

## Conjunctive Adverb

A conjunctive adverb (appearing in the second of a pair of coordinate independent clauses) serves in somewhat the same way as a coordinating conjunction in pointing out the relationship between the clauses. As a part of speech, however, a conjunctive adverb is classified as an adverb, not as a conjunction. For this reason, a semicolon is necessary to separate independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb.

e.g. People in the West do much camping out; **therefore**, many of them are good astronomers.  
(Therefore anticipates a result.)

e.g. The rain is a treat for many persons; **moreover**, it is a boon to plant life.  
(Moreover points toward a supplementary idea.)

e.g. For many years, the team had tried unsuccessfully to win; however, they won it easily last year. (However calls attention to a contrast.)

Sometimes the relationship between coordinate clauses is so close that no connecting word is necessary. Ordinarily a semicolon separates such clauses; a colon may be appropriate, but a comma would produce a comma fault.

e.g. His face was dirty and unshaven; his hair looked as if it had not been combed for days.

e.g. The protagonist in Henry James's novel *The Beast in the Jungle* is blinded by self-interest: he does not even notice that his lifelong confidante is in love with him.

(The colon is appropriate because the second clause explains the idea of the first clause. A semicolon would be acceptable but not so precise as the colon.)

Parallelism. Parallelism is the use of similar constructions to express similar ideas. Structure is parallel when a word, a phrase, or a clause is balanced by at least one other of its own type (an adverb is balanced by at least one other adverb, a prepositional phrase by at least one other prepositional phrase, etc.). Unless used excessively, parallel structure usually has a pleasing effect on the reader, and it shows him readily which ideas are of equal significance.

#### **4. Economy**

Economy in a sentence means the reasonable use of words. It does not imply the omission of words essential to the thought or feeling or to the artistic form of the sentence. It signifies rather the avoiding of words that clutter the sentence and obscure its meaning. In each pair of examples below, the shorter version more readily communicates its meaning.

e.g. Wordy (28 words): I have known the Griffith boy—his name is Rob—ever since the first day in college, which was three years ago.

e.g. Economical (14 words): I have known Bob Griffith since his first day in college three years ago.

e.g. Difficult to read (31 words): It seems that in any unpleasant situation with which we are confronted in life, the experience is made to seem less painful to us if we have someone to encourage us.

e.g. Easy to read (10 words): Any unpleasant experience seems less painful if someone encourages us.

e.g. Repetitious (24 words): In writing my term paper on the: subject of aviation history, I chose this particular subject out of a personal interest in the subject.

e.g. Brief (13 words): For my term paper, I chose a subject that interests me, aviation history.

Wordy and incoherent (31 words): Using the words “a set pattern of order” is telling that a company which follows same will not change the way it makes decisions in dealing with issues that come up.

e.g. Economical and coherent (15 words): A company that follows “a set pattern of order” decides issues according to a policy.

## 5. Variety

An effective variety becomes almost automatic in a succession of correct, meaningful sentences supporting a central idea. The talented writer instinctively varies his sentences as he composes them. These methods include

- (1) using different kinds of sentences, according to both grammatical structure and rhetorical form;
- (2) using different lengths of sentences; and
- (3) using different orders in the parts of sentences.

The following paragraph from Macaulay's essay entitled "History" (1828) has an interesting and agreeable variety in sentence structure. Of the eleven sentences in the paragraph, six are complex and five are simple. Three of the complex sentences and all the simple sentences contain compound elements of one kind or another.

#### Effective variety

A history in which every particular incident may be true may on the whole be false. The circumstances which have most influence on the happiness of mankind, the changes of manners and morals, the transition of communities from poverty to wealth, from knowledge to ignorance, from ferocity to humanity— these are, for the most part, noiseless revolutions. Their progress is rarely

#### Insufficient variety

A history containing all true incidents can be written. Such a history may on the whole be false. Certain circumstances have the most influence on the happiness of mankind. These circumstances are the changes of manners and morals, the transition of communities from poverty to wealth, from knowledge to ignorance, and from ferocity to humanity. For the most part, these are noiseless.

\*\*So far as **rhetorical form** is concerned, the loose sentence is the most natural and the most popular kind in modern composition. An occasional periodic or balanced sentence, then, provides effective variety. The writer's best criterion for deciding which form to use is this question: In

which form can the sentence best serve its particular purpose? Other things being equal, however, he might be governed by the rhetorical form of other sentences in the context. These three sentences illustrate the different rhetorical patterns.

**Loose:** My favorite indoor pastime is basketball. (The grammatical structure is complete at the comma.)

**Periodic:** As you may have guessed by now, my favorite indoor pastime is basketball. (The grammatical structure becomes complete only with the last word.)

**Balanced:** As you may have guessed long ago, my favorite indoor pastime is an athletic game; as you may have guessed by now, that game is basketball. (The structure following the semicolon parallels that preceding the semicolon.)

### **Variety in Length of Sentences**

It is important to avoid groups of very short or very long paragraphs. Neither kind, the short sentence or the long one, is necessarily better than the other. But sameness in length, becomes tiresome for the reader. Moreover, variety in the length of sentences permits the ideas being communicated. A good average for sentence length in composition is approximately twenty words, but the range in length may well extend from fewer than half to more than twice of that number.

The following paragraph from a student composition would be more effective if the student had used more variety in the length of his sentences and more variety in grammatical elements within the sentences. Here the average length of the sentences is thirteen words; the range, between ten

and fifteen words. Variety in the length of sentences is most noticeable when a relatively short sentence adjoins a relatively long one. The short sentence suggests finality.