

APSU Writing Center

Combining Sentences

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Combining sentences makes academic writing more concise and easier to read. It helps ideas flow smoothly and avoids repetition.

Common Sentence Errors

- A **run-on sentence** happens when two complete ideas are joined without punctuation or connecting words.
- A **comma splice** happens when two complete ideas are joined with only a comma.
 - **Incorrect Example:** I love coffee I drink it every morning.
 - **Correct Example:** I love coffee, and I drink it every morning.
 - The coordinating conjunction *and* joins two complete ideas.

Ways to Combine Sentences

Combine Subjects

- When two or more subjects perform the same action, you can combine them into one sentence.
 - **Original Sentence:** Sarah reads books. Tom reads books.
 - **Combined Sentence:** Sarah and Tom read books.
 - The subjects *Sarah* and *Tom* are combined into one compound subject since they share the same verb *read*.

Use Participial Phrases

- A **participial phrase** begins with a verb ending in “ing” or “ed” and acts like an adjective to describe a noun.
- A **modifying phrase** is a group of words that adds more information about a noun or pronoun, telling us how, when, why, or under what condition something happens.
- You can use a participial phrase to turn one sentence into a modifying phrase.
 - **Original Sentence:** The dog barked. It ran around the yard.
 - **Combined Sentence:** Barking loudly, the dog ran around the yard.

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Use Coordinating Conjunctions

- Coordinating conjunctions connect two equal ideas.
- Use the acronym FANBOYS to remember them (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).
 - **Original Sentence:** This energy drink has electrolytes. I don't know what electrolytes do.
 - **Combined Sentence:** This energy drink has electrolytes, but I don't know what they do.
 - The conjunction *but* connects two complete ideas that contrast with each other.

Use a Semicolon and a Conjunctive Adverb

- A **conjunctive adverb** (however, therefore, furthermore, still) shows how two complete ideas relate to each other.
 - **Original Sentence:** I studied for hours. I still failed the test.
 - **Combined Sentence:** I studied for hours; however, I still failed the test.
 - The semicolon joins the two complete ideas, and *however* shows contrast between them.

Use Subordinating Conjunctions

- A **subordinating conjunction** (because, although, since, if, when) shows that one idea depends on another.
 - **Original Sentence:** The chapter is thorough. It is dense.
 - **Combined Sentence:** Because the chapter is thorough, it is dense.
- When the subordinate clause comes at the end, no comma is needed.
 - **Example:** The chapter is dense because it is thorough.

Use Relative Pronouns

- Relative pronouns (that, which, who, whom, whose, whoever, whomever) connect a clause to a noun and add detail.
 - **Original Sentence:** I have a friend. She is a talented singer.
 - **Combined Sentence:** I have a friend who is a talented singer.



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References

Lewis University Writing Center. (n.d.). *Combining Sentences*.

<https://www.lewisu.edu/writingcenter/pdf/CombiningSentences.pdf>

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