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Sentence Combining: 8 structures that help us eliminate choppy writing, improve connections, and say what we really mean.

See the last page for 2 "example sets" for 1/27/20: "one meme with all 8 structures"

I. INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS SENTENCE COMBINING?

Sentence combining is the technique of being able to connect different kinds of sentence structures together in English. We choose to combine ideas so that we can:

- Create clearer and more logical links between ideas so that our ideas are not choppy or disconnected;
- Maintain an attractive, fluent variety of sentence types so that our writing does not sound mechanical, juvenile, or formulaic; and
- Create a fluent sense of "voice" that carries our message forward as a smoothly-flowing whole.

The skills of sentence combining are among the most important tools of **grammar**[1] that give rise to the particular writing **styles**[2] **of individual writers.**

Two common misconceptions about sentence combining:

SENTENCE COMBINING IS NOT:

- *a way merely to make our writing longer:*

By combining sentences, we do tend to create "longer sentences"; however, this is the end *result* of connecting shorter ideas, each of which is as short and economical with words as we can make it. Sentence combining is thus *not by intention* a way to create "long" or "wordy" sentences, but a way to maximize the number of *ideas and relationships between ideas* in our writing, which will hopefully be composed of ever-clearer, short but now-connected phrases.

- *a way to fix vague and wordy writing that lacks content:*

Wordy writing actually often hides the need to combine sentences in the first place--overdressed sentences *sound* fluent yet may hide the lack of connection between ideas that are actually disconnected. Instead, we must eliminate these wordy, vague sentences to begin with, hear where the basic ideas remain choppy or separated, then use sentence combining techniques to link these compact, now-simplified ideas together to make rich, interesting English writing.

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[1] "Grammar" in this case meaning "conforming to those particular rules of technical 'correctness' in standard English.

[2] "Style" in this context meaning *how* we express ideas, and the specific personal preferences we develop for which structures of grammar we employ to do so.

II. Quick overview: the 8 Structures of Grammar used to combine sentences

The following concepts are all considered standard, formal terms of grammar. After you read each overview definition here, I encourage you to look up each bolded word in a few grammar sites of your choice. It's always helpful with grammar to get different examples and definitions of the same concepts--seeing more and more-varied definitions for these abstract names and classifications will help them stick, as you see multiple examples and what the definitions share in common across the varying sites' explanations..

Phrases Vs. Clauses

A **Phrase** is generally any group of words; in sentence combining, we use the term "phrase," however, only for phrases that do not fall under the more specific category, known as **"Clauses."**

Clauses, in turn, are only those phrases[3] that have a **subject** (a noun or pronoun that "does" or "is" something) and a **predicate (**some verb phrase that says what the subject does).
Note that this definition is very similar to that of a sentence: all simple sentences **are** clauses, as every sentence contains a subject and predicate. Think of the clauses that we're talking about as "used-to-be-sentences" that have been changed slightly so that they can now work as part of larger sentences.

At the heart of every sentence is an **independent clause,** which forms the backbone of the sentence-we'll refer to this as the **"primary clause"** of the sentence. In order to combine other clauses with that primary clause, we avoid run-ons by changing the ones we're "combining in" in one of a few ways so that they become **"dependent,"** meaning that:

- they depend grammatically on the primary clause to make sense only as a *part of that other sentence;* separated, these dependent structures will no longer sound like sentences.
- they now become only *part of the meaning* of that parent sentence; in turn, the new clause only "makes sense" in contributing to, or modifying, the primary clause on which it depends--the independent clause remains the "main point" of the sentence.

Here are the 4 types of DEPENDENT CLAUSES:

Note: the explanatory sentences in each box all feature examples of the clause types!

Subordinate/Adverb Clauses: made by adding a "**subordinating conjunction**" to the beginning of an independent clause, these create dependent clauses that **function as adverbs**, telling us "how, when, why, or under what condition "something in the primary clause is done."

__When__ we want to show when, how, or why something is done, an adverb clause works very well. *__Because__ they can come at the beginning of a sentence, they can help create more variety __even if__ they can come at the end of a sentence as well.*

[3] all clauses are phrases, but not all phrases are clauses!

Two Grammar rules raise known issues in subordinate/adverb clauses:

__When__ they begin a sentence, we set them off with a comma, but we need not do so if they end the sentence.

Because any kind of connector can begin an adverb clause, it's fine to start a sentence with "because."
(Note: Some middle school teachers tell you to avoid starting a sentence this way, and they have a point, but the problem actually isn't "starting the sentence with 'because.'" It's actually something else that their rule helps some students prevent: ~~Because they don't want you to make a fragment like this.~~ Fragments are bad, starting with "because"= okay. Ms. Hatchet would be proud!)

Two types of Relative/Adjective Clauses: made by changing the subject at the beginning of a clause to a **"relative pronoun,"** these function like **adjectives,** which describe or modify nouns. Like participles, adjective clauses help us **describe a noun** by adding actions, which prevents us from having multiple, short sentences expressing actions about the same noun.

Adjective clause grammar depends on which of two functions the clause serves:

Restrictive adjective clauses identify or "restrict" a specific noun from among others, clarifying "which specific one we're talking about."

Non-restrictive adjective clauses simply describe something about a noun when its identity is already known.

Note the two types, demonstrated here:

Adjective clauses, **which** may add description or define things based on their actions, come in two kinds: *"restrictive clauses*" add actions ***that*** *specify the particular thing being talked about*, whereas non-restrictive ones simply add description or elaboration**, which** may be helpful to include within one sentence rather than starting a new one.

Noun Clauses: Often in English, we need to refer to something as if it were its own "thing," but we lack a noun to name it. Noun clauses allow us to take a complex idea that could only be expressed as a sentence, then, with the addition of a connecting word in front (usually **"that," "whether," "if," or question words like "how," "why," "who")** use this resulting clause as if it were a single noun. Noun clauses most often follow "thinking" verbs (like "think," "know," "believe," "suppose") or "author verbs" (such as "argues," "contends," Ilustrates," "proposes," et al.) after which these noun clauses act as objects or **object complements** to the verb.

*Did you ever wonder **what** it's called when you use a question word to set off a sentence-within a sentence?*
*Now you can see **that** it's a "noun clause."*

*Notice too **that** the resulting clause actually contains a complete sentence to which a "that" or question word has been added.*

We also use four types of "Phrases"(that aren't clauses)to combine sentences:
(examples follow)

- **Appositives:** a noun or adjective phrase placed next to a noun, which it names, characterizes, or defines, an appositive provide a quick way to get rid of choppy sentences that otherwise would say: "____is (a) _____"

An appositive, a defining or descriptive phrase placed next to a noun that it modifies, helps us get rid of "____is a ____" sentences.

- **Infinitives**: any verb phrase beginning with a "to+verb." Infinitive phrases are made from the predicate of a sentence whose primary action shows purpose or intent; we attach these sentences into other sentences by changing their verbs to the infintive form.

We need infinitives in English to express basic concepts like intention. To do this, we take the sentence that shows intention or reason, then turn the predicate of that sentence into an infinitive to turn that sentence into part of a larger sentence .

- **Participial phrases (or "participles"):** a verb phrase placed next to a noun in a larger sentence, joined by changing its verb to the participle forms ending in either "-ed" or "ing." Participles offer one of English's most flexible ways to combine multiple sentences in which the same subject performs multiple actions.

***Coming** at any point in a sentence, participles modify sentences by adding second or third actions taken by a noun in the primary clause. Writers sometimes confuse participles in the middles of sentences with appositives, **separated** from their primary clause by commas , but in fact, participles have a different structure, **built** from verbs rather than nouns or adjectives.*

***Grammar Note:** be careful with where participles are placed, as they may be confusing to your reader dangling at the end of the sentence.*

Misplaced even at the beginning of a sentence, readers may be confused about this dreaded "dangling participle"!

- **Absolutes :** a variation on the participle with a noun added before the participial verb. This specifies *exactly which part or aspect* of the noun in the primary clause performs the action:

*Absolutes help clarifiy the nouns that participle verbs refer to, the **noun** at the beginning of the phrase* **specifying which specific thing or part of a thing is performing an action**.

They also remove the confusion from would-be dangling participles, their opening noun **now specifying what or who is doing something at the end of the sentence.**

**note that the bolded portions of each absolute are in fact participial phrases*

Detailed guide to Sentence Combining:
8 structures, with full definitions, examples, analysis, and how to avoid common mistakes.

III. Step-by step examples and explanations of all eight structures

(arranged in order of increasing grammatical complexity)

note on how to read this guide: To improve visual clarity, the following formatting aids have been followed throughout:
- Color highlights mark all deliberately-used examples of each structure (color legend corresponds to headings of each)
- *italics represent my explanations, most commenting directly on the examples immediately adjacent*
- "-" marks show the choppy sentences *before combining* where each technique could be used
- "incorrect" sentences with specific examples of grammar errors are in red highlights
- **Bold** is used for simple emphasis.

APPOSITIVE

Two noun phrases are "in apposition" when they refer to or name the same thing, and sit side-by-side in a sentence. The phrase that's attached to the other noun or noun phrase is referred to as ***an appositive****, and is always set off from the sentence by a comma or commas.*

We use appositives to name, define, and add simple description, getting rid of sentences in the form " ____is a ___" in the process.

-Dr. P teaches English. He is a contumacious malefactor.

Now using an appositive:

+Dr. P, a contumacious malefactor, is my English teacher.

Notice that in this example, I could also make the first part an " ___is ____" and change the

structure:

-Dr. P is an English teacher. He likes elaborate insults borrowed from Shakespeare, like calling someone a "contumacious malefactor. "

would create the appositive:

+Dr. P, an English teacher, likes elaborate insults borrowed from Shakespeare, like calling someone a "contumacious malefactor. "

Finally, notice that either appositive can PRECEDE the subject, not only inserted in the middle of a sentence. In this case, we use only one comma to set it off the appositive from the rest of the sentence:

+A contumacious malefactor, Dr. P teaches my English class. *or*

+An English teacher, Dr.P likes elaborate insults borrowed from Shakespeare, like calling someone a "contumacious malefactor."

We can also make appositives from adjectives: notice that they no longer "give two names for the same thing," like appositives made from nouns do. Still, these "adjective phrases in apposition" function as appositives in that they too get rid of "___ is a ___" sentences and modify nouns:

-The teacher was only marginally fond of basketball. He preferred to watch football instead.

Now *with an adjective phrase in apposition:*

+The teacher, only marginally fond of basketball, preferred to watch football instead.

or

- The grammar assignment was systematic and thorough in its design. It required students to combine sentences.

+The grammar assignment, systematic and thorough in design, required students to combine sentences.

One common style issue: We DON'T need to use an appositive if all we're combining is an adjective

For instance, if in this last example., we were only combining the idea :

The grammar assignment was systematic and thorough.

*All we're really adding is the adjectives "*systematic and thorough, "*we don't need the extra wordiness or sense of sentence interruption produced by an appositive:*

OK: The grammar assignment, systematic and thorough, required students to combine sentences.

Instead, simply use the adjedtives:

Better: The systematic, thorough grammar assignment required students to combine sentences.

Here's another example:

-*Ethan Frome* is a great, sad tale of unrequited love. It is filled with a sense of frustrated

longing.

This is a great candidate for an appositive:

+*Ethan Frome*, a great, sad tale of unrequited love, is filled with a sense of frustrated longing. *or*

+A great, sad tale of unrequited love, *Ethan Frome* is filled with a sense of frustrated longing.

Nice, but what if we were only combining:

-*Ethan Frome* is a great, sad tale. It is filled with a sense of frustrated longing.

Notice that here, simply using adjectives instead just sounds smoother and less wordy?:

Better: The great, sad tale of *Ethan Frome* exudes a sense of frustrated longing.

Return to list of terms, or continue to next page below:

THE INFINITIVE:

The term "infinitive" has two meanings: as a part of speech, it refers to the form of any verb which accompanies ***modal verbs*** *like "can," "want," "like," or "need":*

Example: I need to learn.

An infinitive phrase, in turn, includes any objects or complements that accompany the verb:

Example: I need to learn what infinitives are.

As a technique for sentence combining, however, we can take the entire predicate of a short choppy sentence, turn it into an infinitive with "to +infinitive form of verb," then attach this structure to another sentence to show purpose, cause, or reason. We can, and often do, attach 2-3 infinitives together to help explain reasons for doing things:

-I need to learn what infinitives are. I need to do this so that I can use them to make better sentences.

As infinitives:

+I need to learn what infinitives are to be able to use them to make better sentences.

Notice that infinitives can be very short or long, and often show up with surprising frequency, including one after the other:

+If I want a second slice of pizza to go with my sushi, I'll need my ATM card to get cash at the Union to pay for it or I won't be able to eat.

Grammar note: *Don't "split the infinitive" (by adding modifiers in between the "to" and verb) if you can help it:*

-Because she wants to rebelliously get back at her mother, Jing Mei resists practicing piano.

now restoring the infinitive:

+Because she rebelliously wants to get back at her mother, Jing Mei resists practicing piano.

hmmm. not split, but "rebelliously wants" still seems awkward. Try to place the modifier more carefully, not even attached to the infinitive if it doesn't belong there:

++ To get back at her mother, Jing Mei **rebelliously resists** practicing piano.

Or:

-To **scrupulously** avoid splitting infinitives, writers should carefully place modifiers within their sentences.

+To avoid splitting infinitives, writers should **scrupulously** look for the best placement of modifiers within their sentences.

Final style and logic caution: *be careful that you don't muddle your point of view when you use infinitives to analyze something an **author** is doing: you may mistakenly end up mixing the intentions of the author with those of the character:*

-Fitzgerald uses the color white to cloud Daisy's purity with irony.

*While it's not clear exactly how irony can be used to "cloud someone's purity," the mistake is really about what's ironic: the author is portraying her as being less than pure--the irony is that **he's** doing so while using symbols associated with purity. Thus, disentangling (1) **his** portrayal, (2) **her** purity, and (3) **the story's** irony, we get the much clearer:*

+ Through his ironic choice of the name "Daisy," Fitzgerald depicts his flawed heroine as hiding a heart of yellow (consistently associated with corruption and death throughout the novel) behind an exterior of innocent white.

Here's another example of misplaced-infinitive confusion:

-*Robert* Frost describes the road not taken as the same is the one he took to create confusion as to whether either one is different.

*Wait: Did he **take the road to create confusion**? Or describe his confusion when choosing it?*

+To challenge the supposed "difference" of the two roads, Frost describes the "road taken" as indistinguishable from the one he took.

Watch out for "reverse Show ← Tells": this occours when, rather than support "what the text shows -->," we reverse the inference to assert "Why the text detail in the story happens." Since we don't want to make unsupportable claims that ASSUME why an author said something, make sure to include qualifiers when you urn tan inference about the text into an infinitive. That way, it accurately conveys that this is only our inference or guess, not that we KNOW the author put it there for this reason.

+ Fitzgerald portrays Daisy as constantly wearing white **as if** to suggest that she appears pure, regardless of her possible moral corruption beneath.

His doing so is thus done AS IF this were his intention, even if it's only our inference.

+Seemingly to challenge the supposed "difference" of the two roads, Frost describes the "road taken" as indistinguishable from the one he took.

We don't KNOW that he intended it, but it SEEMS like he did from the poem

+Despite acknowledging the roads as indistinguishable, Frost states that "ages and ages hence" he WILL believe that his road has "made all the difference," evidently to warn us that even people aware of their rationalizations will accept and believe them eventually.

We may not be sure that he meant to warn us, but from the EVIDENCE, it looks likely.

Debunking a writing myth: ("~~don't use qualifiers~~"-MYTH!)

Often, younger students are encouraged never to use qualifiers, lest they sound like they're being wishy-washy or indecisive. In fact, however, as each of these examples shows, not only are these more-qualified assertions "ok," they can clearly be defended as more accurate and logically-supported. notice how in each of these examples, our guarded conclusions are simply more accurate, the opposite of vague!

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THE PARTICIPLE:

Grammar background: "Where the participle" gets its name.

*As a part of speech **the "participle" form of a verb** is the "-ed" or "-ing" form used with most tenses that use helping verbs.*

Simple tenses DO NOT take the participle:

I eat. (simple present, no helping verb)
I ate. (Simple past, with no helping verb)
I will eat (simple future, which DOES need a helping verb, but is not the participle form.)

All the perfect and progressive tenses, however DO use the participle:
These tenses use the "past participle" form with its "-ed" or "-en" ending:
used with helping verb "have" or "had" to create the other tenses:

Past perfect: I **had eaten**
Present perfect: I **have eaten**
Future perfect: I **will have eaten**

The progressive tenses, in turn, rely on the "present participle," which typically takes an "-ing" ending:

*The present progressive: I **am eating***
*The past progressive: I **was eating***
*The future progressive: I **will be eating***
*The past perfect progressive: I **had been been eating***
*The present perfect progressive: I **have been eating***
*The future perfect progressive: I **will have been eating***

"Participle phrases" begin with a participle form of a verb, and the rest of what would have been the "predicate" of the sentence that went with them, then attach that phrase to a NOUN in the primary clause that performs that action:

-The students laughed at the references to various drinks. They were particularly delighted at the funny sound of "mojito" and "julep."

Now with a participial phrase:

+Laughing at the references to the names of various drinks, the students were particularly delighted at the funny sound of "mojito" and "julep."

Notice that when both sentences are short, either can serve as the participle, depending on emphasis:

+Particularly delighted at the funny sound of "mojito" and "julep," the students laughed at the references to the names of various drinks.

Notice that as with appositives, we can vary which idea ends up as the modifying phrase, shifting the emphasis to which idea is in the primary clause.

While there's no technical, or grammatical similarity between appositives and participles, a number have students have noticed that these phrases actually are put together in analogous ways:
Just as appositives let you join two noun phrases to one verb, participles let you join two verbs to one noun!

SO, to make a participle, take a second sentence about ***what something in your first sentence does****, then, in that second sentence, lose the subject and change the verb to an -ing or -ed ending, attaching the resulting participle to the sentence.*
USE Participles to give extra action to a noun in a sentence, getting rid of sentences that simply state one action ("THIS happened") without any connection to what about it/ why it matters? etc.

Picturing the students laughing at Dr. P's dumb examples from period 4, all the students in period five began to laugh as well.
Or, switching which action is the primary action with the one that's the "extra" action described by the participle:
Laughing at yet another one of Dr. P's dumb examples from period 4, all the students in period 5 could only picture the reactions of their peers in the other class.

-*Dr. P thought long and hard about the assignment. He wondered whether it would keep them up all night.*
Without chop, using participle:
+ Thinking long and hard about the assignment, Dr. P hoped it wouldn't keep them up at night.
Or
+Dr. P thought long and hard about the assignment, hoping it wouldn't keep them up at night.

BUT!!
GRAMMAR CAUTION: THE DREADED "DANGLING PARTICIPLE" (I just made one!) ↑
As with other phrase types, the participle can be placed anywhere in the sentence. Unfortunately, because:

- Participles add actions to nouns
- Sentences often have nouns acting as objects as well as subjects *and*
- Modifiers in English modify whatever they're next to,

WE CREATE FUNNY MISPLACED MODIFIERS WHEN THE PARTICIPLE PHRASE "DANGLES" AT THE END OR BEGINNING OF THE SENTENCE, SEEMING TO MODIFY THE "WRONG" NOUN.

SO:

Looking again at the last example:
-Dr. P thought long and hard about the assignment, hoping that it wouldn't keep them up at night.
Q: There's our unclear "dangling participle"; who's "wondering?" the teacher, or the assignment?
A: The teacher, who's wondering ABOUT the assignment:

+Dr.P, wondering whether the assignment would keep them up all night, thought long and hard about whether he still wanted to assign it.

DO: put the partic. phrase next to , or before, whatever is "doing it"

Here are a few more fun examples:
-Packer fans' tailgate parties are known for their brats, anticipating Mr. Rogers's quick recovery from his concussion suffered in the game against the Lions.
+Packers fans, anticipating Mr. Rogers's quick recovery from his concussion suffered in the game against the Lions, served up some truly majestic bratwurst at their tailgate parties.

-The Coen brothers'film *True Grit* showcases a particularly grizzled Jeff Bridges, who acts brilliantly with his pre-teen costar, boozing and shooting it up in many scenes.
+The Coen brothers' *True Grit* showcases a particularly grizzled Jeff Bridges, who, boozing and shooting it up in many scenes, acts brilliantly with his pre-teen costar.

Finally, notice that in some really "good" dangling participle sentences, you can actually create unintentional puns if the modifiers can refer metaphorically or euphemistically to noun it's been misplaced near. Thus:
-At least one die hard Packers fan cheered the way Mr. Rogers vindicated his midseason injury, celebrating with even more beer and brats, dramatically pounded by the Lions.
(no wonder Detroit's offensive line is looking a tad heavier this year...)
Another example:
-Check in at the main office with the signed form from your teacher before leaving school early, giving them the slip.
Another example:
-Misplaced participles can be confusing to your reader, dangling at the end of a sentence. Dangling at the wrong end of a sentence , the reader may be confused by dangling participial phrases.
Or my personal favorite:
-The exotic and expensive puppy was the best gift he could have given his sister, certified an immaculate, purebed bitch.

Note about common confusion in identifying participles:
Sentences use participial verbs all the time, but only some are used as part of special, modifying PARTICIPIAL PHRASES. *As you look at the examples above, notice how the marked participle verbs with -ed or -ing endings function differently than the same verbs would if used as the main verb in a sentence that just happened to be in one of these tenses!*

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THE ABSOLUTE

An absolute is created when the helping verb "to be" is removed from a sentence containing a participle verb, or a simple sentence REPLACES its predicate with a participial phrase. Let's first look at WHY we need a structure different from the participle, since the two phrase types initially look very similar:

Suppose that we start with this:

The car sped over the cliff. It was spinning through the air.

We MIGHT be tempted to do this, using a participle:

-The car sped over the cliff, **spinning through the air.** Or

-Spinning through the air, the car sped over the cliff.

See the problem? The participle, attaching the action, doesn't make it clear exactly WHAT specifically is "spinning." Right now, it's the whole car. What if it's NOT the whole car that's spinning?

*The **absolute** lets us add back in the noun that tells us SPECIFICALLY:*

+The car set sail through the sky, **its wheels** spinning as it drove over the cliff.

Perhaps an earlier cause is at issue:

+**His eyes** spinning after the 12 vodka tonics, the driver drove his car over the cliff.

maybe we're interested in the effects:

+**His head** spinning from the collision, the driver stepped from the car.

SO here's our definition of the Absolute and its function:

USE absolutes as a way to combine extra sentences in the form "X does Y" when the X is a specific part of the subject of another sentence. Form the absolute by keeping a NOUN in front of a participial phrase.

Now look at a few examples, including some "memes" based on literary interpretations:

-He gave a definition of an absolute based on how they function. These functions were best explained with examples.

Combined using absolute:

+He gave a definition of an absolute based on how they function, **these functions** ~~were~~ best explained with examples.

- Shakespeare actually dismisses his lover's physical beauty. This is shown when he says that her eyes "look nothing like the sun."

with the absolute:
+Shakespeare actually dismisses his lover's physical beauty, **<u>her eyes</u>** ~~were~~ looking "nothing like the sun" in his estimation.

-*(choppy)* John Donne's most famous "Holy Sonnet" calls upon God to use divine intervention. Donne does this by asking God to use superior force to "blow" down, "burn," and even "break" him.
with the absolute:
+ Donne's sonnet calls upon God to use **divine intervention**, his superior force ~~was~~ "blow[ing] him down, "burn[ing]" and even "break[ing]" him.

or, describing a different part of the sentence:
+**Donne's speaker**, his faith ~~was~~ challenged by his own inability to resist tempation, finds himself assailed by the Devil.
which replaces the choppy:
-**Donne's speaker** finds himself assailed by the Devil, which happens when he finds his faith challenged by his own inability to resist tempation.

-Hamlet unwittingly creates a mousetrap that will kill everyone in the play, including his mother and friend Laertes. Hamlet's sanity is pushed to the edge by the death of his lover, Ophelia.
+ His sanity ~~is~~ pushed to the edge by the death of his lover, Hamlet unwittingly creates a mousetrap that will kill everyone in the play, including his mother and his friend Laertes.
GRAMMAR CAUTION: make sure that when you use a PRONOUN as your subject ("HIS sanity"), you don't place the absolute next to the wrong noun in the sentence:

-Hamlet unwittingly creates a mousetrap that will kill everyone in the play, including his mother and his friend Laertes, his sanity ~~is~~ pushed to the edge by the death of his lover.
See how this placement of the absolute makes it sound like LAERTES, not Hamlet, loses his lover and his sanity?

See, finally, in these examples, how the absolute can help us eliminate wordiness, if we restate things in the shortest way:
-Pi innocently ignores any reason that he cannot "be a Hindu, AND a Christian, AND a Muslim" at once. His teachers do not ever think to make a strong case to persuade him that their beliefs must be exclusive.
+**His teachers** ~~were~~ never thinking to persuade him that their beliefs must be exclusive, Pi sees no reason why he cannot "be a Hindu, AND a Christian, AND a Muslim" at once.

-In “A cup of tea,” the cup overflows as the teacher deliberately pours too much tea into his cup. He suggests symbolically that the visiting scholar’s mind is “overfilled” with prior learning.

+ In “A cup of tea,” a teacher tries to prove that the visiting scholar’s mind is “overfilled” with prior learning, **his cup** ~~was~~ overflowing as the teacher deliberately pours too much tea into it.

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CLAUSES:

So, now that you've looked up some information about clauses, let's go over the basics one more time:

- *a clause is any phrase that contains a* ***subject and a predicate.***
- *based on this definition, all sentences are "clauses" but not all clauses are sentences.*
- *When a clause can stand on its own as a sentence, it is called an "****independent" clause.***
- *The clauses that we combine into an existing sentence are called "****dependent"*** *clauses because they cannot stand on their own.*
- *When we combine dependent clauses into sentences, the "core" independent clause in the resulting "****complex" sentence*** *is also called the "primary clause."*
- *The dependent clauses we combine into complex sentences can function as* ***adverbs, adjectives, or nouns.***

Let's look at each of these three functions:

1. ADVERB ("subordinate") CLAUSES

To make an ***adverb clause,*** *add a* ***subordinating conjunction to the beginning of a simple sentence, then attach it to another sentence based on the relationship between the ideas.***

What's a ***"subordinating conjunction?"*** *Any of the words we use to turn a sentence into a "subordinate clause. Look at the following list of subordinating conjunctions by category (this list was inspired by a list at the high-quality grammar site virtualsalt.com) think about sentences that use these words, and what these connectors DO. Consider what each category title means as you look at the words in that category::*

Time	Place	Cause/effect	Contrast	condition	Contrary condition/ "concession"	Manner
after as before since when while whenever until once once	where wherever	because since so that in order to	although though even though while	if in case provided that assuming that	until unless despite even though even if	as if as though how

Now that you've looked at the kinds of connecting words, see how in each of the following sentences:

- *we'll start with two short, disconnected sentences*
- *figure out how they're related, then*
- *turn one sentence into a **subordinate/adverb clause** by adding a **subordinating conjunction** to make it a subordinate clause in the other sentence.*

Choppy:
-He realized that his students needed a quick overview of advanced grammar. He showed them all 8 useful combining techniques.
What's the relationship? time and implied cause/effect:
What do we do? Turn into an adverb clause + primary clause (subordinating conjunction in bold):

+**When** he realized that his students needed a quick overview of advanced grammar, he showed them all 8 useful combining techniques.
or
+ He showed his students all 8 useful combining techniques **when** he realized that they needed a quick overview of advanced grammar.

GRAMMAR NOTE: NOTICE THAT ADVERB CLAUSES CAN BE PLACED EITHER AT THE BEGINNING OR THE END OF THE SENTENCE. THE ORDER WILL PRESERVE THE LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP, BUT MAY TAKE ON A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT "FLAVOR" DEPENDING ON WHETHER THE PRIMARY CLAUSE GOES FIRST, OR "GETS THE LAST WORD." ***COMMAS ALWAYS SEPARATE ANY CLAUSE OR PHRASE THAT COMES BEFORE THE PRIMARY CLAUSE:*** *THUS,* ***IF** THE ADVERB CLAUSE GOES FIRST, IT'S FOLLOWED BY A COMMA.* *YOU DON'T NEED A COMMA **WHEN** THE ADVERB CLAUSE COMES AT THE END*

Example #2:
-She realized that she had successfully completed the entire Pohlmann assignment in 40 minutes. She felt like applying to Harvard.
What's the logical relationship? condition/cause/effect. New, adverb clause sentences:
+Once she realized that she had successfully completed the entire Pohlmann assignment in 40 minutes, She felt like applying to Harvard.
or
+She felt like applying to Harvard **once** she realized that she had successfully completed the entire Pohlmann assignment in 40 minutes.

Now that we've built a few of these step-by-step, here's 3 more examples of adverb clauses in action:

Example 1, to show cause → effect:
Because the teacher used really lame pop culture references, the students knew that he didn't get out much.
or
The students knew that the teacher didn't get out much **since** he used such lame pop culture references.

Notice that the choice among similar conjunctions (in this case as, since, or because) is all about taste: know your options and choose the one that sounds the best and captures your meaning.

Example 1 raises an important question:

Debunking (another) grammar myth: "~~Don't start a sentence with 'because.'~~"--MYTH!
In the example just above, a subordinate clause cohabitates quite comfortably with its primary clause, even though the subordinate clause begins the sentence with "because." THIS IS COMPLETELY FINE IN FORMAL WRITING. My suspicion is that legions of middle-school grammar instructors foisted the "don't start with 'because'" rule on well-meaning students after being inundated with sentences like:
I really think that it's important to learn proper techniques of sentence combining. Because it will help my writing flow better.

Of course, what's REALLY the problem here, as should be obvious by now, is not that the sentence "starts with 'because,'" but that the second clause is not a sentence at all. It needs to be joined to the other clause, not reworded, as it would be just as much a "non-sentence" if it were turned into:

I really think that it's important to learn proper techniques of sentence combining. Since it will help my writing flow better.

The "REAL" rule, if there's one to be had, is merely: "Don't separate subordinate clauses from their primary clauses since doing so will create sentence fragments."

More examples:
Even though the teacher made really lame pop culture references, the students at least gave him credit for trying.
Same idea, reversed order:
The students at least gave the fading, middle-aged teacher credit for trying **even as** he continued in vain to make non-lame pop culture references
Example 3, to show condition:
If the teacher tried his very best, he hoped that the students would think that he knew something about pop culture.
notice that in this example, however, the clause acts like a dangling modifier: he hoped they would think this regardless of whether he tried, but this makes it sound like his "hoping" depended on his doing his best. This version would be better:
The teacher hoped that if he tried his very best, the students would think that he knew something about pop culture.
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ADJECTIVE/"RELATIVE" CLAUSES

To make an adjective clause, replace the subject of a sentence with a ***"relative pronoun"*** ***(*** *who/whose/whom/which/that). Relative pronouns "relate" the clause to* ***a specific noun*** *in the primary clause, much like an absolute would.*

The resulting "relative clause" functions like an adjective in adding extra description about a person, place, or thing in the primary clause:
choppy:
-The exercise initially challenged students. It presented 8 powerful strategies.
combined using an adjective clause:
+The exercise, which initially challenged students, presented 8 powerful strategies.
of course, as with all these sentence combining techniques, we can choose which idea is in the primary clause, and which is the dependent:
+The exercise, which presented 8 powerful strategies, initially challenged students.
*also, like other clauses and phrases, adjective clauses can be placed in more than one position within the sentence, (****though they must be placed adjacent to the nouns that they modify)*** *so by changing the placement of the clauses in these examples, we get:*
The students learned eight powerful strategies in the exercise, which challenged them.
or
The exercise required students to learn eight powerful strategies that challenged them.
or
The students had to step up their skills to satisfy their teacher, who challenged them to learn eight powerful strategies to combine sentences.

Now that you've studied these examples, and how they show the definition above, let's look at some things we have to watch out for in creating Adjective clauses.

Three specific, and somewhat subtle grammar rules cause problems with adjective clauses:
1. The difference between restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses affects the choice of relative pronoun and punctuation.
2. The difference between people and things determines the choice of "which/that" or "who/whom"
3. to avoid weak verbs and wordiness, DON'T use adjective clauses to combine subordinate clauses containing the verb "to be": use an appositive instead.

Let's do a quick summary of each of these rules:

GRAMMAR RULE 1. The difference between restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses affects the choice of relative pronoun and punctuation.

RESTRICTIVE Adjective clauses DO NOT GET SET OFF BY COMMAS, and use the relative pronoun "THAT" (or "who," where appropriate).

NON-RESTRICTIVE adjective clauses, which add information rather than identify, use "which" and are set off by commas.

The dictionary defines "restrictive" modifiers as "essential to the meaning of the sentence." This definition is often confusing, however, regarding what we mean by "essential":
A different way to put this is that "restrictive" modifiers are "essential" in that they dermine"which exact one among various possible other ones we're talking about." Such a modifier in effect "restricts" all the possible ones we COULD be talking about to THAT particular one described.

So, for example:

Please get me the book that's on the table.

would imply that there are several books in the room, but I'm asking for THAT one. (not the one THAT's on the couch.)

Compare this to a "non-restrictive" clause, which simply adds extra information about the book, as though it was already clear which book we're referring to:
Please get me the book, which is on the table.
The non-restrictive clause implies, in this version, only one book is present; it simply happened to be on the table.

THUS, YOUR CHOICE OF ",WHICH…" OR "THAT…" IS BASED ON EXACTLY WHICH FUNCTION YOU WANT THE CLAUSE TO FULFILL:

Thus, If, say, I'm singling out one specific person or thing, I use the restrictive "that…":
+Fitzgerald's extended Southern California rest would produce the masterpiece that would ensure his legacy, *The Great Gatsby. (which of his masterpieces? THAT one)*
or
+The writing skills that produced this masterpiece, however, soon took a back seat to his prolific drinking skills. (which writing skills? his magazine writing? his screenplays? no, only those that he used to produce this novel)

If, however, we're adding descriptive, extra information, we use ",which…" as in:

The writing skills that produced this masterpiece, however, soon took a back seat to his prolific drinking skills, which had taken a similarly destructive toll on his fellow French expatriate, Earnest Hemingway.

we're adding extra, grammatically "inessential" information to the sentence, not singling out particular "drinking skills" among others, but adding an extra insight about them, namely their consequences.

Grammar rule of Adjective clauses #2: The difference between people and things determines the choice of "which/that" or "who/whom."

So, while grammar rules alone suggest that it's o.k. to write:

Fitzgerald emerged as the novelist **that** best embodies the spirit of the "Jazz Age".

Common sense, and a little sensitivity to the notion that human beings are more important than things, argue for using the personal pronouns "who or whom" for adjective clauses that refer to people. Thus it sounds better to say that:

Fitzgerald emerged as the novelist **who** best embodies the spirit of the "Jazz Age".

Remember that the case of the pronoun, who or whom, depends only ***the function of the pronoun in the clause itself,*** *not the case of the noun the clause modifies:*

thus:

Hemingway soon loomed as the successful, self-indulgent celebrity whom Fitzgerald both resented and envied. *(Fitzgerald envied HIM, hence "whom.")*

but

Hemingway soon loomed as the successful, self-indulgent celebrity who offered Fitzgerald a tantalizing vision of Fitzgerald's own possible, if self-destructive success.*(HE showed Fitzgerald this, hence "WHO")*

Finally, the restrictive/non-restrictive distinction still holds with who and whom: it's just that we now show inessential description with the presence of a comma, while clauses that identify "which one" take no comma

Thus, while

Fitzgerald emerged as the novelist **who** best embodies the spirit of the "Jazz Age".

WHICH novelist? Exactly THAT novelist who did this".

BUT:

Fitzgerald**, who** secured his reputation with the publication of the "great American novel," *The Great Gatsby*, best embodies the spirit of the Jazz Age. *or*

Hemingway soon loomed as **a** successful, self-indulgent celebrity**, whom** Fitzgerald both resented and envied.

In each of these last two, the clause only adds extra information, not restricting among other possible things.

Adjective Clauses grammar rule #3. To avoid weak verbs and wordiness, DON'T use adjective clauses to combine subordinate clauses containing the verb "to be": use an appositive instead.

Though not grammatically necessary, this sure makes stylistic sense, as each of these examples

becomes smoother and more compact when we use the appositive, not an adjective clause, to get rid of "X is a Y" sentences:
Bad example of using adjective clause to wordy effect, best avoided:
- The students noticed something about the teacher's example sentence, which were all possessed of a certain mordant wit that was of a type that was sardonic and associated with Dr.P.

using our appositive rules, we get the much less-cumbersome:
*+*The students noticed that the teacher's example sentences, mordantly witty, all showed Dr. P's characteristically sardonic irony.

Or, better YET, simply using the modifiers:
*++*The students noticed Dr. P's mordant, sardonic wit throughout his example sentences.

Bottom line: don't ever use a weak verb in an adjective clause--use the "is" as a clue that you can find a more compact solution:

-Dr.P's guide, which was as long as it was thorough, nevertheless represented a move towards clarity that was much easier to understand than his original class notes, which were pretty incomplete.
+Dr.P's new guide, though long, nevertheless thoroughly clarified his original, incomplete class notes considerably.

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NOUN CLAUSES: Noun Clauses

Sometimes, when we need to refer to a complex, abstract thing, there simply isn't a noun that will do it. In these situations, we can create a "noun clause" by adding the connecting word "that" or "whether" at the beginning of the sentence to make a dependent clause.
We usually use noun clauses as objects of verbs that connote thinking or sensing.

+He believed that John Mayer was the best songwriter of his generation.
+John Mayer had to admit that this was probably true.
+Any listener could hear, however, that most of Mayer's songs were about himself.
+Mr. Mayer for his part would probably insist that he was simply the most interesting person he knew.
+Few of his critics felt that this quite excused this unfortunately narcissistic level of self-absorbtion.

Watch out for either of these two common noun clause errors, both of which pop up as a matter of course in everyday speech:
***1. Don't neglect the linking** word that should begin a noun clause:*

-We speculated the asignment would be easy. *? (How do you "speculate an assignment?")*
instead:
+We wondered whether the asignment would be easy.
+We speculated that it would challenging.

-The teacher hoped his students, if they hated grammar as much as he did, might be perversely inspired by their mutual antipathy to vanguish the sentence-combining octupus for good.
notice that this sounds fine, but on paper appears illogical: how did he "hope his students"?
+The teacher hoped that his students, if they hated grammar as much as he did, might be perversely inspired by their mutual antipathy to vanguish the sentence-combining octupus for good.

2. Noun clauses use "that", not the colloquial "How" to connect to the primary clause.
Most speakers of colloquial American English commonly use "how" to connect noun clauses, as in simple statements like:
At the master class, my teacher was saying how I needed to work more on my breathing technique.

In formal English, however, the connecting word "how" conveys a very specific meaning: "in what way?" In effect, misusing "how" creates an unanswered question that the reader will expect you to answer:
"How should you work on that breathing, exactly?"
This problem goes away as soon as you correctly replace the "how" with "that":

At the master class, my teacher said that I needed to work more on my breathing technique.

Thus:
-The teacher thought, somewhat wistfully, how he'd rather go to Starbucks than teach any more grammar.
How would he rather go? by bus, car, bicycle? on foot? Use "THAT"!
+ The teacher thought, somewhat wistfully, that he'd rather go to Starbucks than teach any more grammar.

Or if we were combining: He had high hopes for his students: He wanted them to be able to use clauses.
We might get :
-He had high hopes for how his students would be able to use clauses.
really? how would they use them: well? poorly? sometimes? during math class?... Instead, it should be:
*+*He had high hopes that his students would be able to use clauses.

Finally, notice that because they function as nouns, noun clauses* CAN *function as the subjects of sentences; at the same time, in American English, this tends to be frowned upon as a bit old-fashioned, and a little pompous:

That noun clauses could begin sentences seemed as awkward as it was antiquated.

That we are not amused by beginning sentences with noun clauses should be as obvious as it was to Her Majesty, the Queen.

That Dr. P had by now finally, irreparably, and prolixedly over-emphasized the unregenerate obstreporousness of beginning any sentence with a noun clause as its subject was as annoying as it it was self-evident.

SO,
Following our general style rule against "abstract subjects," keep sentences less wordy by avoiding noun clauses as subjects.

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QED

Appendix of old notes and examples (not edited)

The woman in the story is named Phoenix. *She is on some kind of trip.* *“Phoenix” is a mythic symbol of rebirth.*	–> somehow this story is about her rebirth.

MY HEADINGS ARE FOR REFERENCE ONLY: ON YOURS, YOU’LL SIMPLY LABEL THE SHEET WITH A PEN OR PENCIL (NO HEADINGS OR COLOR CODES NEEDED)

Set #1(period 3)

PP NC INF

Welty chooses the symbolically loaded name “Phoenix,” (suggesting [that her trip could, along with her name, be used {to symbolize some kind of rebirth}$_{\text{inf}}$.]$_{\text{NC}}$)$_{\text{part}}$

App ABS Adv cl

Welty’s main character, {“Phoenix Jackson,}$_{\text{APP}}$” immediately hints at rebirth, [the mythic connotations of her name implying some kind of renewal (when she completes her journey$_{\text{AC}}$)]$_{\text{ABS}}$.

ADJ C (R & NR) + NC

Phoenix,(who is beginning some kind of journey,)$_{\text{NR AjC}}$ already implies by her name (that the struggles [that she takes on in this journey]$_{\text{RAjC}}$ will lead to some kind of rebirth.)$_{\text{NC}}$

Set #2 (period 1)

APP PP. Restr Adj.

The woman, Phoenix, {embarking on some kind of trip},$_{\text{PP}}$ could symbolically be foreshadowing some rebirth (that could come with the end of her journey)$_{\text{R AjC.}}$

ABS, APP, Adv clause

Her name symbolic of rebirth, Phoenix, the main character, may experience some kind of rebirth when she completes her journey.

NR adj C, NC, Inf

Phoenix, whose very name seems suggestive of rebirth, may end up showing that she is herself going to renew herself through her journey.

February 3 LAB

SC: "Keep it simple" lab

WTFocus?

Try to start with clear sentences that combine only 2 Label what you have, then only "try to use" those structures you haven't used.

Some sample content for P's demo

(Welty essay)

She calls the journey a "habit of love" She says that the grandson's status "can't affect" this in the slightest	–-> Story's ultimately about what P does out of devotion (not the practical effect)

A few SC reminders/ "known-good" moves with show –-> Tell

1. A "causal" Sub. Conjunction can always go before evidence (makes an adverb clause)

Her story, she says, is ultimately about what P does out of devotion, as Welty calls her journey "a habit of love."

e.g.: For Welty, the story is ultimately about P's devotion, given that she calls the journey a "habit of love.

2. An infinitive can usually work with the "tell".

She calls the journey a "habit of love" as if to show that the grandson's status "can't affect" this in the slightest, since she argues that the story ultimately centers on Phoenix's devotion

e.g.: Welty claims {that the journey of the story is "a habit of love,"} as if to suggest {that only P's devotion to her grandson ultimately matters.}

3. "tells" will almost always create noun clauses if you use a "meaning" or "demonstration" verb (*like "shows", "suggests," et al.). (see underlined above)*

She calls the journey a "habit of love" She says that the story doesn't reveal his health, as this "can't affect" the story in the slightest	–-> Story's ultimately about what she does out of devotion (not the practical effect)

(3) Find an interesting "secondary" detail usually about a noun in either show or tell:

1. any part of the main subject, or specific sub group can be restricted with an adjective clause OR absolute

Her story is ultimately not about the condition of the grandson, his health [~~is~~]unable to "affect the story in the slightest," since she calls Phoenix's devotion to her journey *"a habit of love."*

To Welty, the story is ultimately about Phoenix's devotion, her "habit of love" ~~is~~ unaffected by whether her grandson is alive or dead.

The habit of love that Phoenix shows when she completes her journey is for Welty no different whether the grandson is alive or dead.

she says, is ultimately about what P does out of devotion, as Welty calls her journey "a habit of love."

Her story, she says, is ultimately about what P does out of devotion, as Welty calls her journey "a habit of love."

For Welty, a story like hers that ultimately turns on P's devotion becomes a "habit of love" that can't be affected by whether her grandson is alive.

Phoenix, [her grandson's status ultimately irrelevant in Welty's view], carries on her "errand of love" regardless of whether he is still alive.

2. any action can be incorporated into either part with a non-restrictive adjective clause or participle. (WHO DOES…. / DOING…)

Phoenix, completing her journey regardless of her grandson's status, ultimately carries on her "errand of love" regardless of whether he is still alive, her devotion evidently Welty's main concern.

Phoenix, who completes her journey regardless of her grandson's status, ultimately carries on her "errand of love" whether he is still alive or not.

For Welty, the story, which she actually calls an exploration of the "habit of love," ultimately reflects Phoenix's devotion to her journey.

Calling the story an exploration of "the habit of love," Welty suggests that Phoenix's devotion is ultimately what matters most. For Welty, Phoenix's devotion to her grandson, the whole point of the trip, becomes evident in the journey, regarded by Welty as "a habit of love."

She calls the journey a "habit of love" She says that the story doesn't reveal his health, as this "can't affect" the story in the slightest	à Story's ultimately about what she does out of devotion (not the practical effect)

3. anything you can say to characterize or describe how or what a noun is= appositive. ~~Character is~~ (a) …

Welty emphasizes the importance of P's journey, a "habit of love" that ultimately shows devotion to her grandson regardless of whether he is alive.

Welty argues that the grandson's fate, unimportant to Phoenix's devotion, "can't affect" the story's central truth in the slightest.

ABS + Adv Clause

The doctor's diploma "matching the dream in her mind," Phoenix's recollection of the purpose for her journey for Welty represents the decisive moment in the story when phoenix achieves "victory."

Pp, APP, Restr Adj Cl. NC

Reflecting Phoenix's purpose," the "dream in her mind" of helping her grandson, the diploma on the wall for Welty symbolizes the moment Phoenix remembers why she came.

R aj CL, Adv. Cla PP,

Welty focuses on the diploma in the doctor's office, which that signals "victory" for phoenix , as it reminds her of her purpose for coming, "match[ing] the dream in her mind."

Welty skeptically calls out writers who would control the interpretation of their work, the facts of their stories already ceded to the public domain of opinion when they ask readers to read them.

App AvC inf NC Raj cl

Facts, for Welty the basis of any story, must "mean what they say," as authors need to accept that others will inevitably attach their own interpretations to the facts that authors create.

AbsNC NC, part.

Welty criticizes a common belief among some readers, who hold that authors deliberately can withhold meaning or have "things not mean what they say": she argues that this is a misjudgment of the actions of readers, their own interpretations perfectly plausible if based on the facts of the story.

R aj Cl

To Welty, critics who wish to control what may be considered a valid interpretation of a story are guilty of violating the "facts" of the story, as they essentially try to have stories "not mean what they say."

SET from 2.20/20

Burger King has a new ad
It features a moldy Whopper
The tagline brags about "the beauty of no artificial ingredients"
—>They're being humorous
—> With no preservatives, it gets moldy

pp/nc/abs w/nc
Featuring a moldy whopper, a new BK ad brags that they don't use any preservatives, [the mold apparently demonstrating that their food is more "natural" than that of competitors. (4)]

Inf, app
A new BK ad humorously employs the picture of a whopper covered in mold [to highlight their health-conscious, if perishable, turn.] (3)

NR aj cl, nc, app, R adj cl
A new ad from BK, in which a whopper seems to turn to mold before our eyes, brags [that their burgers, {now free of preservatives,} show the "beauty of no artificial ingredients"(that might otherwise chemically protect the burger from spoilage.)] (4)