

Lessons and Exercises for Clear Writing

English L Workbook

Sixth Edition

Cabrillo College English Department

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many hands have worked on this book since its first appearance some eight years ago. Mel Tuohey, who created Morley and Clarissa to keep things lively while the principles of grammar were being taught, is responsible for the original version of the English L book. Since then, a number of Cabrillo English instructors have added to the book, particularly Anita Wilkins, Linda Kitz, Fred Levy, Nick Roberts, Jeff Towle, Karen Warren, and Dick Lundquist. However, we have only added to the excellent work that Mel began.

Nearly all the tutors in the Writing Center have helped to revise these lessons and exercises. I am deeply indebted to them for their diligence and intelligence. Anthony Kerfoot, Jeff Towle, and Karen Warren worked very hard on the revisions for this edition. And, of course, without Kathryn George's tireless work on the computers this book would be nothing but an idea.

My thanks to all of you who brought this book into being and who continue to make it better.

Barbara Bloom
June 20, 1990

The English L Catalog

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Because it is vital to your success in English L that you understand how the program works, we have devoted the first lesson to a thorough explanation of this. Please read what follows carefully before going on to Exercise 1.

This book provides a series of lessons that will familiarize you with the basic rules of written English and provide some strategies for improving your writing. The first half consists of explanatory lessons; the second half consists of exercises you will be doing based on the lessons.

1. When you begin your first lesson, carefully read its single sheet of explanation and examples in the first half of the book.
2. Next, find and remove the single sheet of exercises that goes with the lesson.
(NOTE: If you fold and crease at the perforation, the sheet will usually tear out cleanly.)
3. Return to the explanation sheet, and keep that page open as you do the exercises. Nothing is required in the exercises that is not explained in the reading.
4. Be sure to write your name, your English 100/101 instructor's name, and your English 100/101 ticket number in the box at the top of the exercise sheet. Your exercises cannot be properly recorded on your lab record without this information. If you are unsure of your ticket number, look on the lists posted in the Writing Center.
5. The tutor will answer any questions you have, initial your exercise, and give it to the L clerk, who will stamp it, record it, and return it to your instructor. Your instructor will review it and return it to you.

THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THESE RULES:

Students of day sections of English 100/101 may not submit more than three exercises per week. Students in evening sections of 100/101 may submit four exercises per day during evening hours only. An exercise is considered completed only after it has been checked by a tutor, dated, and recorded. Your instructor will receive monthly progress reports, but you may check our records anytime to see that we have recorded everything you have submitted. ***BE SURE TO SAVE ALL OF YOUR COMPLETED EXERCISES.***

Thirty-four exercises are required for credit. Any thirty-four lessons, including those in the appendix, will suffice. English L gives no Incompletes. If you finish at least thirty-four lessons, you will receive a credit in English L and be eligible for a grade in 100/101. If you finish 33 or fewer, you will be given a no-credit in L and will have to repeat the entire program for 100/101 credit.

We urge you not to remove the explanation sheets from your book. Along with the glossary of grammatical terms in the back of the book, these lessons make a succinct handbook of grammar and usage which you may need in upper division and graduate work. We believe the information in this book will help you improve your writing, not only in English courses but in many others as well.

WRITING CENTER HOURS: Monday through Friday from 9 to 3
Monday through Thursday evenings from 5 to 7.

The Writing Center closes on the last day of regular classes. The Writing Center is not open during finals week.

HOW TO HELP YOURSELF AND THE WRITING CENTER

You can help yourself, your fellow students, and the Writing Center staff in several ways: by avoiding the busy times in the Writing Center as much as possible, by making sure that you read the lessons carefully before doing the exercises, and by spreading your work out over eleven to twelve weeks, beginning early, completing three to four lessons per week regularly, and finishing the program well before the end of the term.

1. Every sentence normally has at least one combination of subject and verb. It's important to be able to recognize these two main elements in order to write correct sentences.

Even a very short group of words can be a sentence if it contains this subject-verb combination:

S V	S V	S V
Karen typed.	Steve laughed.	Eduardo slept.

Or there may be interrupting words between the subject and verb:

S	V
Karen, trying to finish her essay,	typed furiously.

A sentence may also have multiple subjects or verbs.

S V V	S S V
Steve laughed and ran off.	Eduardo and his cousins slept during the long bus ride.

2. In most cases the verb contains the action of the sentence. The action may or may not be happening to an object:

S V	
She dropped her keys.	(object: keys)
S V	
The students protested.	(no object)

A verb may also be followed by a word or words describing the subject. In such cases the verb can be a state of being:

S V	S V	S V
Reality is interesting.	Snakes are reptiles.	Caterpillars become butterflies.

3. Another clue to finding the verb in a sentence is this: **it is the only word which changes with time.**

S V	
Today I write without too many problems.	
S V	
A few years ago I wrote without too many problems.	

4. When you need to identify the subject of a sentence, **find the verb first**. Then ask yourself **who** or **what** is performing the action or being in the sentence. This is the subject.

S V
His old Ford lost its muffler.

The action in the sentence above is "lost." Who or what "lost"? The **Ford** lost.

5. Subjects are often people or things, but they can be places, events, or ideas:

S V	S V
Love is a complex emotion.	Surfing demands courage.

Note: In the last sentence, the words "surfing," which came from the verb "to surf," is not a verb but the subject of the sentence. When the -ing ending is added to a verb, the word can function as a noun (subject or object) or an adjective.

S V	
<u>Running</u> is Maria's favorite exercise.	(subject)
S V	
<u>Laughing at the mess</u> , she threw the paintbrush on the floor.	(adjective)

6. Another possible source of confusion in subject-verb identification is the imperative sentence. In this case the subject "you" is implied:

S V
(You) Answer the phone.

In some sentences, the subject comes after the verb:

V S	V S
There are too many cars in the parking lot.	In the clear water of the bay, swam fish of all colors and sizes.

To punctuate and construct sentences correctly, you must know what constitutes a complete sentence. Many of us can tell when a sentence sounds complete. A grammatical definition for a complete sentence is that it has a **subject** and a **verb** (See Lesson 1). It's essential, then, that you know how to recognise subjects and verbs. If you master the concept of determining what constitutes a sentence, you'll have a good basis for understanding the material in the rest of this book.

I. Let's look at some complete sentences.

- * I like chocolate. (Verb: "like" Subject: Who likes? "I")
- * Jogging can be hard on the knees. (Verb: "can be" Subject: What can be hard on the knees? "Jogging")
- * Ever since elementary school, mathematics has been my favorite subject.
(Verb: "has been" Subject: What has been my favorite subject? "Mathematics")

Commands are complete sentences, too.

- * Sit down. (Verb: "sit" Subject: "you" (unstated))
- * Eat your dinner. (Verb: "eat" Subject: unstated "you")
- * Wash the dishes. (Verb: "wash" Subject: unstated "you")

II. A. Let's look at some incomplete sentences. These lack subjects and verbs.

- * Running around the corner.
- * In that empty lot across the street.
- * OK, but not right now.

To correct the sentences above, the writer would have to **add subjects and verbs**.

- Corrected:
- * Running around the corner, I slipped and fell.
(Verbs: "slipped" and "fell" Subject: Who slipped? "I"
Note: "Running" is not a verb here; you can't say "I running" but you can say "I slipped")
 - * In that empty lot across the street are three tall cypress trees.
 - * OK, you can take the car but not right now.

II. B. Another reason that sentences are incomplete is that the writer places a subordinating conjunction (words like "if," "although," "when," "because," "as," etc.) in front of the subject and verb. (For more information on subordinating conjunctions, see Lesson 6.) These phrases sound incomplete; after reading them, the reader would want to know more.

- * If you have the time.
- * Because my children are sick.
- * When my car breaks down.

To make these sentences complete, the writer would have to **add a complete sentence**.

- Corrected:
- * If you have the time, write me a letter.
 - * I stayed home because the children are sick.
 - * When my car breaks down, I take the bus.

II. C. Incomplete sentences, commonly called fragments (see "fragment" in the glossary), can be of any length. Although long, the following phrases are incomplete.

- * Many young people nowadays, when they reach that difficult point in their lives that requires them to take on adult responsibility, a step that many are reluctant to take. (Subject: "people" but no verb)
- * Considering how many problems the program encountered since it began five years ago, especially the inadequate funding it received. (This phrase might begin a sentence, but as it stands, it lacks a subject and verb.)

One way to join sentences is with a comma and a *coordinating conjunction* (**and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet**). Another solution is to use a semicolon. Both ways of joining sentences are both called *coordination*, and they create what we call *compound* sentences. Let's look at some examples of combining sentences with coordinating conjunctions:

Morley stayed up late, **and** Clarissa went to bed early to read.

Oscar came out of the water with the others, **but** Maria kept swimming.

There was no food at all in the house, **so** we went out to eat.

We can go to the 7 o'clock showing and eat afterwards, **or** we can just have a leisurely dinner and forget the movie.

Notice two things about these sentences: the various conjunctions create a relationship between the two simple sentences being joined, and in each case, either of the two joined sentences can stand on its own as a complete sentence. The last example requires special comment. Notice that it contains not one, but **three** coordinating conjunctions (**and . . . or . . . and**). However, only one of these, **or**, joins two complete sentences; the other two simply join two verbs to one subject:

We can go . . . and eat
We can . . . have . . . and forget

This one-sentence pattern (known as a simple sentence) should not be confused with two sentences combined by coordination (compound sentence).

Here are two more examples of compound sentences using coordinating conjunctions not quite as common as the ones we used above:

My cousin never shows any kind of generosity, **yet** he always expects everyone to be generous to him.

Lisa has been brooding lately, **for** she knows that at the age of 25 she has to take her life into her own hands.

Notice that in all the examples above, there is a comma before the coordinating conjunction that joins the two main clauses (another term for complete sentences).

The semicolon is thoroughly discussed in a later lesson. Simply put, the semicolon is another device for creating coordination. This is done in two ways: with just the semicolon, or with the semicolon plus a conjunctive adverb like **therefore, however, in fact, on the other hand, consequently, or nevertheless**. Please note that these connectors **do not** join sentences. They actually *introduce* the sentence they are in. Examine the following examples of semicolon use for coordination:

The fall weather conditions we yearn for have arrived; cool nights are followed by clear sunrises and warm middays.

Student use of the art gallery is modest; **in fact**, some students never set foot in it the whole time they attend college.

Student radicalism still exists on many campuses; the great majority of students, however, pay little attention to political and social issues.

Notice that in the last example the connector **however** is placed inside the second clause, but the semicolon stays where it is. The sentence would also be correct with **however** placed right after the semicolon. Notice also that **however** with a semicolon is a more formal way to achieve the same effect as a comma with **but**. The writer can choose the degree of formality.

Here we will look at *subordination*, which creates a different relationship between the two sentences (clauses) being combined. Subordinate clauses are sometimes called *dependent clauses* because they depend on another independent clause to make sense. The subordinate clause is usually not the main point the writer is trying to make.

Here is a partial list of subordinating conjunctions:

after	as soon as	how	whenever	unless
although	as though	if	than	until
as	because	provided that	that	when
as if	before	since	though	while

Here is an example of *subordinating* one idea to another by using the conjunction *if*:

Two simple
sentences:

You don't want to go to the game. Let me know right away.

Combined:

If you don't want to go to the game, let me know right away.

This combined sentence is called a complex sentence, and it uses subordination as the connecting relationship. The first clause is subordinated to the second or main clause, or, to put it another way, it depends on the main clause for clarity. Notice that the order of the clause can be reversed without losing the meaning of the sentence:

Let me know right away **if** you don't want to go to the game.

In the following examples, notice the different relationships created by the various subordinating conjunctions:

Although Morley was broke, he invited Clarissa to the club dance.

Unless they get wildly lucky, the Giants always fade in the stretch.

Our program has to be cut **because** the government reduced our funding.

Whenever the 49ers lose, Charley goes into deep depression.

I grew up in Buffalo, **where** summers are hot and winters are cold.

Ever since Laura spent that year in Spain, she's been a coffee drinker.

No matter what the relationship between the two clauses may be—time, place, cause, contradiction, or consequence—in every case the dependent or subordinate clause cannot stand alone as a sentence:

When I finish mowing the lawn
If you don't come now

These fragments clearly leave us hanging; they need a main clause to be complete.

It turns out that two forms of sentence structure—coordination and subordination—mesh quite smoothly and are frequently combined. Here are some examples that should be familiar:

If I work too hard, I don't have enough fun, **but if** I have enough fun, I feel guilty.

Rob likes Marsha, **so whenever** he's with her, he's very attentive.

In the first example, two complex sentences, each with its subordinate and main clauses, are joined with **but** into one large compound sentence. In the second example, a simple sentence is joined by **so** to a complex sentence beginning with **whenever**. In both cases, a coordinating conjunction is followed immediately by a subordinator (**but if**, **so whenever**). This kind of sentence is called *compound-complex*.

What Is a Run-on Sentence?

In the Sentence Combining: Coordination lesson, you learned how to correctly join two or more independent clauses. In this lesson, we'll introduce you to a problem which occurs when a writer attempts to join independent clauses without proper coordination; this error is commonly called a *run-on sentence*. Here are some examples:

Run-on: I want to finish my requirements at Cabrillo then I want to transfer to UCSC.

This first sentence is incorrect because it joins two independent clauses with no punctuation or conjunction. (*Then* is not a conjunction!)

Run-on: Let's go to the beach, it's too hot to study.

This sentence is incorrect because it has a comma but no conjunction.

How To Correct Run-on Sentences

Join the independent clauses with a semi-colon. Here are some examples:

Correct: I want to finish my requirements at Cabrillo; then I want to transfer to UCSC.

Correct: Yesterday I worked picking raspberries; it's hard work for long hours.

Correct: Gerardo was the first to arrive; everyone else was late.

Join the clauses with a subordinating conjunction, making an independent clause and a dependent clause. A few of the subordinating conjunctions are "although," "because," "if," and "when":

Correct: Let's go to the beach because it's too hot to study.

Join the independent clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, for, nor, so,yet):

Run-on: Students were upset about the university's plans to build more colleges they held a sit-in in the chancellor's office.

Correct: Students were upset about the university's plans to build more colleges, so they held a sit-in in the chancellor's office.

Smooth two independent clauses into one. For example:

Run-on: I went to my cousin's party it was fun.

Correct: My cousin's party was fun.

Separate two independent clauses with a period. For example:

Run-on: Next week is my birthday, I plan to have a beach party.

Correct: Next week is my birthday. I plan to have a beach party.

1. Although short, uncluttered sentences may produce the clearest writing, effective prose usually includes considerable sentence variety—varying lengths, patterns, and grammatical constructions. Too many short sentences can make for stuttering, dull reading; often, these sentences can be joined in a number of ways, improving the flow of the writing and placing related ideas into perspective. Below are a few sentence patterns demonstrating how the writer can stress more important ideas by subordinating ideas of less significance, a process referred to as reduction.

2. REDUCTION THROUGH APPOSITIVES

- * Willie Mays was the greatest player in baseball history. He played with the Giants for twenty-one years.

These clearly related sentences can be joined by reducing one or the other to an **appositive** (see Lesson 8 and the glossary). Whichever sentence remains as the main statement receives the most emphasis. The writer decides which idea should be reduced and which should be stressed (the appositives are italicized in the following examples):

- * Willie Mays, *the greatest player in baseball history*, played with the Giants for twenty-one years.
- * Willie Mays, *a member of the Giants for twenty-one years*, was the greatest player in baseball history.

3. REDUCTION THROUGH PARTICIPIAL PHRASES

- * Irma leaped into the air. She caught the bridal bouquet at knee-level.
- * Irma leaped into the air, *catching the bridal bouquet at knee-level*.
- * *Leaping into the air*, Irma caught the bridal bouquet at knee-level.

When the verbs of adjoining simple sentences have essentially the same subject (*Irma/she*), one of the sentences may be reduced to a participial phrase—a phrase containing a form of the verb ending with *-ing*. The choice for reduction is crucial, since what is reduced is de-emphasized: *catching* in the second sentence, *leaping* in the third.

4. REDUCTION THROUGH RELATIVE CLAUSES

Relative clauses get their name from the pronouns which introduce them, the relative pronouns *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *that* and *which*, and turn the main clauses into dependent clauses.

- * Old Man Browning lives next door to us. He never recognizes me downtown.
Old Man Browning, *who lives next door to us*, never recognizes me downtown.
- * My car hasn't had an oil change in three years. It still runs well.
My car, *which still runs well*, hasn't had an oil change in three years.
My car, *which hasn't had an oil change in three years*, still runs well.
- * Ambrose would not lend an army buddy five dollars. He hadn't seen the man in years.
Ambrose would not lend five dollars to an army buddy, *whom he hadn't seen in years*.

In reducing simple sentences to relative clauses, the writer must remember that the clause almost always provides only additional (nonessential) information and so must be set off by commas (see Lesson 12). Also, the writer must decide which idea is the less or least important in a given instance. Notice the difference in meaning between the two revisions of the second example above (the car).

1. REDUCTION THROUGH RELATIVE CLAUSES

In previous lessons, we have shown some ways to reduce two short sentences into one longer one. Another way to do this is to reduce one of the sentences to a relative clause:

- * Students take too many classes. They sometimes burn out.
- * Students *who take too many classes* sometimes burn out.
- * Peter Tschaikovsky is known for his lush melodies. He was a Russian composer.
- * Peter Tschaikovsky, *who is a Russian composer*, is known for his lush melodies.

The *who* clauses above are also known as **restrictive** and **nonrestrictive** clauses. Their function and their punctuation are explained in Lesson 12.

2. REDUCTION THROUGH PARTICIPIAL PHRASES

In Lesson 7, we discussed reduction through participial phrases, defining a participle as a "form of a verb ending in *-ing* (like "defining" in the participial phrase you have just read). Past participles can also be used to form phrases. (See "participle" in the glossary.) The second sentence uses a past participial phrase to reduce the two sentences of the first example into one sentence.

- * Morley was shocked by Clarissa's rejection. He left the party with Ambrose.
- * Morley, *shocked* by Clarissa's rejection, left the party with Ambrose.

The second sentence below uses a present participial phrase to reduce the two sentences of the first example into one sentence.

- * Elissa walked carefully across the street. She kept her eyes on the traffic.
- * Elissa, *walking* carefully across the street, kept her eyes on the traffic.

3. REDUCTION OF RELATIVE CLAUSES

Sometimes relative clauses themselves may be reduced. Note how *who*, *whom*, *which*, and *that* and their verbs can often be eliminated when their clauses are reduced to appositives:

- * Dan Marino, *who was the NFL's most ebullient quarterback*, was disheartened by the 49ers' pass rush.
- * Dan Marino, *the NFL's most ebullient quarterback*, was disheartened by the 49ers' pass rush.
- * Lisa, *who is our most talented musician*, won a scholarship to the Eastman School of Music.
- * Lisa, *our most talented musician*, won a scholarship to the Eastman School of Music.

or to adjectives:

- * Morley's father, *who is destitute*, needs help.
- * Morley's *destitute* father needs help.
- * Sara's dive, *which was graceful*, ended abruptly in the shallow end of the pool.
- * Sara's *graceful* dive ended abruptly in the shallow end of the pool.
- * Middlemarch is a Victorian novel *that is long, excellent, but seldom read*.
- * Middlemarch is a *long, excellent, but seldom read* Victorian novel.

Reducing relative clauses improves the sentences by removing needless words. In general, when you can reduce clauses without sacrificing meaning or emphasis, do so.

One of the basic functions of the comma is to separate elements within sentences so that the reader is guided as smoothly as possible through the writer's ideas. Although this particular function of the comma is often a matter for the writer's judgment, rather than of rules, the examples offered below demonstrate the conventions most contemporary writers follow.

1. Elements in a series

- * In his address the President pleaded for *faith, hope, charity, and a balanced budget*.
- * Mice were everywhere: *in the attic, beneath the house, behind the walls, and even in the cupboards and closets*. (Phrases in a series are in italics.)
- * The only time I get depressed is *when I consider the national debt, when my checkbook doesn't balance, or when I have to multiply fractions*. (Clauses in a series are in italics.)

2. Independent clauses joined by *and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so*. An independent clause, as you'll remember, is a group of words that can stand alone as a sentence. When two independent clauses are linked together in a single sentence with one of the coordinating conjunctions listed above, a comma precedes the conjunction.

- * He was a tall man with a powerful build, *and* his bearing was a clear warning against casual treatment.
- * Morley's sister was not dumber than an ox, *but* she certainly was not any smarter.
- * By six o'clock Anna had finished all her chores, *yet* she wandered about the house as if in search of some crucial task.

3. Long introductory element

- * *At the end of a long and distinguished career*, he was no richer than he had been at the start. (Introductory phrase)
- * *Whenever he tried to put chains on the tire*, the car would maliciously wrap them around the rear axle. (Introductory clause)

4. Introductory transitional elements, casual introducers, and direct addresses (names)

- * Clarissa has always been fond of money; *in fact*, she likes nothing else.
- * I don't ordinarily lend money. *However*, I'll make an exception for you.
- * *Well*, what do you think she did next?
- * *Yes*, I know what a crescent wrench is for.
- * *Theresa*, please take your feet off the table. (Or: Please take your feet off the table, Theresa)

5. Concluding elements not essential to the main idea of a sentence

- * George finally apologized for his outburst in church, *citing a sore toe as the cause*. (Nonessential concluding phrase)
- * Morley stared at Clarissa, *who pretended not to see him*. (Nonessential concluding clause)

The second basic function of the comma is to set off interrupters—that is, elements that interrupt the main idea of a sentence. The writer must be certain to put a comma **before** and a comma **after** the interrupting element; the sentence should fully express its main idea without the words between the commas.

1. Interrupting individual words

- * What you see before you, Alberta, is a person who has made up her mind.
(Names of persons directly addressed, including endearments like "honey," "darling," "dummy")
- * Gabriela Mistral, daughter of a country schoolteacher in Chile, won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1945. (Appositive)
- * Hand me that, uh, thingamabob over there." (Interjection)
- * My dog isn't very smart; he is, however, reasonably sweet-tempered. (transitional element)

2. Interrupting phrases

- * We shall return your money, of course, whenever you ask for it.
- * Our firm, by the way, is considering filing for bankruptcy in the near future.
- * The launch, running at full speed, slammed into the pier.
- * The other day we saw Chris Evert Lloyd, flushed with her recent successes, sitting in the lobby of the Sir Francis Drake.

3. Interrupting clauses

- * Doris Lessing, though she was born in Persia and grew up in Africa, is considered an English writer.
- * The other day I went to see Mr. Crenolin, who evidently knows all there is to know about trees, and asked his advice on how to save our sick elms.
- * Morley kept shouting "*caveat emptor*," which means "let the buyer beware," at people going into the supermarket.
- * Silence, you'll agree, is not easily come by these days.

Remember that to set off interrupters, you need two commas—one before and one after the interrupter. Keep in mind, too, that the main idea of the sentence should be fully expressed without the words between the commas.

A third basic function of the comma is to clarify sentences that might otherwise be misread. In each of the following sentences, for example, the lack of a crucial comma leads to momentary misinterpretation and in some cases the appearance of incorrect sentence structure.

- * When the Great Depression ended our family's financial troubles, oddly enough, grew even greater.
- * Just as we kissed Audrey's mother stormed into the room.
- * What she knows she knows well enough to teach to others.

The addition of the missing comma clears things up immediately:

- * When the Great Depression ended, our family's financial troubles, oddly enough, grew even greater.
- * Just as we kissed, Audrey's mother stormed into the room.
- * What she knows, she knows well enough to teach to others.

Here are some other examples with the necessary commas. To appreciate the usefulness of the critical commas (the ones boldly marked), read the sentences as if the commas weren't there:

- * Whatever is, is right. (Alexander Pope)
- * It has always been a peculiarity of the human race that it keeps two sets of morals in stock—the private and real, and the public and artificial. (Mark Twain)
- * Over and over we tried to revive her sagging spirits, with our anxiety rising by the minute.
- * Be good, my dear, and let who will, be clever.
- * Where there is too much, something is missing.
- * A few hours before, the party had ended quietly.
- * As we drove over, the old man told a funny story about his army days.

In most of the instances above, the reader's confusion would be very likely only momentary if the writer neglected to place the commas where they are now. A moment's thought would make the meaning clear. But clarity is not the reader's responsibility; it is the writer's. The writer must anticipate the reader's needs.

1. RESTRICTIVE AND NONRESTRICTIVE CLAUSES

- * The woman *who lives upstairs* loves classical music.
(Restrictive)
- * Mrs. Takamoto, *who lives upstairs*, loves classical music.
(Nonrestrictive)

There is a significant difference between the two sentences above: the unspecified person in the first sentence (The woman) is clearly identified in the second (Mrs. Takamoto). Because of this difference, there are commas around the clause *who lives upstairs* in the second sentence but not in the first. We call this clause in the first sentence **restrictive** because it restricts the meaning of the general word *woman* to only the one *who lives upstairs*. In short, the clause tells us which woman the sentence is talking about. In the second sentence, however, we already know what woman is being referred to (Mrs. Takamoto), so the clause is **nonrestrictive**. It does not identify the subject; it simply gives us some useful information about her. Because this nonrestrictive clause does not identify the subject, and because there are distinct pauses before and after the clause (not evident in the first sentence), we set off the clause with commas. Note the differences in the following paired examples:

- * People *who live in glass houses* shouldn't throw stones.
- * The American people, *who are habitually monolingual*, frequently resist learning another language.
- * The economic problems *that beset us today* didn't occur overnight.
- * Our current economic problems, *which did not occur overnight*, have to be solved slowly and patiently.

Now, if we go back and read these sentences **without** the clauses in italics, we will notice a big difference in the completeness of meaning between the two sentences in each pair:

- * People shouldn't throw stones.
- * The American people frequently resist learning another language.
- * The economic problems didn't occur overnight.
- * Our current economic problems have to be solved slowly and patiently.

The first sentence in each pair above simply doesn't make the same sense as the original because the missing **restrictive** clauses told us **which** people shouldn't throw stones and **which** problems didn't occur overnight. But the other two sentences retain their essential meaning because *The American people* and *Our current economic problems* are already clearly identified. In those sentences, the missing **nonrestrictive** clauses merely give us useful additional information, which we set off with two commas. But in the other sentences there are no commas because we read directly into the **restrictive** clauses to find out exactly what people and what problems are being discussed. So the commas or the lack of them signal the difference between identified or unidentified subjects, between unessential and essential information.

2. APPOSITIVES

- * Socrates, *a wise old codger*, knew that the world is round.
- * William Faulkner's first novel, *Soldier's Pay*, was published in 1928.
- * Oddly enough, Morley was fond of both Clarissa Clew, *a woman of considerable good sense*, and Dahlia Dewmott, *idiocy's foremost practitioner*.

Appositives, phrases providing sidelight information, are almost always nonrestrictive and are therefore set off by commas. You may have noticed that in the preceding sentence *phrases providing sidelight information* is itself an appositive. You may have also noticed that appositives are reduced clauses (add *who was* or *which was* to the italic phrases above and you'll have nonrestrictive clauses). And again, notice the relationship between the identified subjects, the rhythmic pauses, and the use of commas.