Basic Sentence Combining and Comprehensive Skills

EASY WRITER II

Dianna S. Campbell Terry Ryan Meier

Introduction to Sentence Structure / Overview of the Sentence Pattern / The Subject / The Predicate / The Modifiers / Summary and Cumulative Exercises

Sentence Combining: Basic Strategies and Common Problems / Compound Sentences / Complex Sentences / Embedded Sentences /

A Sentence-Combining Approach to the Problem of Run-ons

A Sentence-Combining Approach to the Problem of Fragments /

Punctuating Sentence Combinations / Using Commas in Compound and Complex Sentences (A Review) /

Using Commas in Embedded Sentences / Using Commas to Set Off Phrases /

Using Commas in a Series / Cumulative Review of Commas / Using Semicolons / Using Colons /

Cumulative Review of Commas, Semicolons, and Colons /

Revising Sentences / Dangling Modifiers / Faulty Parallelism / Passive Sentences / Direct and Indirect Quotes

Free Exercises in Sentence Combining /

Revising at the Word Level / Subject-Verb Agreement / *-Ed* Endings / Consistency of Verb Tense / Apostrophes

Pronoun Problems / Easily Confused Words / Capitalization

EASY WRITER II

BASIC SENTENCE COMBINING AND COMPREHENSIVE SKILLS

DIANNA S. CAMPBELL
Mount Mary College

TERRY RYAN MEIER
Milwaukee Area Technical College

1817

HARPER & ROW, PUBLISHERS, New York
Cambridge, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Washington,
Lo ydney

To the memory of Mrs. Marguerite Lauder (1894–1984)
and to all teachers
who expect their students to do great things.

To the Teacher

If you have been using *Easy Writer* for several semesters or quarters, you are familiar with the Easy Writer system for teaching basic writing skills on the college level, and you know that it works. You also know that when you're teaching highly motivated students, you can never have too much material. That's what *Easy Writer II* provides: the same effective system and completely new classroom-tested material.

We've kept our basic sentence-combining approach, which means that, once again, the emphasis is not merely on teaching students to avoid errors but on helping them create good sentences with a great deal of variety and style. The goals of *Easy Writer* and *Easy Writer II* are identical. You'll find all the same chapter and unit headings and, within them, the same variety of exercises designed to help students develop sound basic writing skills.

What's different is the content of the exercises. In *Easy Writer,* for instance, there's a Chapter 1 sentence structure exercise based on an episode in the life of Rosa Parks; in *Easy Writer II* the corresponding exercise is based on the childhood of the Marx brothers. Where the legend of Dracula supplies the content for a run-on exercise in *Easy Writer,* the roots of hypochondria supply it here. In *Easy Writer* students learn to use logical and consistent verb tenses by rewriting an essay about Jim Thorpe; in this alternate edition, they revise problems of verb tense in an essay on Vincent van Gogh.

As in *Easy Writer,* we've tried to create exercises that will nourish and encourage lively, curious minds. If your students are like ours, you'll continue to find that they appreciate exercises that teach them basic skills and entertain them or inform them about the world at the same time. Who can resist the humor of Winston Churchill or the charm and spunk of Ruth Gordon? How many readers wouldn't be curious about why Indian dance was once illegal in the United States? And what students, in the event that they're ever stranded at sea, wouldn't want to know how to discourage shark attacks? It's really very simple: we try to keep them thinking, keep them laughing, and keep them working on the basics.

Although we've preserved the basic design and sequence of *Easy Writer,* we have made a few changes in some explanations, mostly in the nature of clarifying and expanding our discussions of rules and strategies. We've also included more fill-in-the-blank items within the explanatory sections. Most of these short items contain their own answer keys on the same page so that students can be more certain about whether or not they really understand a particular point before they begin an exercise.

If you have not taught with *Easy Writer,* we want you to know that you certainly can choose *Easy Writer II* for your students; the book is completely self-contained, just as *Easy Writer* is. The second edition of *Easy Writer,* which has been widely used since its publication in 1984, will continue to be available and will itself be revised and updated at regular intervals. So teachers who want

to use *Easy Writer* one year and *Easy Writer II* the next will have that option. In a given year one edition can be a principal teaching tool for a basic writing course or lab while the other edition provides supplemental exercises. The next year the roles of the two texts can be reversed.

Both *Easy Writer* and *Easy Writer II* come complete with their own Instructor's Manuals, each of which contains a complete answer key for the book and a set of tests. (Each chapter has two tests; there is also a final exam that covers all the material in the book, and *Easy Writer II* includes a comprehensive practice test students can take before the final.) The Instructor's Manual includes notes and suggestions for each chapter.

We are grateful for the invaluable assistance we received from a number of teachers at Mount Mary College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Special thanks go to Sister David Marie Mueller, S.S.N.D., who, in matters grammatical, certainly ranks among the world's great consulting detectives; to Sister Joan Cook, S.S.N.D., and Sister Mary Warner, S.S.N.D., who helped so much in classroom testing and provided unfailing encouragement; and to Richard A. Campbell, who lent us his considerable technical expertise in word processing. We're also indebted to many other teachers who contacted us with comments and suggestions based on their use of *Easy Writer* and to all the students who tested and retested our materials and offered many helpful suggestions. Of course, any shortcomings of the book are our responsibility and ours alone.

Once again, we're thankful for the encouragement of our sponsoring editor at Harper & Row, Phillip Leininger. Finally, very little of this work could have been completed without the loving cooperation of our families and the excellent child care provided by Kathy Kurtz and Grandma Evie Alivo.

Teaching basic writing is an important, demanding, and often exhausting job. Most students work with a textbook just once, whereas their teachers help new classes of students work through it again and again. With this in mind, we hope you'll enjoy the fresh material in this alternate edition.

Dianna S. Campbell
Terry Ryan Meier

To the Student

Before you begin the first exercise in *Easy Writer II*, you need to think seriously about how important it is to improve your basic writing skills. No matter what your college major or career goals may be, you know that there is very little you can do successfully in this world without basic competence in your own language. Learning to write well is nothing less than acquiring the power to succeed—in school and in the world that lies beyond school. Competence is power. Incompetence is a major handicap. It's as simple as that.

But before you can start to acquire competence in basic writing, you have to believe in your own potential. Some adult students are convinced that it's impossible to become a good writer. As teachers, we can tell you that it is certainly possible, but it takes a great deal of work. A halfhearted try will not be enough to make a real difference; you'll have to put your whole heart into your work in *Easy Writer II* if you want to see significant results. If you're not willing to devote a considerable amount of time and energy to the project, you have a very small chance of success. But with enthusiasm, consistency, and hard work, you have an excellent chance. Developing basic writing skills is not a matter of luck; it's a matter of pluck. It's not a matter of magic; it's a matter of mastery. To master any skill—whether it's racquetball, roller skating, or writing—you need confidence, hard work, and patience. We've taught many, many students who were amazed at how far they came in one or two semesters. They did it; you can do it, too.

We've tried to write a book that won't bore you. While you're working on problems such as run-ons, fragments, and subject-verb agreement, you'll be reading about world-class athletes who overcame tremendous physical handicaps, black musicians whose careers were affected by disc jockeys' decisions about which records to play in the early years of rock and roll, and pet psychologists who say mental problems in dogs can be avoided. Every topic will not appeal to every student, but we think you'll find most of them informative, amusing, or just offbeat and interesting.

In *Easy Writer II* we use simple terms and pared-down explanations of important rules and techniques. These are the products of years of experimenting to learn which explanations are the quickest and clearest, and some of the best suggestions have been made by our own students.

Here's the formula one more time: Believe in yourself, work hard, and work consistently. If you follow these guidelines, more power to you.

Dianna S. Campbell
Terry Ryan Meier

Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction to Sentence Structure

This chapter presents the most basic elements of sentence structure by focusing on the main components of simple sentences. If any chapter in the book should be taken slowly and reviewed frequently, this is the one. This chapter lays the groundwork for the rest of the book and tries to help you develop the tools for acquiring some of the most valuable basic writing skills.

UNIT 1: Overview of the Sentence Pattern

If someone asked you to define a *sentence*, do you think you could? Many people would say no, and yet the same people would immediately be able to pick out the *sentence* among the following choices:

(a) At usually peaks, statistics a major according to league pitcher's 30 career age.

(b) Major according to, usually peaks league statistics a career at pitcher's 30 age.

(c) Career pitcher's major, statistics age according usually 30 league to peaks a at.

(d) According to statistics, a major league pitcher's career usually peaks at age 30.

Each one of the four sequences contains the same words, but only one makes *sense*—(d). It makes sense because the words are arranged in the form that we call a *sentence*. The fact that you can recognize the sentence so easily shows how natural the pattern is and how much intuitive language skill you already have. And for a writer, it is much more important to be able to recognize and produce good sentences than to be able to define them in the precise, meticulous way that linguists must.

But in order to make good sentences and avoid certain types of errors, we do need to develop a basic working definition of a *sentence*. That's what we want to accomplish in the five units of Chapter 1. Let's start by analyzing why (d) is a sentence.

Sentences are made up of clauses. In this chapter, we are concerned primarily with *simple sentences*—those that are made up of one clause. In the rest of the book, we will analyze and create sentences that contain more than one clause.

But for now, we need to define the word *clause*. A *clause* is *a subject plus a predicate*. The subject names something, possibly a person, an object, a place, or an idea. Then the predicate makes a statement about that subject. The predicate tells us something about that person, object, place, or idea.

Finding Key Parts of Simple Sentences

Most students find that the easiest way to analyze simple sentences is to look at the predicate first. The most important part of the predicate is the verb, and you probably remember that most verbs show some sort of action. So when you're analyzing a sentence, look for the verb first. Write *V* over the word that shows action in sentence (d):

According to statistics, a major league pitcher's career usually peaks at age 30.

Peaks is the word that shows action. It's the verb. Then you have to ask yourself, "What peaks? What comes to its peak or its highest point?" Obviously, it's *a major league pitcher's career* that peaks. *A major league pitcher's career* is the complete subject of the verb *peaks*. The key word in the complete subject is *career*. *Career* is the most important part of the complete subject, so we call it the key word in the subject. *Peaks* is the verb, and that makes it the most important part of the predicate.

A Note about Complements

Before you do the first exercise, there is one more thing you should know about the predicate of a sentence. Its most important element is always the verb, but some verbs don't make sense or sound complete by themselves. They need a *complement*—a word to *complete* their meaning. For example, look at this sentence:

New York Mets pitcher Dwight Gooden won the 1985 Cy Young Award at the surprisingly young age of 20.

You can probably pick out the verb—*won*—right away, and there's no question about the subject. Who won? New York Mets pitcher Dwight Gooden won. So *New York Mets pitcher Dwight Gooden* is the complete subject. The name *Dwight Gooden* is the key word in the subject. But in this particular sentence, if you say *Dwight Gooden won* and stop there, you have a sense of incompleteness, don't you? You want to ask, "Dwight Gooden won *what*?" In this sentence the verb *won* raises a question that needs to be answered. Without an answer, you have a feeling of incompleteness. So the answer to the question raised by certain kinds of verbs is called a *complement*. (It's helpful to realize that the word *complement* is related to the word *complete*.) The complement of a verb may come in the form of one word or more than one word. In the sentence about Dwight Gooden the complement of the verb *won* is *the 1985 Cy Young Award*. The sentence would be labeled in this way:

S V C
New York Mets pitcher Dwight Gooden won the 1985 Cy Young Award at the surprisingly young age of 20.

In the first example sentence, we didn't mark a complement because the verb *peaks* doesn't require one. It doesn't need anything. The word *peaks* doesn't leave you

hanging, does it? *A career peaks* makes sense by itself. No one would ever ask, "A career peaks what?" A career just peaks; it reaches its top point. That's all.

Exercise One

Directions: **Here are ten simple sentences. Remember that they are called "simple" because each one contains only one clause. Please do the following:**

(a) **Draw one line under the key word in the complete subject and label it *S*.**
(b) **Draw two lines under the verb in the predicate and label it *V*.**
(c) **Read the *S* and *V* together to see if they make sense by themselves. If they don't make sense or if they give you a feeling of incompleteness, then find the word that completes the idea of the verb and mark it *C* for *complement*. (You will find that most of the sentences do have complements.)**

1. A hypnophobic person hates bedtime.
2. The typical American husband stands six inches taller than his wife.
3. In 1809 Napoleon divorced Josephine.
4. In the words of Ernest Hemingway, the great American writer, the sun also rises.
5. President Teddy Roosevelt studied judo.
6. The Dutch dip their french fries in mayonnaise rather than in catsup.
7. Yellowstone became the world's first national park in 1872.
8. After a six-year reign, King Tutankhamen died at the age of 18.
9. Oxygen constitutes 89 percent of the weight of water.
10. After a mysterious two-year disappearance, the famous *Mona Lisa* reappeared in Florence, Italy, in 1913.

NOTE: If you had a perfect or nearly perfect score on Exercise One and if you found the work easy, you may skip Exercise Two. If you had any difficulty at all, please do the exercise below.

Exercise Two

Directions: **Please follow the same directions you followed for Exercise One.**

1. Plato, the great philosopher of the ideal, taught Aristotle, another classic thinker.
2. Even with no specific guidance or instruction, healthy human babies walk at some point within the first or second year of life.
3. Conchiferous animals always sport shells.

4. Sweden outlaws all physical punishment of children, even punishment by the children's parents.
5. In 1944 *Seventeen* magazine began.
6. According to the account of Matthew in the New Testament, Jesus Christ suffered in the garden of Gethsemane.
7. The Division of Fine Arts of the University of Southern California chose Ronald Reagan as the most nearly perfect male figure in 1940.
8. In his lifetime a typical man cuts 94 miles of his own whiskers.
9. President Harry S. Truman installed bowling lanes in the White House.
10. Ian Fleming, the popular spy novelist, wrote 13 James Bond books.

UNIT 2: The Subject

In this unit, we will take a closer look at the subject of the sentence—the naming part.

The key part of the complete subject always consists of nouns or pronouns. The key word or key words can be a single noun, a single pronoun, or any combination of nouns and pronouns. Here are some simple examples. Underline and write *S* over the key word or words in the subject of each sentence:

(a) Abraham Lincoln had a very complex personality.

(b) Mary Todd Lincoln was also an extremely complicated individual.

(c) Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd Lincoln were husband and wife.

(d) He and she were an intriguing couple.

(e) Abraham Lincoln and she endured great tragedy together.

[*Answers.* The key words in the subjects are (a) the noun *Abraham Lincoln*; (b) the noun *Mary Todd Lincoln*; (c) the nouns *Abraham Lincoln* and *Mary Todd Lincoln*; (d) the pronouns *He* and *she*; and (e) the noun *Abraham Lincoln* and the pronoun *she.*]

Now that you know that a complete subject can have more than one key word, and that the key words in subjects are always nouns and pronouns, let's go into each category—nouns and pronouns—in more detail.

Nouns

You might remember learning that a noun is the name of a person, place, thing, or idea. Here are some examples of nouns in each of these four groups:

PERSON	PLACE	THING	IDEA
brother	classroom	bagel	thoughts
friend	day-care center	earrings	solution
ballerina	farmyard	hot dog	love
con artist	bar	dress	wealth
lawyer	Superdome	sports car	future
Tina Turner	Oregon	Pepsi	attitude

Nouns can be singular or plural. Some are capitalized, and some are not. All of them, except the capitalized nouns, can follow the words *a*, *an*, and *the*, which are called *noun markers* because they mark or signal the appearance of a noun. For instance, you can say *a friend*, *an attitude*, *the earrings*.

The "Subject Test"

But for many people, thinking of nouns as the names of persons, places, things, and ideas is not helpful. This traditional definition is particularly weak with regard to abstract or idea nouns. **One easy way of checking to see if a word is a noun (or at least if it can be used as a noun) is to try to make it the subject of a sentence.** If a word can be used as the subject of a sentence, it is either a noun or a pronoun. (A pronoun is simply a substitute for a noun; we will discuss pronouns shortly.)

Let's say, for example, that we want to see if *create* and *creation* are nouns. We can try to use each one as the subject of a sentence. For instance, we might try these:

(a) The *create* was amazing.

(b) The *creation* was amazing.

This little test very quickly shows us that *creation* is a noun and *create* is not.

Let's use the test again, this time to see if *color* and *colorful* are nouns. Here are our test sentences:

(a) That *color* is perfect.

(b) That *colorful* is perfect.

Again, the attempt to use each word as the subject of a sentence immediately makes it clear that *color* is a noun and *colorful* is not.

So a word that is a noun can be used as the subject of a sentence. That does not mean that it *has* to be used that way. It just means that it can be. Nouns can also appear in many other spots in sentences; for example, you have already worked with nouns as complements. ("I loved the *creation*." "Red is the right *color* for the trim.")

You will also learn, as we work our way through the book, that a word that is a noun in one context may sometimes function as another part of speech in another context. But that's for later.

Exercise One

Directions: In each pair below, there is one word that can be used as a noun and one word that cannot. Use the test we have just described to determine which

word is the noun; in other words, on the lines provided, try to use each word as the subject of a short sentence. Circle the noun; that's the word that passes the subject test.

1. deny _____

   denial _____

2. organize _____

   organization _____

3. management _____

   manage _____

4. beauty _____

   beautify _____

5. warns _____

   warning _____

6. harass _____

   harassment _____

7. grew _____

   growth _____

8. purpose _____

   purposely _____

9. suggest _____

   suggestion _____

10. appearance _____

    appear _____

Correct Exercise One and, if you need more practice, do Exercise Two.

Exercise Two

Directions: **Follow the same directions as in Exercise One to find the noun in each pair.**

1. knowledge _____

   know _____

2. performance _____

   perform _____

3. confuse _____

   confusion _____

4. approval _____

   approve _____

5. justify _____

   justification _____

6. legality _____

   legally _____

7. announce _____

   announcement _____

8. define _____

   definition _____

9. belief _____

   believe _____

10. operate _____

    operator _____

A Note on Idea Nouns

Most of the nouns you identified in Exercises One and Two are "idea nouns." Notice how often idea nouns have the same suffixes (word endings). These five are very common noun suffixes: *-ance*, *-ity*, *-ment*, *-ness*, and *-tion*. If you watch for these word endings, you'll find it easier to identify many abstract nouns.

A Reminder

Before we move on to the next topic, let us remind you once more that nouns can be used in all parts of sentences. For example, we can say, "Her rich *imagination* fas-

cinated me" or "I was fascinated by her rich *imagination*." The word ***imagination*** is a noun in both sentences. But it is the key word in the subject only in the first example. The noun's ability to perform as the key word in the subject of a clause is our major concern in this unit.

Pronouns

Pronouns are words that take the place of nouns. We use them to avoid repeating a noun over and over. Here are some examples of *nouns* [in the (a) sentences] being replaced by *pronouns* [in the (b) sentences]:

1. (a) According to legend, *Daniel Boone* discovered Kentucky.
   (b) According to legend, *he* discovered Kentucky.
2. (a) *The novel Billy Budd* was discovered in author Herman Melville's attic 20 years after Melville's death.
   (b) *It* was discovered in author Herman Melville's attic 20 years after Melville's death.
3. (a) *The years 400 to 1500* are often called the Middle Ages.
   (b) *They* are often called the Middle Ages.

As usual, we are highlighting the subject position even though pronouns, like nouns, can appear anywhere in sentences.

There are many different types of pronouns, but there are three main groups that can be used as subjects of sentences, and these are the pronouns that we are concerned about here. These pronouns in their three categories are the following:

PERSONAL	DEMONSTRATIVE	INDEFINITE
I	this	anybody
you	that	anyone
he	these	anything
she	those	everybody
it		everyone
we		everything
they		nobody
		no one
		nothing
		somebody
		someone
		something

The names of each group are not terribly important, but the knowledge that these words can function as subjects of sentences *is* very important. In fact, if you, like so many students, happen to have a problem with run-on sentences, this bit of information —that pronouns can be subjects of clauses—will be a key factor in the improvement of your basic writing skills. We'll go into that in more detail in Chapter 2.

Exercise Three

Directions: Write ten simple sentences, each one having a pronoun as its subject. Choose pronouns from each one of the three groups. Use your own paper, please.

UNIT 3: The Predicate

In this unit, we examine in more detail the part of the clause that makes a statement about the subject, and that part is called the *predicate*. We'll look at verbs first, then complements.

Verbs

You might remember learning that a verb is a word that shows action. That definition is true for many verbs, but it is not true for some of the verbs that we use most often. There are actually four main kinds of verbs, and we'll take them one by one.

1. Visible Action Verbs

Visible action verbs are the typical ones that we all remember easily—words such as *skip*, *chew*, *type*, *blink*, and *drive*. They represent actions that we can picture. They are the "visible action verbs."

2. Invisible Action Verbs

Invisible action verbs are slightly more difficult because they call to mind actions that can't be seen. They usually describe actions that go on inside one's mind. Some examples are *enjoy*, *wonder*, *predict*, *care*, and *forget*.

3. Linking Verbs

Linking verbs don't show an action, but they do help to make a statement about a subject by *linking* the subject to a complement. In these examples, notice how the linking verb, which is italicized, makes a statement about the subject by linking it to a complement:

He *is* funny.

She *was* serious.

They *are* comfortable.

The leaves *were* red.

My mother *appears* happy.

My father *seems* ready for retirement.

4. Helping Verbs

A verb is the only type of word in the English language that changes in any way in order to communicate differences in time. Sometimes it changes form and yet remains one word; for example, I *give*, the present tense, changes to I *gave*, the past tense. Other times, helping verbs are added to show changes in time (also called "tense"). Here are some of the verb phrases that can be made by using helping verbs with *give*: