IT'S ALL GREEK TO ME!

Using Authentic Readings to Improve Knowledge of the English Language and Western Culture

Course Packet by Charity Davenport
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A. Writing Skills

A.1 Noun Clauses for Better Sentences

A.1.1 Using Noun Clauses for Better Topic Sentences

Let’s take a look at two sentences:

1. The first way that Edison changed the world was by inventing electricity.
2. First, Edison changed the world by inventing electricity.

Which of these two sentences do you think is better? Why?

In your essays, you can use either way, but it’s important in writing to use variety. That means you should have different kinds of sentences to make your writing better and more interesting. If you just use “First,” “second,” “last” to separate your ideas, it sounds boring. However, the same happens if all of your body paragraph sentences start like this: “The first way is...”, “the second way is...”

So let’s practice other ways to write topic sentences!

Is there a way we can change the sentence parts in 1. to make a similar but different sentence?

Below are several ways to make different kinds of topic sentences, depending on the kind of essay you are writing. You may want to practice by making some example sentences for your essay topic.

Note: Clauses have a subject and a verb, although they may not make a complete idea.

Ex. where he was going

Phrases are a group of words, but they do not have a verb. They usually consist of nouns, gerunds, infinitives, adjectives, and prepositions.

Ex. the reason behind all the commotion
For classifying information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject (controlling idea)</th>
<th>Adjective clause (topic)</th>
<th>“be” verb</th>
<th>Object / prepositional phrase (paragraph focus)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first way</td>
<td>(that) MLK changed the world</td>
<td>is / was</td>
<td>by fighting for equal civil rights.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gerund phrase (paragraph focus)</th>
<th>“be” verb</th>
<th>Subject (controlling idea)</th>
<th>Adjective clause (topic)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fighting for equal civil rights</td>
<td>is / was</td>
<td>the first way</td>
<td>that) MLK changed the world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For processes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>step process</th>
<th>Infinitive phrase (topic) (optional)</th>
<th>“be” verb</th>
<th>Infinitive phrase (paragraph focus: step)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first step</td>
<td>(to get a handsome boyfriend)</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>to go to parties.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gerund phrase (paragraph focus: step)</th>
<th>“be” verb</th>
<th>step process</th>
<th>infinitive phrase (topic) (optional)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Going to parties</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>the first step</td>
<td>(to get a handsome boyfriend).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To explain causes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>“cause” noun</th>
<th>topic as noun phrase</th>
<th>“be” verb</th>
<th>“cause” noun phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>cause of</td>
<td>deforestation</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>to make more land available for human life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another</td>
<td>trigger of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An additional</td>
<td>reason for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The last</td>
<td>explanation for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Cause” noun phrase</th>
<th>“Be” verb</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>“Cause” noun</th>
<th>Topic as noun phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making more land available for human life</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>cause of</td>
<td>deforestation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>trigger of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>reason for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>explanation for</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To explain effects:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>number</th>
<th>“effect” noun</th>
<th>topic as noun phrase</th>
<th>“be” verb</th>
<th>“effect” noun phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>effect of</td>
<td>deforestation</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>less oxygen in the atmosphere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another</td>
<td>consequence of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An additional</td>
<td>result of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The last</td>
<td>outcome of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“effect” noun phrase</th>
<th>“Be” verb</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>“effect” noun</th>
<th>Topic as noun phrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less oxygen in the atmosphere</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>one</td>
<td>effect of</td>
<td>deforestation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>another consequence of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>also</td>
<td>a result of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the last</td>
<td>outcome of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To give reasons:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number + “reason” (why)</th>
<th>opinion noun clause</th>
<th>“be” verb</th>
<th>(that) reason noun clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One reason (why)</td>
<td>we should stop cutting down rainforests</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>(that) it reduces the amount of oxygen in the air.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The second reason (why)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another reason (why)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The last reason (why)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>reason as noun phrase</th>
<th>“be” verb</th>
<th>number + “reason” (why)</th>
<th>opinion noun clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The reduction of the amount of oxygen in the air</td>
<td>is</td>
<td>the first reason (why)</td>
<td>we should stop cutting down rainforests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the second reason (why)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>another reason (why)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the last reason (why)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A.2 Other Noun Clauses

It + "be" + adj. + (that) noun clause

This formula is a very common sentence construct in English. The following adjectives are often used with the formula:

amazing interesting obvious strange undeniable
clear likely a pity surprising unfortunate
good lucky possible too bad (well) known
important nice a shame true wonderful

Also, "for + (someone)" and an infinitive can also be added to the formula. Take a look at how the following sentences are constructed using different parts of the formula:

Ex: It is impossible that John got away with murder.

Ex: It’s too bad for Amy that Bill broke up with her.

Ex: It is nice to know that I have good friends to help me.

Ex: It is important for students to realize how Greek influence permeates American culture.

Practice a variety of the "it is adj" formula in the following sentences.

1. It is lucky ____________________________
2. It’s a shame __________________________
3. It is highly possible ______________________
4. It’s very possible _________________________
5. It is strange ____________________________

Another common type of noun clause are ones made from questions. They usually describe discussions of questions or report the answers to questions.

Ex: Student A: Where does Xu live?
    Student B: I don’t know.
    I don’t know where Xu lives.

The question and the answer can be combined to report someone’s answer about something using noun clauses. The most important thing to remember here is that when you make the question into a noun clause, it does NOT keep the question grammar.
These kinds of noun clauses can be the subject or object of the sentence.

**Ex** We do not know exactly *how many people were affected by the power outage.*

**Ex** *Exactly how many people were affected by the power outage* remains unknown.

This can be done for all kinds of questions, including yes / no questions. But for yes / no questions, the noun clauses look a little different. For yes / no questions, we can use either “if” or “whether” in the noun clause.

**Ex** Xu: Are we going to have a test tomorrow?
Bill: I’m not sure.
Bill isn’t sure *if we are going to have a test tomorrow.*

*Whether we have a test tomorrow (or not)* depends on Mrs. D’s mood.

For questions that involve “can”, “could”, or “should”, a noun clause can be used or an infinitive.

**Ex** Xu: I have a big problem. What should I do? Please tell me!
Please tell me *what I should do about my problem.*
Please tell me *what to do about my problem.*
I don’t know *where you could find tacos in this city.*
I don’t know *where to find tacos in this city.*

**Practice 1:** Put together the following conversations into one sentence using a noun clause.

**Ex** A: Who are you taking to the dance?
B: I don’t know yet.

*Answer: I don’t know yet who I am taking to the dance.*

1. A: Where did John go?
B: I have no idea.

B: That’s a shame.

3. A: Who is that girl over there?
B: It’s obvious!

4. A: Yuxin got roses from her boyfriend!
B: That’s so nice!
5. A: How can I get to the bus station?
   B: *gives directions*

6. A: It’s snowing. Should I go home or stay here at work until it stops?
   B: That’s up to you to decide.

7. A: Would your sister like to come to my party?
   B: I’ll find out tonight.

8. A: Does the copy machine need more paper?
   B: I’ll let you know.

   B: That’s clear.

10. A: How do you use a microwave?
    B: I don’t know...

---

A.3 Avoiding Plagiarism

When you are using research in your essays, there are many aspects to think about other than how to organize your essay and explain your topic. There are many steps to finding information you need for your essay topic.

1. **How do I find the information I need, and quickly?**
   - Search for keywords. They don’t need to be perfect grammar, and you don’t need a lot of words. Sometimes more words make it more difficult, so keep it short. For example, for this assignment you could search for “why Mars planet name”.

2. **How do I know if the information I find is accurate, trustworthy, and up to date?**
   - After you get search results, don’t just choose the first one. Look at the information and the titles given. Also, take a look at the website it comes from before you click on it. Sources that come from databases and academic journals are good, but not always appropriate for the topic. Sites that end with .edu, .gov, and .org are often the most trustworthy. Sites that show the author’s name and some information about the author is good. Also, look for a date and see if the information is up to date.

3. **Should I quote the information or paraphrase it?**
   - Only quote if you feel a paraphrase would make the information lose power or meaning. That doesn’t mean quote everything because you don’t have confidence in your grammar! If you are just giving facts and statistics, it’s probably best to just paraphrase, even if your grammar isn’t perfect. If you quote, you do not change any of the borrowed words and they are surrounded with quotation marks (““). Paraphrases are the same meaning as the borrowed information, but in your own words. Therefore, they do not use quotation marks.
4. **How do I integrate the research into my essay?**
   - When you finally have the information you want to use, it needs to be clear when you start talking about the research and when you finish and go back to your own words and ideas. This can be done by introducing the source before giving the information, and then ending the information with an in-text citation.

5. **How do I avoid plagiarism?**
   - Plagiarism is serious business. Students can be expelled from their universities and people can lose their jobs if they plagiarize. Thus, it’s important to avoid it as much as possible. To avoid plagiarism, you need to use quotation marks when you quote and properly paraphrase with an in-text citation. You will also need a list of your sources and more detailed information about them at the end of the essay.

You will be practicing all of these important skills above in the following short writing assignment.

---

**Why are all of our planets (except Earth) named after the Latin version of the Greek gods?**

What is the connection between the characteristics of the gods and the characteristics of the planets? Find the answer by searching the Internet. Introduce the source and quote or paraphrase the information, and end with an MLA style in-text citation. Then make an MLA style works cited page. Try to use different sources for each question, but keep in mind the quality of the source. Pay attention to punctuation.

**Example (quote):** The website Cool Cosmos says, “Being very cold and the farthest from the Sun, Pluto was named after the Roman god of death” (“How did Pluto”).

**Example (paraphrase):** The planet Pluto is named after the Roman god of the dead since it so far away from the sun and so frigid, according to the website Cool Cosmos (“How did Pluto”).

MLA style works cited pages entries needs to be alphabetized and with hanging indent.

1. Venus: use “according to...” before the information and paraphrase
2. Mercury: use “...says that” and quote
3. Mars: use “according to...” at the end of the information and quote
4. Jupiter: use “...says” at the end of the information and paraphrase
5. Saturn: you choose how to introduce and whether to quote or paraphrase
6. Neptune: you choose how to introduce and whether to quote or paraphrase
7. Uranus: you choose how to introduce and whether to quote or paraphrase
A.4 Writing Skill: Doing Research

Below are some research questions. You can use a simple Google Search to find the answer. Of course, you should do your search in English and then after reading to find the answer, paraphrase the information you learned. Do not copy and paste the information found.

1. The author of one of the readings in the first unit mentions that Mount Olympus is a real place. Where is it located?

2. Where is “Olympus Mons”, and what is it?

3. Which city in Greece is named after Athena?

4. What is the Gaia hypothesis?

5. Who is the goddess Nike? Why do you think a famous company used her name in their products?

6. We get the word “phobia” from Phobos, the god of fear. There are many kinds of phobias—most of which are composed of Greek words. Find 5 phobias and describe what they are of.
   (a) (b) (c) (d) (e)

7. What is modern-day “ambrosia”?
A.5 Paraphrasing

Let’s practice paraphrasing! Paraphrase the information the best you can. You may want to check a classmate’s answers to see if you have the same information in different words.

If you have trouble paraphrasing, you can visit http://www.eslwriting.org/learn-paraphrase-writing/ for help.

Use a combination (not just one!) of the paraphrasing strategies below if you have trouble paraphrasing. Also think about how you would tell a classmate the material without looking at the text. Paraphrases can have a little less or a few more sentences than the original.

1. **Synonyms.** Use words and phrases with a similar meaning.
2. **Voice.** Change the sentence from active voice to passive.
3. **Nominalization.** Change nouns to verbs or vice versa.
4. **Conjunctions.** Combine two sentences with conjunctions.
5. **Separation:** Separate a longer sentence of ideas into two or more sentences, especially if that makes them clearer.
6. **Clauses.** Join two sentences with relative clauses, appositives, and reduced phrases.
7. **Rearrange parts.** Change around dependent and independent clauses and prepositional phrases, as appropriate.

A.6 Practice

Paraphrase the following sentences about famous ancient Greek philosophers and their ideas we still study and use today. Write your paraphrases on a separate sheet of paper. All quotes come from Wikipedia, but you may want to check the definitions in your first language to make sure you understand the ideas before you paraphrase them.

1. Platonic love is a type of love that is non-sexual. The term is named after Plato, who described a kind of love centered on same-gender relations and included sex, which underwent a transformation during the Renaissance (15th–16th centuries) to get its contemporary sense of nonsexual heterosexual love.

2. Cynicism is a school of thought of ancient Greek philosophy as practiced by the Cynics. For the Cynics, the purpose of life is to live in virtue, in agreement with nature. As reasoning creatures, people can gain happiness by rigorous training and by living in a way which is natural for themselves, rejecting all conventional desires for wealth, power, sex, and fame. Instead, they were to lead a simple life free from all possessions.

3. However, the modern definition of this has changed. Now, Cynicism is an attitude or state of mind characterized by a general distrust of others’ motives. A cynic may have a general lack of faith or hope in the human species or people are only motivated by ambition, desire, gratification, materialism, goals, and opinions that a cynic perceives as vain, unobtainable, or ultimately meaningless and therefore deserving of ridicule or admonishment.

4. Skepticism is generally any questioning attitude or doubt towards one or more items of putative knowledge or belief. It is often directed at domains, such as morality (moral skepticism), religion (skepticism about the existence of God), or knowledge (skepticism about the possibility of knowledge, or of certainty).
Appendix A. Writing Skills

5. In ordinary usage, skepticism refers to:
   • an attitude of doubt or a disposition to incredulity either in general or toward a
     particular object;
   • the doctrine that true knowledge or some particular knowledge is uncertain; or
   • the method of suspended judgment, systematic doubt, or criticism that is characteristic
     of skeptics (Merriam–Webster).
   (Hint: try to make the three definition parts part of one sentence.)

6. The Socratic method is a form of cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals,
   based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to draw out
   ideas and underlying presumptions. It is a dialectical method, often involving a discussion
   in which the defense of one point of view is questioned; one participant may lead another
   to contradict themselves in some way, thus weakening the defender’s point.

7. Socrates, one of the most famous ancient Greek philosophers, found guilty of both
   corrupting the minds of the youth of Athens and of impiety ("not believing in the gods of
   the state"), and subsequently sentenced to death by drinking a mixture containing poison
   hemlock.

8. Hippocrates was a Greek physician of the Age of Pericles (Classical Greece), and is
   considered one of the most outstanding figures in the history of medicine. He is referred
   to as the "Father of Modern Medicine" in recognition of his lasting contributions to
   the field as the founder of the Hippocratic School of Medicine. Hippocrates is credited
   with being the first person to believe that diseases were caused naturally, not because of
   superstition and gods. He separated the discipline of medicine from religion, believing
   and arguing that disease was not a punishment inflicted by the gods but rather the product
   of environmental factors, diet, and living habits.

9. The Hippocratic Oath is an oath historically taken by physicians. It is one of the most
   widely known of Greek medical texts. In its original form, it requires a new physician to
   swear, by a number of healing gods, to uphold specific ethical standards.

10. The Oath is the earliest expression of medical ethics in the Western world, establishing
    several principles of medical ethics which remain of paramount significance today. These
    include the principles of medical confidentiality and non-maleficence. Although the
    ancient text is only of historic and symbolic value, swearing a modified form of the Oath
    remains a rite of passage for medical graduates in many countries.

A.7 Practice

Vocabulary and Critical Thinking

While you were paraphrasing, hopefully you also learned a lot about ancient Greek philosophy.
Although the modern meaning might be a little different than the ancient Greek philosophy,
many of these words are used today. Answer the following questions using the information you
learned about Greek philosophy.

1. Read the original Hippocratic Oath (from Wikipedia):
   "I swear by Apollo the Healer, by Asclepius, by Hygieia, by Panacea, and by all the gods
   and goddesses, making them my witnesses, that I will carry out, according to my ability
   and judgment, this oath and this indenture."
• To hold my teacher in this art equal to my own parents; to make him partner in my livelihood; when he is in need of money to share mine with him; to consider his family as my own brothers, and to teach them this art, if they want to learn it, without fee or indenture; to impart precept, oral instruction, and all other instruction to my own sons, the sons of my teacher, and to apprentices who have taken the physician’s oath, but to nobody else.

• I will use treatment to help the sick according to my ability and judgment, but never with a view to injury and wrong-doing. Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a course. Similarly I will not give to a woman a pessary to cause abortion. But I will keep pure and holy both my life and my art. I will not use the knife, but I will give place to such as are craftsmen therein.

• Into whatsoever houses I enter, I will enter to help the sick, and I will abstain from all intentional wrong-doing and harm, especially from abusing the bodies of man or woman, bond or free.

• And whatsoever I shall see or hear in the course of my profession, as well as outside my profession in my interaction with men, if it be what should not be published abroad, I will never divulge, holding such things to be holy secrets.

• Now if I carry out this oath, and break it not, may I gain for ever reputation among all men for my life and for my art; but if I transgress it and forswear myself, may the opposite befall me.

a. This mentions two new goddesses—Hygieia and Panacea. Hygieia is the goddess of and Panacea is the goddess of . We get the words “hygiene” and “hygenic” from Hygieia. “Hygiene” means and “hygenic” means . A panacea is a .

2. Paraphrase the 5 promises given in the Hippocratic Oath.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

3. If you could make a “Hippocratic Oath” for your field or major, what 5 promises would you make future students/ workers take in your oath?

4. We often describe people’s feelings towards others as “cynical”. Go back to your paraphrase to remember what this word means now, or look up the word in a dictionary. What experience have you had that might have made you feel cynical towards others?
5. Go back to your paraphrase or look up the word “skeptical” in the dictionary. What is something you are skeptical about?
## B. Grammar Skills

### B.1 Using Active and Passive Voice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TENSE</th>
<th>ACTIVE VOICE</th>
<th>PASSIVE VOICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIMPLE PRESENT</strong></td>
<td>I paint my living room every year.</td>
<td>My living room is painted every year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIMPLE PAST</strong></td>
<td>I painted my living room yesterday.</td>
<td>My living room was painted yesterday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SIMPLE FUTURE</strong></td>
<td>I will paint my living room.</td>
<td>My living room will be painted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT PROGRESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>I am painting my living room now.</td>
<td>My living room is being painted now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST PROGRESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>I was painting my living room yesterday when I saw a mouse run across the floor.</td>
<td>My living room was being painted yesterday when I saw a mouse run across the floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE PROGRESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>I will be painting my living room when my husband comes home tomorrow.</td>
<td>My living room will be being painted when my husband comes home tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT PERFECT</strong></td>
<td>I have painted my living room twice.</td>
<td>My living room has been painted twice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST PERFECT</strong></td>
<td>I had already painted my living room by the time my husband came home.</td>
<td>My living room had already been painted by the time my husband came home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE PERFECT</strong></td>
<td>I will have painted my living room by the time my husband comes home tomorrow.</td>
<td>My living room will have been painted by the time my husband comes home tomorrow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PRESENT PERFECT PROGRESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>I have been painting my living room for two hours.</td>
<td>My living room has been being painted for two hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAST PERFECT PROGRESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>I had been painting my living room for two hours.</td>
<td>My living room had been being painted for two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUTURE PERFECT PROGRESSIVE</strong></td>
<td>I will have been painting my living room for two hours.</td>
<td>My living room will have been being painted for two hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>GERUND</strong></td>
<td>I need to paint my living room.</td>
<td>My living room needs to be painted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INFINITIVE</strong></td>
<td>Painting a living room takes a long time.</td>
<td>Being painted is not what I expected to happen to me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Active voice is usually how verbs are used in a sentence, when the subject of the sentence performs an action, and sometimes an object receives the result of the action.

**Ex** Active: The dog chased the cat.

Passive voice changes the object of a sentence into the subject and also changes the verb form with it. This is by adding a form of “be” and a past participle. Sometimes the subject of the active sentence becomes the “agent” using “by”.

**Ex** The cat was chased by the dog.

The two example sentences here have the same meaning. Then why are there two different ways to say the same thing?

Active and passive are voices because the meaning may be the same, but the emphasis is not. Although many English teachers advise against using passive voice, it has many reasons to be used.

- **When the “agent” is unknown:**
  
  **Ex** Three million dollars were stolen from the bank.

- **When the “agent” is obvious or unimportant:**
  
  **Ex** Your package was delivered at 6:30 pm.

- **To focus on the receiver of the action, often inanimate:**
  
  **Ex** A pink ribbon was placed around the cute kitten’s neck.

- **To focus more on the action rather than the subject doing the action, such as giving instructions or explaining processes:**
  
  **Ex** The pizza must be baked at 400 F for 25 minutes.

- **To avoid blame:**
  
  **Ex** “Mistakes were made” is a famous quote by Ronald Reagan.

Passive is used often in writing in these disciplines:

- **Lab reports:** In the study, 300 participants were given a questionnaire about their eating habits.

- **News reports:** Three people were killed and one child was badly injured in a collision between two cars on Highway 40 yesterday.

- **Scientific research:** Animal studies have been used for decades to understand various physiological and behavioral phenomena, including the factors involved in drug addiction.

- **Instructions:** The coffee beans are then ground into a powder before being brewed.

In general, passive voice is more often used in writing about topics that do not focus on people, or receivers of actions.
Discuss with a classmate the following passive sentences and the sentences above in the example. Why are they preferably in passive voice?

1. The First Tennessee Bank was robbed last night at 3:45 am.
2. In this experiment, the eggs were placed in vinegar overnight.
3. After that, chunks of graphite (a soft, dark mineral) and clay are placed inside a huge rotating drum. Large rocks inside the drum crush the graphite and clay into a fine powder. Then water is added, and the mixture is blended in the drum for up to three days.
4. All the fruit in the pantry is covered in mold. Somehow the window had been broken.

Discuss with a classmate the following topics. Do you expect these topics to have more or less passive voice used in their explanation?

- The history of the banana
- Red pandas
- My best friend’s wedding
- My best friend
- Emojis
- Chocolate: from tree to store
- Rainbows

For each of the topics above, write on a separate sheet of paper one active and one passive sentence. Share your sentences with a partner and compare.

Sentences should only be made passive for the reasons mentioned above, but sometimes sentences cannot be made passive. That is because if a sentence does not have an object, it cannot be made passive. Some verbs are intransitive—that means they cannot be changed into passive. I could give you a long list of intransitive verbs, but it would be much easier to just not try to make sentences passive if they don’t have an object. Let’s practice so you can see what I mean.

Make the following sentences passive, if possible. If it’s not possible, why is it not? Is the agent necessary to the meaning, or can it be deleted? Also, think about whether the sentence would be better active or passive, or if it doesn’t matter in the current context. Last, make sure your form of “be” matches the verb tense used in the active sentence.

1. Paul McCartney and John Lennon wrote “Let It Be.”

2. People in Saudi Arabia speak Arabic.

3. The scientist used an EKG machine to check the participant’s heart after exercising.

4. Someone stole my phone.

5. The mailman already delivered the mail.
6. Did your parents teach you to read?

7. Someone has taken her to the hospital.

8. Many artists have covered the song “Yesterday.”

9. Students should turn in their homework on time.


11. An earthquake occurred yesterday.

12. I didn’t sleep well last night.

13. My wallet fell out of my bag.

14. Someone has to stay here.

15. Many people saw the game.

B.2 Using Gerunds and Infinitives

B.2.1 Gerunds

Gerunds are formed by adding “ing” to a verb to make it function as a noun. The following are ways gerunds are used.

- As the subject of a sentence:
  
  **Ex**  
  Swimming is my hobby.  
  Consuming fast food contributes to higher obesity rates.  
  Swimming in the lake in the summer is my favorite summertime activity.

- As the object of a verb, depending on the verb. The action of the gerund in this situation usually happens before or at the same time as the main verb:
  
  **Ex**  
  I can’t stop eating chocolate.  
  I don’t recall allowing you into this room.

- After a pronoun/person as an object, depending on the verb, and in formal situations, a possessive noun or pronoun may be used:
  
  **Ex**  
  I enjoy Ms. Chitty’s playing the guitar.  
  I don’t appreciate their rudeness.

- Some special verb phrases require a gerund:
Appendix B. Grammar Skills

Ex You should spend some time studying every day. She had difficulty studying with all the noise in the library.

- **Prepositions cannot have a verb after them, so change the action to a gerund:**
  Ex I am afraid of flying. My sister isn’t interested in trying to learn how to use a computer.

- **Sense verbs “see”, “smell”, and “hear” can use base form verbs, but they usually have a gerund after them:**
  Ex I heard a little girl crying at the playground.

This website gives good word lists for the previous gerund rules: http://www.grammar-quizzes.com/gerundsum.html#complements

**B.2.2 Infinitive**

Infinitives are formed by adding "to" before a verb to make the phrase function as a noun. Be careful as "to" can also be a preposition, and thus a gerund form of a verb must be used after. The following are ways infinitives are used.

- **As the subject of a sentence, but it is not common.**
  Ex To be or not to be—that is the question.

- **As the object of a verb, depending on the verb. The action of the infinitive in this situation usually happens after the main verb:**
  Ex I want to go to UT next year. I plan to visit Turkey next month.

- **Can be used after a pronoun / person as an object, depending on the verb:**
  Ex I want my students to go to UT next year. Bob advised his brother not to buy stock in Apple.

- **To show purpose, reason for an action (same as “in order to”, but “in order” is deleted:**
  Ex I walked to Panera to get some coffee.
  **Note:** The preposition "for" can also be used to show purpose, but usually the purpose is for some thing. Use infinitive if the purpose is an action, and use "for" if the purpose is a thing.
  Ex I walked to Panera for some coffee.

- **With some adjectives to describe someone’s feelings:**
  Ex I was surprised to see Ms. Smith in her Halloween costume. I’m sorry to see you go.

- **Causative verbs “let”, “make”, and “have”, and usually the verb "help” do not use “to” with the infinitive—just the base form verb:**
  Ex I let Claudia braid my hair. Linda was too lazy, so she had someone else write her essay. Unfortunately, I was the one who helped her write it.
  **Note:** The meaning of "let” and "make” are very different here. "Let” has a meaning of permission, allowing someone to do something, while "make” means to force someone to do
something. How are the following example sentences different in meaning?

- **“it + be verb + adj. (for someone) + inf.”**:
  - \[\text{Ex}\] It is a good day to go outside.
  - It is not easy for students to learn English.

- **“too + adj. + inf.”**:
  - \[\text{Ex}\] It is too cold to go outside today.
  - She’s too beautiful to go to jail.

- **“adj. + enough + inf.”**:
  - \[\text{Ex}\] It’s not warm enough to go outside.
  - The chicken isn’t done enough to eat yet.

- **“enough + noun + inf.”**:
  - \[\text{Ex}\] I don’t have enough money to go to the mall this weekend.
  - Brian did not have enough points to pass the test.

I don’t have enough money to go to the mall this weekend.

This website gives good word lists for the previous infinitive rules: [http://www.grammar-quizzes.com/infinitivesum.html#complements](http://www.grammar-quizzes.com/infinitivesum.html#complements)

One of the most difficult aspects of using gerunds or infinitives is when they are used after a verb. As the chart explains, some verbs require either a gerund or infinitive after them. You could just memorize which verbs need a gerund and which need an infinitive, or you could use the loose rule pictured here.

This rule doesn’t always work, but it’s better than just memorizing a list of verbs. These especially can be useful for verbs where both a gerund or infinitive may be used, but it can change the meaning. Let’s look at an example of that.

- \[\text{Ex}\] I stopped smoking.

- I stopped to smoke.
These two sentences have different meanings. We can break down the sentences into two actions—although only one of them is a verb. If one happens before the verb, in the past, most of the time you will need a gerund.

**Ex**

I stopped smoking. (I smoked in the past, but then I stopped.)

In this example, the person first smoked, but then the later action was to stop. The first action was completed and finished before the verb happened.

**Ex**

I stopped to smoke. (I stopped first, and then started to smoke.)

As you can see from the two examples, oftentimes gerunds are the first action before the verb, but infinitives happen after the verb. Let’s look at some other examples.

**Ex**

I enjoy playing tennis. (Gerunds can also mean at the same time. You usually have fun and enjoy something while you do that activity.)

I want to talk to you. (You want now the future activity of talking to someone. This action has not been started yet, and hopefully will occur in the future.)

I miss talking to my friends in my country. (I talked to my friends in my country before, and now I miss that.)

I don’t remember locking my door! (You may or may not have locked the door before you left, and just now you thought about that.)

Don’t forget to turn the oven off. (Hopefully you remember you need to turn the oven off and then do so.)

I decided to go to the US to study English. (First you made a decision, and that will be realized in the future.)

Let’s practice using this rule to guess if we need a gerund or infinitive in the following sentences.

**Fill in the blank with a gerund or infinitive.**

1. watch __________ movies is my favorite hobby. I like __________ American movies and TV series. I think it’s the easiest way __________ fun and practice __________ English. I usually watch movies after doing my homework because it encourages me __________ my homework. __________ movies can truly help me __________ my listening skill. My teacher recommended __________ movies with subtitles if I thought they spoke too fast. Subtitles have made it possible __________ my vocabulary. __________ the actors’ expressions can help me learn new words. Sometimes it’s too difficult __________ every word they say, so I guess the meaning by __________ their body language. The most important thing __________ the right movies. I used __________ movies with many difficult words and I found it was boring and annoying __________ the movies so often __________ new vocabulary words. It made me __________ bored. So, I

2. watch
3. have
4. learn
5. finish
6. watch
7. improve
8. watch
9. increase
10. see
11. catch
12. observe
13. choose
14. choose
15. stop
16. look
17. feel
chose easy movies, like animation, ___________ step by step.

Last week after I finished ___________ my homework, I went to the movie theater downtown ___________ the new Jungle Book movie with my friend Morgan. We chose this movie because we believed it would be easier ___________ to understand. However, there was one thing that made me dislike ___________ to the movies. I resented ___________ people spoil the movie. It’s frustrating ___________ other people ___________ while we’re watching the most exciting scene in the movie. Also the movie started at 10 pm. It’s too late ___________ a movie. Anyway, the movie was awesome and I had a good time ___________ with my new friend. I can’t wait ___________ some free time so that I can go out ___________ a movie again at the theater.

Make your own sentences using the sentence beginners. Do you need to use a gerund or infinitive? Try to write your sentences about your hobbies.

1. I have a difficult time ___________.
2. I waste a lot of time ___________.
3. On the weekend I often lie on my bed ___________.
4. In my free time, I like to go ___________.
5. I promise ___________.
6. I would like ___________.
7. I can’t stand ___________.
8. It is a bad idea ___________.
9. It takes patience ___________.
10. It is dangerous ___________.
11. I am ashamed ___________.
12. I am determined ___________.
13. I am relieved ___________.
14. It’s too easy ___________.
15. I am not strong enough ___________.
16. I don’t have enough money ___________.

B.3 Using Participle Phrases

Participial phrases are magical words or phrases that also help you combine sentences, better describe details, and improve your writing! They are verbs that when "ed" or "ing" are added (or past participle verb), it becomes an adjective. (Not a gerund–this is when we add "ing" to a verb and it becomes a noun. That’s different!)

Ex. When I was 12, I suffered from a broken heart. (My heart was broken.)
I bought myself a used car. (I bought myself a car that was used.)
Don’t wake up the sleeping baby! (Don’t wake up the baby who is sleeping!)

In the sentences in the parentheses above, you can see that the original sentence uses a participle. Present participles (ing) are used with active meanings, and usually in progressive verb tenses. Past participles (ed or past participle form verbs) are used for passive meanings, and are usually used for passive verbs tenses. However, participles by themselves can act as a kind of adjective to help describe action that either a noun is doing or receiving. This meaning can be seen in the example sentences above.

Which sentences in the examples sound better? Probably the ones with the participle phrases. Why should we use them?

• It’s another way to vary our sentence style. We can use adjective clauses, or to add variety, use participial phrases. Using many styles shows you have mastery of the language and makes your paper more interesting. It gives it life!
• It’s another way to combine some sentences—just like adjective clauses, if you have 2 short sentences that have the same subject or object, you can combine them using adjective clauses or participial phrases.
• It’s a good way to get rid of EVIL "be"—the most boring verb in English. Even though it is not the main verb, we will be able to see more action in your writing if you turn some of those UGLY passive verbs into "ed" participles.

There are several ways to easily add participial phrases to your sentences.

• Adjective clauses can often be reduced to participial phrases.

  Ex  People who are living in glass houses should not throw stones. (clause)
  People who live in glass houses should not throw stones. (phrase)
  Mary applied for a job that was advertised in the paper. (clause) (PASSIVE!)
  Mary applied for a job advertised in the paper. (phrase)
  Knoxville, which is located in Tennessee, is a medium-sized city. (clause)
  Knoxville, located in Tennessee, is a medium-sized city. (phrase)

– Appositives are not the same as participle phrases, but they are created in much the same way, by deleting the relative clause word and form of "be" from an adjective clause.

  Ex  Mary, who is a doctor at John Hopkins Hospital, states that many of her patients are not happy with the decision. (clause)
  Mary, a doctor at John Hopkins Hospital, states that many of her patients are not happy with the decision. (appositive)
  My son Carlos got four As on his report card. (appositive)

– Participial phrases created from adjective clauses follow the same comma rule as adjective clauses and appositives! YAY! That means if the information is necessary to complete the meaning, there is no comma!

  Ex  A woman hurrying to catch the bus tripped and fell. (No comma—"A woman" is general!)
  Tina, hurrying to catch the bus, stumbled and fell. (Tina is a specific woman’s name.)
B.3 Using Participle Phrases

- Time clauses can sometimes be reduced to participial phrases, but they will need to keep the time adverb to make sense. This is usually possible for sentences using "after", "before", "when", "while", and "since". To safely reduce, the subject of the main clause and the time clause must be the same topic, and only reduce the time clause, not the main part of the sentence. Don’t forget to replace the name or noun deleted from the time clauses if it’s different from the one in the main clause.

**Ex**  
After I started classes at UT, I learned how important it was to make a schedule for myself.  
(After starting classes at UT, I learned how important it was to make a schedule for myself.)

Since Adam came to the US, he has learned many things about cultures from around the world.  
(Since coming to the US, Adam has learned many things about cultures from around the world.)

Thomas was a famous biker before he was thrust into student life once again.  
(Thomas was a famous biker before thrust into student life once again.)

Anna didn’t want to be a diver anymore after the doctor said she was injured.  
(This sentence’s time clause cannot be reduced because the subject of the main clause and the time clause are different topics.)

- Time clauses with "while" can often be reduced to participial phrases, and ““while” can be kept or deleted. Be careful, though—your participial phrase should be directly AFTER the noun it modifies. You can begin a sentence with a participial phrase ONLY if it is modifying the subject. Usually these kinds of participial phrases stay at the beginning of the sentence. These are good to use instead of sentences with “and” as well.

**Ex**  
While I was sitting on the beach, I watched the sunset.  
X I watched the sunset sitting on the beach. (The sunset was sitting? Crazy!)

Sipping on some coffee, reading a magazine, I enjoyed my free time in the cozy cafe.  
(I was drinking coffee and reading a magazine and enjoying my free time in the cozy cafe.)

- Also "after" clauses can use past participle. Use this when you want to show time order—1 event happened first, and a second event happened later.

**Ex**  
After the students (had) solved the problem without any help, they were very happy. (adverb / time clause)

Having solved most of the problem without any help, the students were very happy. (participial phrase)

- Participial phrases similar to the one in the example above can also be used to show a cause / effect relationship without needing to use “because”. In these cases it’s sometimes better to use “having” to help show which happened first—the cause happens first, and then the effect afterwards. Once again, this reduction is only possible if the subjects of both the main and because clause are the same topic.

**Ex**  
Because she needed $500, Amelia phoned her parents.  
(Needing $500, Amelia phoned her parents.)

All of the students gave out a sigh of relief because they learned the test had been canceled.  
(All of the students gave out a sigh of relief having learned that the test had been canceled.)
Reduce the sentences below, if possible. Are they being reduced from an adjective clause or an adverb clause?

1. Many of the myths and stories were adopted by the Romans, who often just changed the names of the gods and heroes from Greek to Latin words.

2. Hera was proud and quarrelsome and ready to harm those who made her angry.

3. Nemesis, like the Furies, pursued those who had done wrong.

4. But Juno, the queen who lived with Jupiter and shared his throne in the midst of the clouds, did not love Io at all.

5. Demeter had one fair daughter, named Proserpine (Persephone), who was playing with her companions near Mount Etna.

6. After a prophecy that his first wife, Metis, would give birth to a god greater than he, he tricked her into turning herself into a fly.

7. After Hebe married Heracles, her place was taken by Ganymede, a beautiful Trojan boy.

8. Before Theseus was attacked by the robbers and giants, his father gave him a special sword.

9. After leaving the cave, Cadmus hardly had time to walk down into the road again before he saw a white cow, which he followed, as the voice had told him to do.

10. Because Cronus had betrayed his father, he feared that his offspring would do the same.

11. Tantalus was to be punished forever because he had betrayed the gods.

12. They called him Oedipus, Swollen-Foot, because of the wounds they had found upon him.

13. It was not a brave thing to do, and yet he drew a long, sharp knife from his belt and cut off the head of poor Argus while he slept.

14. As much as possible, you should guess vocabulary while you read and avoid using the dictionary unless you feel you don’t understand the material.

15. Excuse me for leaving you, but my queen will do all she can to make you comfortable while I am gone.

Combine the following sentences using an adjective clause, and then reduce into appositive or reduced participial phrases.

1. His toy is the most popular item in the store. The toy is a blue bike.

2. My roommate was late to class today. Her name is Kelly.

3. A unicorn is a horse with a horn. It is a mythological animal.
"It's All Greek to Me!" has everything—entertaining stories, academic articles in a variety of disciplines, vocabulary crossover in literary and academic readings, connections to local, American, and Western culture, and plenty of chances for critical thinking. All readings are authentic with minimal adaptation from a variety of sources. This textbook also gives help for advanced level grammar and writing issues, using outside sources, and reading and vocabulary strategies.

The Online Teacher’s Resource Guide has:

* Additional reading materials
* Additional resources for grammar issues
* Videos related to textbook content
* Tests and quizzes
* Presentation Topics
* Example student essays

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Instructors, email cbeals@utk.edu for access to the guide.