic sentence** is a sentence wherein the main point of the sentence is placed at the end part of the sentence. Basically, the main clause is found in the last part of the sentence.

A loose sentence (or cumulative), on the other hand, is a sentence in which the essential elements, in the main clause, come first, followed by subordinate parts, modifiers, etc.,

- **Balanced sentences**: Balanced sentences are similar to parallel sentence in terms of structure. Like parallelism, a sentence is considered to be balanced if its two parts are equal in length, importance, as well as structure.
Example; *To err is human; to forgive is divine.*
- **Subordination**: Do not place the important idea of a sentence in a subordinate clause or phrase. Make the important idea grammatically independent. If possible, subordinate the rest of the sentence to it.
- **The active voice**: Use the active voice unless there is a reason for doing otherwise. The passive voice is not emphatic. The **active voice** is more natural and emphatic than the passive.

5. Emphasizing by Word/phrase choice and EMPHATIC expressions

The simplest way to emphasize something is to tell readers directly that what follows is important by using such words and phrases as *especially, particularly, crucially, most importantly, extremely, by far, above all*.

6. Emphasizing by Punctuation and Typography

Punctuation or typographic elements can be used **occasionally** to emphasize a word, phrase, or sentence. When **overused**, however, they quickly lose their emphatic power and can irritate readers. In general, the more formal the type of writing, the **less** such devices should be used.

- **Punctuation:** The most common punctuation mark used for emphasis is the exclamation point. A question mark and an exclamation point ?! should not be used together in formal writing. when it comes to academic writing, such as essays and reports, don't use exclamatory sentences AT ALL, unless you are using them in *quotations*.
- **Typographical Devices :** The typographical device most commonly used for emphasis is *italics*. **ALL CAPS** are also sometimes used, particularly when introducing an important note or warning. **Underlining** is best avoided, as underlining can make text more difficult to read.

SENTENCE EMPHASIS PRACTICE

1/ Copy the following sentences and do the following:

- Bracket the independent clause(s) in each sentence and underline each modifying phrase and dependent clause. Label each sentence cumulative or periodic.
- Relocate the supporting details to make cumulative sentences periodic and periodic sentences cumulative, adding words or rephrasing to make your meaning clear.

Example: Feeling isolated, sad, and frightened, [the small child sat alone in the train depot.](periodic)

Revised: The small child sat alone in the train depot, feeling isolated, sad, and frightened. (cumulative)

1. However different in their educational opportunities, both Jefferson and Lincoln as young men became known to their contemporaries as "hard students."
2. The road came into being slowly, league by league, river crossing by river crossing.
3. Without willing it, I had gone from being ignorant of being ignorant to being aware of being aware.
4. To those of us who remain committed mainly to the exploration of moral distinctions and ambiguities, the feminist analysis may have seemed a particularly narrow and cracked determinism.

2/ Combine each of the following sentence groups into one cumulative sentence, subordinating supporting details to main ideas. Then combine each group into one periodic sentence. Each group can be combined in a variety of ways, and you may have to add, delete, change, or reorder words.

Example: More women than ever before are running for office. They are encouraged by the success of other female candidates.

Cumulative: More women than ever before are running for office, encouraged by the success of other female candidates.

Periodic: Encouraged by the success of other female candidates, more women than ever before are running for office.

1. Many politicians opposed the MX missile. They believed it was too expensive. They felt that a smaller, single-warhead missile was preferable.
1. Smoking poses a real danger. It is associated with various cancers. It is linked to heart disease and stroke. It threatens even nonsmokers.
2. Black-footed ferrets are rare North American mammals. They prey on prairie dogs. They are primarily nocturnal. They have black feet and black-tipped tails. Their faces have raccoon-like masks.
3. Today's college students are under a good deal of stress. Job prospects in some fields are not very good. Financial aid is not as easy to come by as it was in the past.
4. Education has grown very expensive. The job market has become tighter. Pressure to get into graduate and professional schools has increased.

2. Rewrite the following sentences, rearranging the elements in the lists into climactic order.

Random order: When the bucket fell off the ladder, the paint splashed onto the small rug, the drop cloth, the Rembrandt painting, and the sofa.

Climactic order:

Random order: Franklin used the ant as a symbol of industry, wisdom and efficiency

Climactic order:

Random order: Before buying the house, inspect the carpet for wear, the foundation for cracks, the roof for leaks, the plumbing for rusty water, and the paint for chipping.

Climactic order:

Random order: Today we enjoy the benefits of modern technology, including life-saving antibiotics, ballpoint pens, and refrigerators.

Climactic order:

Random order: Natural water storage includes the oceans, ponds, lakes, and puddles.

Climactic order:

3. Revise the following sentences to make them more emphatic. For each, decide which ideas should be highlighted, and place these key ideas at sentence beginnings or endings. Use climactic order or depart from conventional word order where appropriate.

1. Police want to upgrade their firepower because criminals are better armed than ever before.
2. A few years ago, felons used so-called Saturday night specials, small-caliber six-shot revolvers.
3. Now, semiautomatic pistols capable of firing fifteen to twenty rounds, along with paramilitary weapons like the AK-47, have replaced these weapons.
4. Police are adopting such weapons as new fast-firing shotguns and 9mm automatic pistols in order to gain an equal footing with their adversaries.
5. Faster reloading and a hair trigger are two of the numerous advantages that automatic pistols, the weapons of choice among law enforcement officers, have over the traditional .38-caliber police revolver.

AVOIDING UNNECESSARY SHIFTS IN SENTENCES

Introduction

within a sentence a shift is a change from one subject to another or from one verb to another. Often shifts are acceptable because they are necessary to express the meaning the writer intends. However, the smoothness of a sentence is sometimes seriously affected by an unnecessary (illogical) and awkward shift.

To be consistent, avoid **unnecessary** shifts 1. in person ; 2. in number ; 3. in verb tense ; 4. in voice ; 5. in mood and 6. in discourse

1. Avoiding Illogical Shifts in Person:

Person is the form a pronoun takes to indicate who is speaking, spoken about, or spoken to (first, second and third person / singular and plural).

An **illogical shift** in person occurs when a writer shifts from one person to another for no apparent reason. Most errors occur in the **second** and **third** person.

Illogical Shift: *Anyone* can learn to cook if *you* practice. (3rd to 2nd person)

Revised: *You* can learn to cook if *you* practice. (consistent use of 2nd person)

Revised: *Anyone* can learn to cook if *he* or *she* practices. (consistent use of 3rd person)

Acceptable shift in person: If the meaning of a sentence clearly requires a change, then you may change person as needed.

Example requiring a change in person: **I** stayed at the house, but **the others** left.

2. Avoiding Illogical Shifts in Number

An **illogical shift in number** occurs when a writer shifts from singular to plural (or the other way around) for no apparent reason.

Illogical Shift: Each *visitor* to the museum must check *their* cameras at the entrance. (sing. to plur.)

Revised: Each *visitor* to the museum must check *his* or *her* camera at the entrance. (consistent sing)

Revised: *Visitors* to the museum must check *their* cameras at the entrance. (consistent plural)

3. Avoiding Illogical Shifts in Tense

The tense of a verb is the time a verb expresses. If not done logically, shifting from one tense to another in the same sentence can cause problems.

Logical shift in tense

The following sentence uses both the present tense and the past tense to express things happening at different times. Therefore, in this case shifting from present tense to past tense is **logical**.

*Usually he **drives** to work, but yesterday he **took** the bus.*

An **illogical shift in tense** occurs when a writer shifts from one tense to another for no apparent reason.

Illogical Shift in Tense: *The dog **walked** to the fireplace, and then he **circles** twice and **lies** down in front of the fire. (past to present)*

Revised: *The dog walked to the fireplace, and then he circled twice and lay down in front of the fire. (consistent past)*

Revised: *The dog walks to the fireplace, and then he circles twice and lies down in front of the fire. (consistent present)*

4. Avoiding Illogical Shifts in Voice

An **illogical shift in voice** occurs when a writer shifts from active to passive voice or from passive to active voice for no apparent reason.

Inconsistent: *Beautiful birds were seen as she entered the garden.*

Consistent: *She saw beautiful birds as she entered the garden.*

Unnecessary Shift: Practice Activities

Eliminate shifts in person and number between, as well as within, sentences. Some sentences may not need revision.

1. In Agra, India, millions of visitors to the Taj Mahal see a glorious white-marble building that serves as a tribute to undying love, but you also see pollution and serious deterioration of the property.
2. Huge crowds arrive daily to see the gorgeous Taj Mahal, which is perfect in its architectural proportions and is topped with beautiful minarets.
3. But he or she also sees terrible neglect, such as huge beehives hanging from archways, litter on the lawns and in the gardens, and canals choked with trash.
4. The whole place smells of pigeon droppings. Decorative panels are faded and destroyed, and many sections are off limits to sightseers.
5. Soon visitors will enter through a new, clean tourist center, complete with a café and computerized ticketing, and you will find a tour of the cleansed, restored monument to eternal love a very pleasant experience.

Read the following sentences, and eliminate any unnecessary shifts. Some sentences are correct, and some can be revised in more than one way.

1. Some historians see World War II and women's work in the factories as the beginning of the push toward equal rights for women.
2. Women went to work in the textile mills in the late 1800s, and her efforts at reforming the workplace are seen by many as the beginning of the equal rights movement.
3. Farm girls from wanted to make money, and they wanted to experience life in the city.
4. The factories promised the girls decent wages, and parents were promised by them that their daughters would live in a safe, wholesome environment.
5. Dormitories were built by the factory owners; they are supposed to ensure a safe environment for the girls.
6. When one visits the working loom room at the factory, you are overcome with a sense of the risks and dangers the girls faced in the mills.
7. For a mill girl, moving to the city meant freedom and an escape from the drudgery of farm life; it also meant they had to face many new social situations for which they were not always prepared.
8. Harriet Robinson wrote *Loom and Spindle*, the story of her life as a mill girl, and then a book of poems was published.
9. When you look at the lives of the loom girls, one can see that their work laid part of the foundation for women's later demands for equal rights.

Revise the following sentences to eliminate unnecessary shifts in tense, mood, voice, or person and number and between direct and indirect discourse. Most of the items can be revised in more than one way.

1. Firemen rushed to the scene, but only a pile of ashes was found.
2. If the whole committee votes, George will be elected.
3. Young people not only enjoy a few weeks away from home at the summer camp, but many valuable things are learned from the experience.
4. Since every city has its own zoo, supplying wild animals to zoos has become a profitable business.
5. The flour and the butter should be mixed into the paste, and add a small amount of milk.
6. When his father spoke to him about going to college, Walter says that he doesn't want to take so much money from the family at a time when living expenses were high.

7. The experienced yachtsman is aware of danger of fire, and, when filling the gas tank, great precautions are taken to spill gasoline in the bottom of the boat.
8. Many doctors recognize the value of health insurance, but the particular kind we should have is something they could not agree on.
9. All students must assemble on the main quadrangle at ten o'clock, and don't be late.
10. A person who is a nonsmoker can develop lung troubles when he or she lives with smokers.
11. The greed of the 1980s gave way to the occupational insecurity of the 1990s, which in turn gives way to reinforced family ties in the early 2000s.
12. The building inspector suggested that we apply for a construction permit and that we should check with his office again when the plans are complete.
13. She studied the package, wondered what could it be, and tore off the wrapping.
14. Suddenly, we heard an explosion of wings off to our right, and you could see a hundred or more ducks lifting off from the water.
15. In my previous job, I sold the most advertising spots and was given a sales excellence award.
16. A cloud of snow powder rose as skis and poles fly in every direction.
17. The flight attendant said, "Please turn off all electronic devices," but that we could use them again after takeoff.
18. The freezing weather is threatening the citrus fruits, which are sensitive to the cold.

Proofread the following paragraph for consistency, and correct any unnecessary shifts. You may want to omit some words or phrases.

Many people think that recycling material is a modern trend. However, during World War II, more than 43 percent of America's newsprint was recycled, and the average person saved meat fat, which they returned to local collection centers. What you would do is pour leftover fat and other greasy gunk from frying pans and pots into tin cans. Today, despite the fact that many people are recycling, a little more than half of Americans' waste is actually recycled. The problem is not to get us to save bottles and cans but to convince industry to use more recycled materials. There is a concern expressed by manufacturers that they would be using materials of uneven quality and will face undependable delivery. If manufacturers would wake up and smell the coffee, they would see the advantages for the country and bigger profits could be made by them.

Avoiding Fragments and Run-on Sentence

What is a Fragment?

Fragments result if certain word groups are punctuated as if they are complete sentences.

Ways to correct Fragments:

- a. Add what is missing (subject, verb, or complete thought)
- b. Attach the fragment to the sentence before or after it

What is a Run-on?

A run-on is created when two complete sentences (independent clauses) are joined together incorrectly (**without proper punctuation**) and are written as one sentence.

Two kinds of run-ons:

- **Fused sentences:** A *fused sentence* has two main clauses joined with no punctuation at all.
- **Comma splices:** A *comma splice* incorrectly joins two main clauses with a comma.

Ways to Correct a Run-On:

- a. By adding a period to make 2 complete sentences
- b. By adding a semicolon
- c. By adding a comma & coordinating conjunction
- d. By adding a subordinate conjunction

Practice

Select the sentence from each group that is a sentence fragment or a run-on sentence.

1.
 - A. Probably two to three hours, depending on how hard the task is.
 - B. The test seemed impossible, but I managed to make an A.
 - C. We went shopping this past weekend.
 - D. He wanted the blue one.
2.
 - A. When you use the conjunctions and, for, nor, but, or, for, or, yet, so.
 - B. They promised to be there in time for the reception, but I expect they will be late.
 - C. There were four in our group.
 - D. Let's meet at Lucy's house, and remember to bring the soft drinks and popcorn.
3.
 - A. Mr. Smith, along with all of his students, took his place in the auditorium.
 - B. The girls arrived late and left early; they only intended to make a brief appearance.
 - C. It is important to spend time studying, however, rest and recreation are also important.
 - D. The prosecution presented its case so well that it would be a surprise for the jury to return a verdict of not guilty.
4.
 - A. This position requires speaking, writing, and supervising skills.
 - B. The conversation took place in her office, which was cluttered with papers and books.
 - C. The activity is brisk in the living room and in the kitchen while people are searching for a place to sit.
 - D. This is not what I requested the color is too dark, and it's the wrong size.
5.
 - A. After searching through a loose-leaf binder of old homework assignments, he finally found the notes he was searching for, and he began his intense study marathon.
 - B. The student entered the professor's office cautiously, and he wondered if the professor--especially someone so distinguished as to be the department head--could have any understanding of the stress students face.
 - C. Then she would be calm.
 - D. She looked at the cat again, who had been watching her, and the bird, which was chirping outside the window.
6.
 - A. He took the elevator up to the ninth floor; he was just in time for his appointment.
 - B. She waited a minute before dialling the phone, still wondering if she was making the right decision.
 - C. The child's mother looked at him disapprovingly; he was wet, and his new clothes were covered in mud.
 - D. Because there was a policy that only students of the school could check out books from the library.

Correct each run-on sentence below in two different ways. For the first five run-ons, follow the instructions in parenthesis. For the last three, decide for yourself how to correct the faulty sentences effectively.

1. Most smoke detectors have a test button, this button may test only the sounding device and not the working components.
(a) *Turn the first main clause into an adverb clause*
2. Sunlight flooded the room the pianos, all black, gleamed.
(a) *Coordinate the two main clauses.*

3. Karen's brother kills flies for turtle food her sister repairs screen doors on submarines.
(a) *Coordinate the two main clauses.*
4. We walked back to the big house, it had been built by my great-grandfather almost a century ago.
(a) (b) *Turn the second main clause into a past participle phrase*
5. I gave your paycheck to Butch he told me you had sent him.
(a) *Turn the second main clause into an adjective clause.*
6. We returned from our vacation the dog was missing.
7. The gardens are dry the road to the shore is dusty.
8. Don't carry your house keys in your wallet a pickpocket then has easy access to your house.

Identify the comma splices and fused sentences in the following paragraph. Correct each in two of the four possible ways listed in the lesson. If a sentence is correct, leave it alone.

Example: The fans rose in their seats, the game was almost over.

Revised: The fans rose in their seats; the game was almost over.

The fans rose in their seats because the game was almost over.

Entrepreneurship is the study of small businesses, college students are embracing it enthusiastically. Many schools offer one or more courses in entrepreneurship these courses teach the theory and practice of starting a small business. Students are signing up for courses, moreover, they are starting their own businesses. One student started with a car-waxing business, now he sells condominiums. Other students are setting up catering services they supply everything from waiters to bartenders. One student has a thriving cake-decorating business, in fact, she employs fifteen students to deliver the cakes. All over the country, student businesses are selling everything from tennis balls to bagels, the student owners are making impressive profits. Formal courses at the graduate as well as undergraduate level are attracting more business students than ever, several schools (such as Baylor University, the University of Southern California, and Babson College) even offer degree programs in entrepreneurship. Many business school students are no longer planning to be corporate executives instead, they plan to become entrepreneurs.

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G. She looked at the cat again, who had been watching her, and the bird, which was chirping outside the window.
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B. Read the following short essay. Put brackets [] around any sentence fragments you find and mark them *Frag*. Then correct the fragments on a separate sheet of paper.

Women Drivers

1 Sexism extends even into the area of automobile driving, it seems. Believing that they are far better drivers than women. Men consider women drivers incompetent, inattentive, and even dangerous behind the wheel.

2 However, statistics prove that women are, in fact, safer drivers than men. For example, insurance rates. Insurance rates for women are 20 percent lower than they are for men. Another proof is that more accidents are caused by male drivers between the ages of 18 and 25 than by any other group. Also, the greater percentage of accidents involving deaths caused by men. Although women are criticized for being too cautious. They are really just being safe drivers.

3 The reasons for women drivers' safer driving habits can. perhaps be found in the differing attitudes of the sexes toward automobiles. On the one hand, women drivers who regard the automobile as a convenience. Like a washing machine. On the other hand, men regard the automobile as an extension of their egos. Using it as a weapon when they feel particularly aggressive. Or using it as a status symbol.

4 All in all, women are safer drivers. Because of their attitude. Men can learn to become safe drivers. If they adopt the attitude that an automobile is merely a convenience.