

Fused Sentences

When two sentences are run together with no punctuation between them, the sentences are said to be fused.

Fused: The grain was ripening unevenly as a result the field was a mixture of green and gold.

Corrected: The grain was ripening unevenly; as a result, the field was a mixture of green and gold.

Fused: What will the population of the world be in 1990 any estimate is subject to error.

Corrected: What will the population of the world be in 1990? Any estimate is subject to error.

Fused: He made a trip to England he wanted to study in the British Museum.

Corrected: He made a trip to England because he wanted to study in the British Museum.

Choppy Sentences.

Choppy sentences are consecutive short sentences that have underlying relationships in meaning but do not adequately show these relationships.

Because the sentences are unduly short and numerous, they give the same emphasis to minor ideas as to major ones. The way to avoid a series of choppy sentences is to combine related ideas, coordinating those of equal importance and subordinating the less significant ones.

Choppy: I am writing a paper. I am interested in the relationships between history and economics. Therefore, I am writing my paper on the Monroe Doctrine.

Effective: Because I am interested in the relationships between history and economics, I am writing a paper on the Monroe Doctrine.

Dangling Modifiers.

When a writer uses a modifier but fails to provide a definite word for it to modify, he leaves the modifier dangling.

Dangling modifiers: Hurrying into the kitchen, a jar of cookies was immediately noticed.

Correction: Hurrying into the kitchen, he immediately noticed a jar of cookies.

Alternate correction: As he hurried into the kitchen, he noticed a jar of cookies.

Inconsistencies in Point of View

A shift in the grammatical structure of a sentence results in an inconsistency in point of view. When a sentence begins in the third person, for instance, the reader immediately adopts the third-person point of view and expects to grasp the whole idea from that viewpoint. If, then, the sentence suddenly shifts to second person, the effect is at best a distraction for the reader. If the distraction lasts long or occurs frequently, the reader may lose the idea or even lose confidence in the writer.

Inconsistency in person and subject: The student is an important member of society, and you should learn to assume civic responsibilities.

Correction: The student is an important member of society and he should learn to assume civic responsibilities.