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Integrating sources

With practice, you will learn to integrate information from sources—quotations, summaries, paraphrases, and facts—smoothly into your own text.

Using signal phrases

Readers need to move from your own words to the words of a source without feeling a jolt. Avoid dropping quotations into

the text without warning. Instead, provide clear signal phrases, usually including the author's name, to prepare readers for a quotation.

DROPPED QUOTATION

In 2000, the legislature of Suffolk County passed a law restricting drivers' use of handheld phones. "The bill prohibits the use of a cell phone while driving unless it is equipped with an earpiece or can act like a speakerphone, leaving the driver's hands free" (Kelley 1).

QUOTATION WITH SIGNAL PHRASE

In 2000, the legislature of Suffolk County passed a law restricting drivers' use of handheld phones. According to journalist Tina Kelley, "The bill prohibits the use of a cell phone while driving unless it is equipped with an earpiece or can act like a speakerphone, leaving the driver's hands free" (1).

To avoid monotony, vary both the language and the placement of your signal phrases. The models in the chart on page 408 suggest a range of possibilities.

When your signal phrase includes a verb, choose one that is appropriate in the context. Is your source arguing a point, making an observation, reporting a fact, drawing a conclusion, refuting an argument, or stating a belief? By choosing an appropriate verb, you can make your source's stance clear. See the chart for a list of verbs commonly used in signal phrases.

Varying signal phrases in MLA papers

MODEL SIGNAL PHRASES

In the words of researchers Redelmeier and Tibshirani, "..."
 As Malt Sundeen has noted, "..."
 Patti Pena, mother of a child killed by a driver distracted by a cell phone, points out that "..."
 "...," writes Christine Haughney, "..."
 "...," claims wireless industry spokesperson Annette Jacobs.
 Radio hosts Tom and Ray Magillozzi offer a persuasive counter-argument: "..."

VERBS IN SIGNAL PHRASES

acknowledges	comments	endorses	reasons
adds	compares	grants	refutes
admits	confirms	illustrates	rejects
agrees	contends	implies	reports
argues	declares	insists	responds
asserts	denies	notes	suggests
believes	disputes	observes	thinks
claims	emphasizes	points out	writes

WHEN TO USE QUOTATIONS

- When language is especially vivid or expressive
- When exact wording is needed for technical accuracy
- When it is important to let the debaters of an issue explain their positions in their own words
- When the words of an important authority lend weight to an argument
- When language of a source is the topic of your discussion (as in an analysis or interpretation)

It is not always necessary to quote full sentences from a source. To reduce your reliance on the words of others, you can

often integrate a phrase from a source into your own sentence structure.

Redelmeier and Tibshirani found that hands-free phones were not any safer in vehicles than other cell phones. They suggest that crashes involving cell phones may "result from a driver's limitations with regard to attention rather than dexterity" (456).

Using the ellipsis mark and brackets

Two useful marks of punctuation, the ellipsis mark and brackets, allow you to keep quoted material to a minimum and to integrate it smoothly into your text.

THE ELLIPSIS MARK To condense a quoted passage, you can use the ellipsis mark (three spaced periods) to indicate that you have omitted words. What remains must be grammatically complete.

The University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center has begun a study assessing a variety of driver distractions. According to Allyson Vaughan, "The research . . . is intended to inject some empirical evidence into the debate over whether talking on wireless phones while driving leads to accidents" (1).

The writer has omitted the words *funded by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety*, which appeared in the source.

On the rare occasions when you want to omit one or more full sentences, use a period before the three ellipsis dots.

Redelmeier and Tibshirani acknowledge that their study "indicates an association but not necessarily a causal relation between the use of cellular telephones while driving and a subsequent motor vehicle collision. . . . In addition, our study did not include serious injuries . . ." (457).

Ordinarily, do not use an ellipsis mark at the beginning or at the end of a quotation. Your readers will understand that the quoted material is taken from a longer passage, so such marks

are not necessary. The only exception occurs when words at the end of the final quoted sentence have been dropped. In such cases, put three ellipsis dots before the closing quotation mark and parenthetical reference, as in the example just given.

Obviously you should not use an ellipsis mark to distort the meaning of your source.

BRACKETS Brackets allow you to insert your own words into quoted material. You can insert words in brackets to explain a confusing reference or to keep a sentence grammatical in your context.

According to economists Robert Hahn and Paul Tetlock, "Some studies say they [hands-free phones] would have no impact on accidents, while others suggest the reductions could be sizable" (2).

To indicate an error in a quotation, insert [sic] right after the error. See also 39c.

Setting off long quotations

When a quoted passage takes up more than four typed lines of prose or more than three lines of poetry in your paper, set off the quotation by indenting it one inch (or ten spaces) from the left margin.

Long quotations should be introduced by an informative sentence, usually followed by a colon. Quotation marks are unnecessary because the indented format tells readers that the words are taken word-for-word from the source.

Tom and Ray Magliozzi are not impressed by economists who conduct risk-benefit analyses of phone use by drivers:

Other critics [of regulation of cell phones]--some from prestigious "think tanks"--perform what appear to be erudite cost/benefit analyses. The problem here is that the benefits are always in units of convenience and productivity while the costs are in units of injuries and people's lives! (2)

Notice that at the end of an indented quotation the parenthetical citation goes outside the final mark of punctuation.

53b Use signal phrases to introduce most summaries and paraphrases.

Introduce most summaries and paraphrases with a signal phrase that names the author and places the material in context. Readers will then understand that everything between the signal phrase and the parenthetical citation summarizes or paraphrases the cited source. ✓

Without the signal phrase (underlined> in the following example, readers might think that only the quotation at the end is being cited, when in fact the whole paragraph is based on the source.

Alasdair Cain and Mark Burris report that research on traffic accidents and cell phone use has been inconclusive. Many factors play a role: for example, the type of phone (hands-free or not), the extent to which the conversation is distracting, and the demographic profile of the driver. Although research suggests that phoning in a moving vehicle affects driver performance, studies have failed to quantify the degree of driver impairment. Cain and Burris write that drivers using cell phones on the road "were anywhere from 34 percent to 300 percent more likely to have an accident" (1).

There are times, however, when a signal phrase naming the author is not necessary. When the context makes clear where the cited material begins, you may omit the signal phrase and include the authors' last names in the parentheses: (Cain and Burris 1).

53c With statistics and other facts, a signal phrase may not be needed.

When you are citing a statistic or other specific fact, a signal phrase is often not necessary. In most cases, readers will understand that the citation refers to the statistic or fact (not the whole paragraph).

Using parallel structures

Parallel structures are frequently used within sentences to underscore the similarity of ideas (see 9). They may also be used to bind together a series of sentences expressing similar information. In the following passage describing folk beliefs, anthropologist Margaret Mead presents similar information in parallel grammatical form.

Actually, almost every day, even in the most sophisticated home, something is likely to happen that evokes the memory of some old folk belief. The salt spills. A knife falls to the floor. Your nose tickles. Then perhaps, with a slightly embarrassed smile, the person who spilled the salt tosses a pinch over his left shoulder. Or someone recites the old rhyme, "Knife falls, gentleman calls." Or as you rub your nose you think, That means a letter. I wonder who's writing?

— Margaret Mead, "New Superstitions for Old"

A less skilled writer might have varied the structure, perhaps like this: *The salt gets spilled. Mother drops a knife on the floor. Your nose begins to tickle.* But these sentences are less effective; Mead's parallel structures help tie the passage together.

Maintaining consistency

Coherence suffers whenever a draft shifts confusingly from one point of view to another or from one verb tense to another. (See 13.) In addition, coherence can suffer when new information is

introduced with the subject of each sentence. As a rule, a sentence's subject should echo a subject or object in the previous sentence.

The following rough-draft paragraph is needlessly hard to read because so few of the sentences' subjects are tied to earlier subjects or objects. The subjects appear in italics.

One goes about trapping in this manner. At the very outset *one* acquires a "trapping" state of mind. A *library* of books must be read, and preferably *someone* with experience should educate the novice. *Preparing* for the first expedition takes several steps. The *purchase* of traps is first. A *pair* of rubber gloves, waterproof *boots*, and the grubbiest *clothes* capable of withstanding human use come next to outfit the trapper for his adventure. Finally, the *decision* has to be made on just what kind of animals to seek, what sort of bait to use, and where to place the traps.

Although the writer repeats a number of key words, such as *trapping*, the paragraph seems disconnected because new information is introduced with the subject of each sentence.

To improve the paragraph, the writer used the first-person pronoun as the subject of every sentence. The revision is much easier to read.

I went about trapping in this manner. To acquire a "trapping" state of mind, *I* read a library of books and talked at length with an experienced trapper, my father. Then *I* purchased the traps and outfitted myself by collecting a pair of rubber gloves, waterproof boots, and the grubbiest clothes capable of withstanding human use. Finally, *I* decided just what kinds of animals to seek, what sort of bait to use, and where to place my traps.

— John Clyde Thatcher, student

Notice that Thatcher combined some of his original sentences. By doing so, he was able to avoid excessive repetitions of the pronoun *I*. Notice, too, that he varied his sentence openings (most sentences do not begin with *I*) so that readers are not likely to find the repetitions tiresome.

Providing transitions

Transitions are bridges between what has been read and what is about to be read. Transitions help readers move from sentence to sentence; they also alert readers to more global

connections of ideas — those between paragraphs or even larger blocks of text.

①

SENTENCE-LEVEL TRANSITIONS Certain words and phrases signal connections between (or within) sentences. Frequently used transitions are included in the following list.

:

TO SHOW ADDITION

and, also, besides, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, next, too, first, second

TO GIVE EXAMPLES

for example, for instance, to illustrate, in fact, specifically

TO COMPARE

also, in the same manner, similarly, likewise

TO CONTRAST

but, however, on the other hand, in contrast, nevertheless, still, even though, on the contrary, yet, although

TO SUMMARIZE OR CONCLUDE

in other words, in short, in summary, in conclusion, to sum up, that is, therefore

TO SHOW TIME

after, as, before, next, during, later, finally, meanwhile, then, when, while, immediately

TO SHOW PLACE OR DIRECTION

above, below, beyond, farther on, nearby, opposite, close, to the left

TO INDICATE LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP

if, so, therefore, consequently, thus, as a result, for this reason, since

Skilled writers use transitional expressions with care, making sure, for example, not to use *consequently* when an *also* would be more precise. They are also careful to select transitions with an appropriate tone, perhaps preferring *so* to *thus* in an informal piece, *in summary* to *in short* for a scholarly essay.

In the following paragraph, taken from an argument that dinosaurs had the “right-sized” brains for reptiles of their body size,” biologist Stephen Jay Gould uses transitions (italicized) with skill.

I don't wish to deny that the flattened, minuscule head of the large-bodied “*Stegosaurus*” houses little brain from our subjective, top-heavy perspective, *but* I do wish to assert that we should not expect more of the beast. *First of all*, large animals have relatively smaller brains than related, small animals. The correlation of brain size with body size among kindred animals (all reptiles, all mammals, *for example*) is remarkably regular. As we move from small to large animals, from mice to elephants or small lizards to Komodo dragons, brain size increases, *but* not so fast as body size. *In other words*, bodies grow faster than brains, *and* large animals have low ratios of brain weight to body weight. *In fact*, brains grow only about two-thirds as fast as bodies. *Since* we have no reason to believe that large animals are consistently stupider than their smaller relatives, we must conclude that large animals require relatively less brain to do as well as smaller animals. *If* we do not recognize this relationship, we are likely to underestimate the mental power of very large animals, dinosaurs in particular. {Italics added.}

— Stephen Jay Gould, “Were Dinosaurs Dumb?”

CAUTION: Do not be too self-conscious about plugging in transition words while you are drafting sentences; overuse of these signals can seem heavy-handed. Usually, you will use transitions quite naturally, just where readers need them. If you (or your reviewers) discover places where readers cannot easily move from sentence to sentence in your rough draft, you can always add transition words as you revise.

ON THE WEB

For an electronic exercise on transitions, go to dianahacker.com/rules

and click on ► **Electronic Writing Exercises**
► **E-ex 4-2**

②

PARAGRAPH-LEVEL TRANSITIONS Paragraph-level transitions usually link the *first* sentence of a new paragraph with the *first* sentence of the previous paragraph. In other words, the topic sentences signal global connections.

Look for opportunities to allude to the subject of a previous paragraph (as summed up in its topic sentence) in the topic sentence of the next one. In his essay “Little Green Lies,”

Jonathan H. Alder uses this strategy in the following topic sentences, which appear in a passage describing the benefits of plastic packaging.

Consider aseptic packaging, the synthetic packaging for the "juice boxes" so many children bring to school with their lunch. [Rest of paragraph omitted.]

What is true for juice boxes is also true for other forms of synthetic packaging. [Rest of paragraph omitted.]

3

TRANSITIONS BETWEEN BLOCKS OF TEXT In long essays, you will need to alert readers to connections between blocks of text more than one paragraph long. You can do this by inserting transitional sentences or short paragraphs at key points in the essay. Here, for example, is a transitional paragraph from a student research paper. It announces that the first part of her paper has come to a close and the second part is about to begin.

Although the great apes have demonstrated significant language skills, one central question remains: Can they be taught to use that uniquely human language tool we call grammar, to learn the difference, for instance, between "ape bite human" and "human bite ape"? In other words, can an ape create a sentence?

Another strategy to help readers move from one block of text to another is to insert headings in your essay. Headings, which usually sit above blocks of text, allow you to announce a new topic boldly, without the need for subtle transitions. (See 5b.)

4e If necessary, adjust paragraph length.

Most readers feel comfortable reading paragraphs that range between one hundred and two hundred words. Shorter paragraphs force too much starting and stopping, and longer ones strain the reader's attention span. There are exceptions to this guideline, however. Paragraphs longer than two hundred words frequently appear in scholarly writing, where they suggest seriousness and depth. Paragraphs shorter than one hundred words occur in newspapers because of narrow columns; in informal essays to quicken the pace; and in business writing and Web sites, where readers routinely skim for main ideas.

In an essay, the first and last paragraphs will ordinarily be the introduction and conclusion. These special-purpose paragraphs are likely to be shorter than the paragraphs in the body of the essay. Typically, the body paragraphs will follow the essay's outline: one paragraph per point in short essays, a group of paragraphs per point in longer ones. Some ideas require more development than others, however, so it is best to be flexible. If an idea stretches to a length unreasonable for a paragraph, you should divide the paragraph, even if you have presented comparable points in the essay in single paragraphs.

Paragraph breaks are not always made for strictly logical reasons. Writers use them for all of the following reasons.

REASONS FOR BEGINNING A NEW PARAGRAPH

- to mark off the introduction and conclusion
- to signal a shift to a new idea
- to indicate an important shift in time or place
- to emphasize a point (by placing it at the beginning or the end, not in the middle, of a paragraph)
- to highlight a contrast
- to signal a change of speakers (in dialogue)
- to provide readers with a needed pause
- to break up text that looks too dense

Beware of using too many short, choppy paragraphs, however. Readers want to see how your ideas connect, and they become irritated when you break their momentum by forcing them to pause every few sentences. Here are some reasons you might have for combining some of the paragraphs in a rough draft.

REASONS FOR COMBINING PARAGRAPHS

- to clarify the essay's organization
- to connect closely related ideas
- to bind together text that looks too choppy

Prefer active verbs.

As a rule, choose an active verb and pair it with a subject that names the person or thing doing the action. Active verbs express meaning more emphatically and vigorously than their weaker counterparts — forms of the verb *be* or verbs in the passive voice.

PASSIVE The pumps *were destroyed* by a surge of power.

BE VERB A surge of power *was responsible* for the destruction of the pumps.

ACTIVE A surge of power *destroyed* the pumps.

Verbs in the passive voice lack strength because their subjects receive the action instead of doing it. Forms of the verb *be* (*be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been*) lack vigor because they convey no action.

Although passive verbs and forms of *be* have legitimate uses, if an active verb can carry your meaning, use it. Even among active verbs, some are more active — and therefore more vigorous and colorful — than others. Carefully selected verbs can energize a piece of writing.

- The goalie crouched low, ^{swept}reached out his stick, and ^{hooked}sent the rebound away from the mouth of the net.



ESL

Some multilingual speakers avoid the passive voice even when it is appropriate. For advice on transforming an active sentence to the passive, see 62c.



GRAMMAR CHECKERS are fairly good at flagging passive verbs, such as *were given*. However, because passive verbs are sometimes appropriate, you — not the computer program — must decide whether to make a passive verb active.

8a Use the active voice unless you have a good reason for choosing the passive.

In the active voice, the subject does the action; in the passive voice, the subject receives the action (see also 62c). Although both voices are grammatically correct, the active voice is usually more effective because it is simpler and more direct.

ACTIVE Hernando *caught* the fly ball.

PASSIVE The fly ball *was caught* by Hernando.

In passive sentences, the actor (in this case Hernando) frequently disappears from the sentence: *The fly ball was caught*.

In most cases, you will want to emphasize the actor, so you should use the active voice. To replace a passive verb with an active alternative, make the actor the subject of the sentence.

A bolt of lightning struck the transformer.

- ~~The transformer was struck by a bolt of lightning,~~ plunging us into darkness.

The active verb (*struck*) makes the point more forcefully than the passive verb (*was struck*).

The settlers stripped the land of timber before realizing the

- ~~The land was stripped of timber before the settlers realized~~ the consequences of their actions.

The revision emphasizes the actors (*settlers*) by naming them in the subject.

We did not take down the

- ~~The Christmas decorations were not taken down until~~ Valentine's Day.

Often the actor does not appear in a passive-voice sentence. To turn such a sentence into the active voice, the writer must decide on an appropriate subject, in this case *We*.

Appropriate uses of the passive

The passive voice is appropriate if you wish to emphasize the receiver of the action or to minimize the importance of the actor.

APPROPRIATE Many native Hawaiians *are forced* to leave their beautiful beaches to make room for hotels and condominiums.

APPROPRIATE As the time for harvest approaches, the tobacco plants *are sprayed* with a chemical to retard the growth of suckers.

The writer of the first sentence wished to emphasize the receiver of the action, *Hawaiians*. The writer of the second sentence wished to focus on the tobacco plants, not on the people spraying them.

In much scientific writing, the passive voice properly emphasizes the experiment or process being described, not the researcher.

APPROPRIATE The solution *was heated* to the boiling point, and then it *was reduced* in volume by 50 percent.

ON THE WEB

Rules on avoiding the passive voice have sparked debates. If you're interested in learning why, go to dianahacker.com/rules

and click on ► **Language Debates**
► **Passive voice**

8b Replace *be* verbs that result in dull or wordy sentences.

Not every *be* verb needs replacing. The forms of *be* (*be, am, is, are, was, were, being, been*) work well when you want to link a subject to a noun that clearly renames it or to an adjective that describes it: *History is a bucket of ashes. Scoundrels are always sociable.* And when used as helping verbs before present participles (*is flying, are disappearing*) to express ongoing action, *be* verbs are fine: *Derrick was plowing the field when his wife went into labor.* (See 29a.)

If using a *be* verb makes a sentence needlessly dull and wordy, however, consider replacing it. Often a phrase following the verb will contain a word (such as *violation*) that suggests a more vigorous, active alternative (*violate*).

► Burying nuclear waste in Antarctica would ^{*violate*} ~~be in violation of~~ an international treaty.

Violate is less wordy and more vigorous than *be in violation of*.

► When Rosa Parks ^{*resisted*} ~~was resistant to~~ giving up her seat on the bus, she became a civil rights hero.

Resisted is stronger than *was resistant to*.

EXERCISE 8-1

Revise any weak, unemphatic sentences by replacing *be* verbs or passive verbs with active alternatives. Some sentences are emphatic; do not change them. Revisions of lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

The ranger doused the campfire before giving us
~~The campfire was doused by the ranger before we were given~~
a ticket for unauthorized use of a campsite.

- The Prussians were victorious over the Saxons in 1745.
 - The entire operation is managed by Ahmed, the producer.
 - Yellow flags were thrown down by all the referees.
 - At the crack of rocket and mortar blasts, I jumped from the top bunk and landed on my buddy below, who was crawling on the floor looking for his boots.
 - There were shouting protesters on the courthouse steps.
- Just as the police were closing in, two shots were fired by the terrorists from the roof of the hotel.
 - Her letter was in acknowledgment of the student's participation in the literacy program.
 - The bomb bay doors rumbled open and freezing air whipped through the plane.
 - Listening to the music of Charlie Parker and John Coltrane was my motivation to take up the saxophone.
 - The only responsibility I was given by my parents was putting gas in the brand-new Mitsubishi they bought me my senior year.



The pronoun *he* was too distant from its antecedent, *ex-husband*, which appeared several sentences earlier.

23b Generally, avoid broad reference of *this*, *that*, *which*, and *it*.

For clarity, the pronouns *this*, *that*, *which*, and *it* should ordinarily refer to specific antecedents rather than to whole ideas or sentences. When a pronoun's reference is needlessly broad, either replace the pronoun with a noun or supply an antecedent to which the pronoun clearly refers.

- More and more often, especially in large cities, we are finding ourselves victims of serious crimes. We learn to accept ^{our fate} *this* with minor gripes and groans.

For clarity the writer substituted a noun (*fate*) for the pronoun *this*, which referred broadly to the idea expressed in the preceding sentence.

- Romeo and Juliet were both too young to have acquired much ^{a fact} wisdom, which accounts for their rash actions.
- The writer added an antecedent (*fact*) that the pronoun *which* clearly refers to.

EXCEPTION: Many writers view broad reference as acceptable when the pronoun refers clearly to the sense of an entire clause.

If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you. *This* is the principal difference between a dog and a man.

—Mark Twain

23c Do not use a pronoun to refer to an implied antecedent.

A pronoun should refer to a specific antecedent, not to a word that is implied but not present in the sentence.

- After braiding Ann's hair, Sue decorated ^{the braids} ~~them~~ with ribbons.

The pronoun *them* referred to Ann's braids (implied by the term *braiding*), but the word *braids* did not appear in the sentence.

Modifiers, such as possessives, cannot serve as antecedents. A modifier may strongly imply the noun that the pronoun might logically refer to, but it is not itself that noun.

- In ^{Euripides} Euripides' *Medea*, he describes the plight of a woman rejected by her husband.

The pronoun *he* cannot refer logically to the possessive modifier *Euripides'*. The revision substitutes the noun *Euripides* for the pronoun *he*, thereby eliminating the problem.

*23d Avoid the indefinite use of *they*, *it*, and *you*.

Do not use the pronoun *they* to refer indefinitely to persons who have not been specifically mentioned. *They* should always refer to a specific antecedent.

- Last year ^{Congress} ~~they~~ shut down all government agencies for more than a month until the budget crisis was finally resolved.

The word *it* should not be used indefinitely in constructions such as "It is said on television . . ." or "In the article it says that . . ."

- ^{The} ~~In the encyclopedia~~ it states that male moths can smell female moths from several miles away.

The pronoun *you* is appropriate when the writer is addressing the reader directly: *Once you have kneaded the dough, let it rise in a warm place for at least twenty-five minutes.* Except in informal contexts, however, the indefinite *you* (meaning "anyone in general") is inappropriate. (See page 177.)



ON THE WEB

For electronic exercises on using active verbs, go to dianahacker.com/rules

and click on ► **Electronic Grammar Exercises**
 ► **Clarity**
 ► **E-ex 8-1 through 8-3**

9

Balance parallel ideas.

If two or more ideas are parallel, they are easier to grasp when expressed in parallel grammatical form. Single words should be balanced with single words, phrases with phrases, clauses with clauses.

A kiss can be a comma, a question mark, or an exclamation point. — Mistinguett

This novel is not to be tossed lightly aside, but to be hurled with great force. — Dorothy Parker

In matters of principle, stand like a rock; in matters of taste, swim with the current. — Thomas Jefferson

Writers often use parallelism to create emphasis. (See p. 126.)



GRAMMAR CHECKERS do not flag faulty parallelism. Because computer programs have no way of assessing whether two or more ideas are parallel in meaning, they fail to catch the faulty parallelism in sentences such as this: *In my high school, boys were either jocks, preppies, or studied constantly.*

9a Balance parallel ideas in a series.

Readers expect items in a series to appear in parallel grammatical form. When one or more of the items violate readers' expectations, a sentence will be needlessly awkward.

- Abused children commonly exhibit one or more of the following symptoms: withdrawal, rebelliousness, restlessness, and depression.
~~they are depressed.~~

The revision presents all of the items as nouns.

- Hooked on romance novels, I learned that there is nothing more important than being rich, looking good, and ~~to have~~ ^{having} a good time.

The revision uses *-ing* forms for all items in the series.

- After assuring us that he was sober, Sam drove down the middle of the road, ran one red light, and ~~two stop signs.~~ ^{went through}

The revision adds a verb to make the three items parallel: *drove . . . , ran . . . , went through . . .*

NOTE: In headings and lists, aim for as much parallelism as the content allows. (See 5b and 5c.)

9b Balance parallel ideas presented as pairs.

When pairing ideas, underscore their connection by expressing them in similar grammatical form. Paired ideas are usually connected in one of these ways:

- with a coordinating conjunction such as *and*, *but*, or *or*
- with a pair of correlative conjunctions such as *either . . . or* or *not only . . . but also*
- with a word introducing a comparison, usually *than* or *as*



Parallel ideas linked with coordinating conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions (*and, but, or, nor, for, so, and yet*) link ideas of equal importance. When those ideas are closely parallel in content, they should be expressed in parallel grammatical form.

- At Lincoln High School, vandalism can result in suspension or even ^{expulsion} ~~being expelled~~ from school.

The revision balances the nouns *suspension* and *expulsion*.

- Many states are reducing property taxes for home owners and ^{extending} ~~extend~~ financial aid in the form of tax credits to renters.

The revision balances two *-ing* verb forms: *reducing* and *extending*.

Parallel ideas linked with correlative conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions come in pairs: *either . . . or, neither . . . nor, not only . . . but also, both . . . and, whether . . . or*. Make sure that the grammatical structure following the second half of the pair is the same as that following the first half.

- Thomas Edison was not only a prolific inventor but also was a successful entrepreneur.

The words *a prolific inventor* follow *not only*, so *a successful entrepreneur* should follow *but also*. Repeating *was* creates an unbalanced effect.

- I was advised either to change my flight or ^{to} ~~take~~ the train.

To change my flight, which follows *either*, should be balanced with *to take the train*, which follows *or*.

Comparisons linked with *than* or *as*

In comparisons linked with *than* or *as*, the elements being compared should be expressed in parallel grammatical structure.

- It is easier to speak in abstractions than ^{to ground} ~~grounding~~ one's thoughts in reality.

- Mother could not persuade me that giving is as much a joy as ^{receiving} ~~to receive~~.

To speak in abstractions is balanced with *to ground one's thoughts in reality*. *Giving* is balanced with *receiving*.

NOTE: Comparisons should also be logical and complete. (See 10c.)

9c Repeat function words to clarify parallels.

Function words such as prepositions (*by, to*) and subordinating conjunctions (*that, because*) signal the grammatical nature of the word groups to follow. Although they can sometimes be omitted, include them whenever they signal parallel structures * that might otherwise be missed by readers.

- Many smokers try switching to a brand they find distasteful ^{to} ~~or~~ a low tar and nicotine cigarette.

In the original sentence the prepositional phrase was too complex for easy reading. The repetition of the preposition *to* prevents readers from losing their way.

EXERCISE 9-1

Edit the following sentences to correct faulty parallelism. Revisions of lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

We began the search by calling the Department of Social Services and ^{requesting} ~~requested~~ a list of licensed day care centers in our area.



12e Repair dangling modifiers.

A dangling modifier fails to refer logically to any word in the sentence. Dangling modifiers are easy to repair, but they can be hard to recognize, especially in your own writing.

Recognizing dangling modifiers

Dangling modifiers are usually word groups (such as verbal phrases) that suggest but do not name an actor. When a sentence opens with such a modifier, readers expect the subject of the next clause to name the actor. If it doesn't, the modifier dangles.

- When the driver opened*
 ▶ [^]Opening the window to let out a huge bumblebee, the car accidentally swerved into an oncoming car.
 The car didn't open the window; the driver did.
- women have often been denied*
 ▶ After completing seminary training, [^]women's access to the pulpit ~~has often been denied~~.
 The women (not their access to the pulpit) complete the training.

The following sentences illustrate four common kinds of dangling modifiers.

- ✓ **DANGLING** *Deciding to join the navy, the recruiter enthusiastically pumped Joe's hand.* [Participial phrase]
- ✓ **DANGLING** *Upon entering the doctor's office, a skeleton caught my attention.* [Preposition followed by a gerund phrase]
- ✓ **DANGLING** *To please the children, some fireworks were set off a day early.* [Infinitive phrase]
- ✓ **DANGLING** *Though only sixteen, UCLA accepted Martha's application.* [Elliptical clause with an understood subject and verb]

These dangling modifiers falsely suggest that the recruiter decided to join the navy, that the skeleton entered the doctor's office, that the fireworks intended to please the children, and that UCLA is only sixteen years old.

Although most readers will understand the writer's intended meaning in such sentences, the inadvertent humor can be distracting, and it can make the writer appear somewhat foolish.

ON THE WEB

The rules on avoiding dangling modifiers have sparked debates. If you're interested in learning why, go to dianahacker.com/rules and click on ▶ **Language Debates**
 ▶ **Dangling modifiers**

Repairing dangling modifiers

To repair a dangling modifier, you can revise the sentence in one of two ways:

1. Name the actor in the subject of the sentence, or
2. name the actor in the modifier.

Depending on your sentence, one of these revision strategies may be more appropriate than the other.

ACTOR NAMED IN SUBJECT

- ▶ *I noticed*
 Upon entering the doctor's office, a skeleton, [^]caught my [^]attention.

- ▶ *we set off*
 To please the children, [^]some fireworks ~~were set off~~ early.

ACTOR NAMED IN MODIFIER

- When Joe decided*
 ▶ [^]Deciding to join the navy, the recruiter enthusiastically ^{his}pumped Joe's hand.



- ▶ Though ^{Martha was} only sixteen, UCLA accepted ^{her} Martha's application.

✓ **NOTE:** You cannot repair a dangling modifier just by moving it. Consider, for example, the sentence about the skeleton. If you put the modifier at the end of the sentence (*A skeleton caught my attention upon entering the doctor's office*), you are still suggesting—absurdly, of course—that the skeleton entered the office. The only way to avoid the problem is to put the word *I* in the sentence, either as the subject or in the modifier.

- ▶ Upon entering the doctor's office, ^{I noticed} a skeleton ^{caught} my attention.

- ▶ ^{As I entered} Upon entering the doctor's office, a skeleton caught my attention.

Checking for dangling modifiers

Does an opening phrase suggest an action without naming the actor?

NO

No problem

YES

Does the subject of the sentence name the actor?

YES

No problem

NO

Revise the dangling modifier.

do in class

EXERCISE 12-2

Edit the following sentences to correct dangling modifiers. Most sentences can be revised in more than one way. Revisions of lettered sentences appear in the back of the book. Example:

To acquire a degree in almost any field, ^{a student must complete} two science courses. ^{must be completed.}

- At the age of ten, my parents took me on my first balloon ride.
 - To show our appreciation for your patience, enclosed is a coupon that you may redeem for the book of your choice.
 - Nestled in the cockpit, the pounding of the engine was muffled only slightly by my helmet.
 - In choosing her bridesmaids' dresses, cost had to be considered a major factor.
 - When a young man, my mother enrolled me in tap dance classes, hoping I would become the next Gregory Hines.
- While working as a ranger in Everglades National Park, a Florida panther crossed the road in front of my truck one night.
 - By following this new procedure, our mailing costs will be reduced significantly.
 - As president of the missionary circle, one of Grandmother's duties is to raise money for the church.
 - After becoming eligible to win these bonuses, a sales quota must be maintained for six consecutive months.
 - As a child growing up in Nigeria, my mother taught me to treat all elders with respect.

ON THE WEB

For electronic exercises on misplaced and dangling modifiers, go to dianahacker.com/rules

and click on ▶ **Electronic Grammar Exercises**
▶ **Clarity**
▶ **E-ex 12-1 through 12-4**

Angela Daly
Professor Chavez
English 101
14 March 2001

A Call to Action:

Regulate Use of Cell Phones on the Road

When a cell phone goes off in a classroom or at a concert, we are irritated, but at least our lives are not endangered. When we are on the road, however, irresponsible cell phone users are more than irritating: They are putting our lives at risk. Many of us have witnessed drivers so distracted by dialing and chatting that they resemble drunk drivers, weaving between lanes, for example, or nearly running down pedestrians in crosswalks. A number of bills to regulate use of cell phones on the road have been introduced in state legislatures, and the time has come to push for their passage. Regulation is needed because drivers using phones are seriously impaired and because laws on negligent and reckless driving are not sufficient to punish offenders.

No one can deny that cell phones have caused traffic deaths and injuries. Cell phones were implicated in three fatal accidents in November 1999 alone. Early in November, two-year-old Morgan Pena was killed by a driver distracted by his cell phone. Morgan's mother, Patti Pena, reports that the driver "ran a stop sign at 45 mph, broadsided my vehicle and killed Morgan as she sat in her car seat." A week

Title is centered.

Opening sentences catch readers' attention.

Thesis asserts Angela Daly's main point.

Daly uses a clear topic sentence.

Signal phrase names the author of the quotation; no page number is available.

later, corrections officer Shannon Smith, who was guarding prisoners by the side of the road, was killed by a woman distracted by a phone call (Besthoff). On Thanksgiving weekend that same month, John and Carole Hall were killed when a Naval Academy midshipman crashed into their parked car. The driver said in court that when he looked up from the cell phone he was dialing, he was three feet from the car and had no time to stop (Stockwell B8).

Expert testimony, public opinion, and even cartoons suggest that driving while phoning is dangerous. Frances Bents, an expert on the relation between cell phones and accidents, estimates that between 450 and 1,000 crashes a year have some connection to cell phone use (Layton C9). In a survey published by Farmers Insurance Group, 87% of those polled said that cell phones affect a driver's ability, and 40% reported having close calls with drivers distracted by phones. Many cartoons have depicted the very real dangers of driving while distracted (see Fig. 1).

Scientific research confirms the dangers of using phones while on the road. In 1997 an important study appeared in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The authors, Donald Redelmeier and Robert Tibshirani, studied 699 volunteers who made their cell phone bills available in order to confirm the times when they had placed calls. The participants agreed to report any nonfatal collision in which they were involved. By comparing the time of a collision with the phone records, the researchers assessed

Author's name is given in parentheses; no page is available.

Page number is given when available.

Clear topic sentences like this one are used throughout the paper.

Summary and long quotation are introduced with a signal phrase naming the authors.

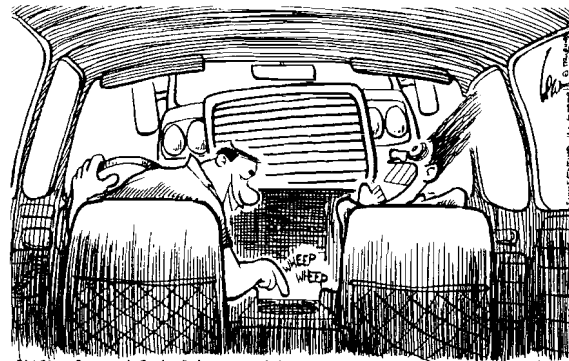


Illustration has figure number, label, and source information.

Fig. 1. Chan Lowe, cartoon, Washington Post 22 July 2000: A21.

the dangers of driving while phoning. Here are their results:

We found that using a cellular telephone was associated with a risk of having a motor vehicle collision that was about four times as high as that among the same drivers when they were not using their cellular telephones. This relative risk is similar to the hazard associated with driving with a blood alcohol level at the legal limit.

(456)

In reports by news media, the latter claim was exaggerated ("similar to" is not "equal to"), but the comparison with drunk driving is startling nonetheless.

A 1998 study focused on Oklahoma, one of the few states to keep records on fatal accidents involving cell phones. Using police records, John M. Violanti of the

Long quotation is set off from the text; quotation marks are omitted.

Rochester Institute of Technology investigated the relation between traffic fatalities in Oklahoma and the use or presence of a cell phone. He found a ninefold increase in the risk of fatality if a phone was being used and a doubled risk simply when a phone was present in a vehicle (522-23). The latter statistic is interesting, for it suggests that those who carry phones in their cars may tend to be more negligent (or prone to distractions of all kinds) than those who do not.

Some groups have argued that state traffic laws make legislation regulating cell phone use unnecessary. Sadly, this is not true. Laws on traffic safety vary from state to state, and drivers distracted by cell phones can get off with light punishment even when they cause fatal accidents. For example, although the midshipman mentioned earlier was charged with vehicular manslaughter for the deaths of John and Carole Hall, the judge was unable to issue a verdict of guilty. Under Maryland law, he could only find the defendant guilty of negligent driving and impose a \$500 fine (Layton C1). Such a light sentence is not unusual. The driver who killed Morgan Pena in Pennsylvania received two tickets and a \$50 fine--and retained his driving privileges (Pena). In Georgia, a young woman distracted by her phone ran down and killed a two-year-old; her sentence was ninety days in boot camp and five hundred hours of community service (Ippolito J1). The families of the victims are understandably distressed by laws that lead to such light sentences.

Summary begins with a signal phrase naming the author (see bottom of previous page) and ends with page numbers in parentheses.

Daly counters an opposing argument.

Facts are documented with in-text citations: authors' names and page numbers (if available) in parentheses.

Daly uses an analogy to justify passing a special law.

When certain kinds of driver behavior are shown to be especially dangerous, we wisely draft special laws making them illegal and imposing specific punishments. Running red lights, failing to stop for a school bus, and drunk driving are obvious examples; phoning in a moving vehicle should be no exception. Unlike more general laws covering negligent driving, specific laws leave little ambiguity for law officers and for judges and juries imposing punishments. Such laws have another important benefit: They leave no ambiguity for drivers. Currently, drivers can tease themselves into thinking they are using their car phones responsibly because the definition of "negligent driving" is vague.

Daly explains why U.S. laws need to be passed on the state level.

As of December 2000, twenty countries were restricting use of cell phones in moving vehicles (Sundeen 8). In the United States, it is highly unlikely that legislation could be passed on the national level, since traffic safety is considered a state and local issue. To date, only a few counties and towns have passed traffic laws restricting cell phone use. For example, in Suffolk County, New York, it is illegal for drivers to use a handheld phone for anything but an emergency call while on the road (Haughney A8). The first town to restrict use of handheld phones was Brooklyn, Ohio (Layton C9). Brooklyn, the first community in the country to pass a seat belt law, has once again shown its concern for traffic safety.

Transition helps readers move from one paragraph to the next.

Laws passed by counties and towns have had some effect, but it makes more sense to legislate at the state level. Local laws are not likely to have the impact of

state laws, and keeping track of a wide variety of local ordinances is confusing for drivers. Even a spokesperson for Verizon Wireless has said that statewide bans are preferable to a "crazy patchwork quilt of ordinances" (qtd. in Haughney A8). Unfortunately, although a number of bills have been introduced in state legislatures, as of early 2001 no state law seriously restricting use of the phones had passed--largely because of effective lobbying from the wireless industry.

Daly cites an indirect source: words quoted in another source.

Despite the claims of some lobbyists, tough laws regulating phone use can make our roads safer. In Japan, for example, accidents linked to cell phones fell by 75% just a month after the country prohibited using a handheld phone while driving (Haughney A8). Research suggests and common sense tells us that it is not possible to drive an automobile at high speeds, dial numbers, and carry on conversations without significant risks. When such behavior is regulated, obviously our roads will be safer.

Daly counters a claim made by some opponents.

Because of mounting public awareness of the dangers of drivers distracted by phones, state legislators must begin to take the problem seriously. "It's definitely an issue that is gaining steam around the country," says Matt Sundeen of the National Conference of State Legislatures (qtd. in Layton C9). Lon Anderson of the American Automobile Association agrees: "There is momentum building," he says, to pass laws (qtd. in Layton C9). The time has come for states to adopt legislation restricting the use of cell phones in moving vehicles.

For variety Daly places a signal phrase after a brief quotation.

The paper ends with Daly's stand on the issue.

Heading is centered

Works Cited

The URL is broken after a slash. No hyphen is inserted.

List is alphabetized by authors' last names (or by title when a work has no author).

First line of each entry is at the left margin; extra lines are indented 1/2" (or five spaces).

Double-spacing is used throughout.

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