**University of Guelma**

**Department of English**

**Written Expression**

**First Year Groups**

**Joining Sentences part one**

Good sentences are the sinew of style. They give to prose its forward thrust, its flexibility, its strong and subtle rhythms. The cardinal virtues of such sentences are clarity, emphasis, concision, and variety.

**C**lauses and phrases are the building blocks of sentences.

**The Phrase**

A **phrase** is any group of related words that, unlike a sentence, has no subject-predicate combination. The words in a phrase act together so that the phrase itself functions as a single part of speech. For example, some

phrases act as nouns, some as verbs, some as adjectives or adverbs. Remember that phrases can’t stand alone as sentences.

**The Prepositional Phrase**

The most common phrase is the **prepositional phrase.** You’ll find these phrases everywhere—in sentences, clauses, and even in other phrases. Each prepositional phrase begins with a preposition *(in, of, by, from, for,* etc.) and includes a noun or pronoun that is the object of the preposition.

*of* the *people*

*by* the *river*

*for* the *party*

The object of a preposition can have its own modifiers, which also are part of the prepositional phrase.

of *the remaining few* people

by *the rushing* river

for *the midnight victory* party

Prepositional phrases function as either adjectives or adverbs.

The woman *in the trench coat* pulled out her cellular phone.

The prepositional phrase here acts as an adjective describing the noun *woman.*

Most of the audience snoozed *during the tedious performance.*

The prepositional phrase here acts as an adverb modifying the verb *snoozed*.

**Phrases Containing Verbals**

Briefly, these verbals act as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs in sentences.

**The participial phrase**

A **participial phrase** begins with a past or present participle and is followed by its objects and modifiers. Like participles alone, participial phrases are used as adjectives.

The *wailing cats* disturbed the neighbors.

*Sniffing the fresh air,* Jim realized he had found paradise.

In the preceding sentence, the present participle *sniffing* introduces the participial phrase, which includes the participle's object (*air*) and its modifiers (*the, fresh*). This participial phrase acts as an adjective modifying the subject of the sentence (*Jim*).

*Annoyed,* the customer stalked out of the store.

The past participial *annoyed*describes the noun *customer.*

**The gerund phrase**

At first, a **gerund phrase** may look like a participial phrase because gerund phrases begin with the *-ing* form of a verb *(walking, seeing, talking,* etc.) and have objects and modifiers. But a gerund phrase always acts as a noun in a sentence, not as an adjective. Like other nouns, a gerund phrase can serve as the subject of a sentence, the object of a verb or preposition, or the complement of a linking verb.

In the following example, the gerund phrase *Walking across the rickety wooden bridge* answers *what was scary?*

*Walking across the rickety wooden bridge was scary.* Thus, it functions as a noun in the sentence.

In the next sentence, the gerund phrase *seeing the suspect* is the direct object of the verb reported. Notice that the entire phrase, not just the word *suspect,* is the direct object.

The police officer reported *seeing the suspect.*

Here, the gerund phrase *talking often and loudly* is the object of the preposition *by.*

The senator made his reputation by *talking often and loudly.*

In the final example*, Calling Uncle Roberto* is a gerund phrase acting as the subject of the sentence. *Asking for trouble* is a gerund phrase acting as a complement of the linking verb *is.*

*Calling Uncle Roberto* is *asking for trouble.*

**The infinitive phrase**

An **infinitive phrase** contains an infinitive (for example, *to sleep, to have slept, to consider, to throw*) and its objects and modifiers. Infinitive phrasesusually function as nouns, though they can be used as adjectives and

adverbs.

In this sentence*, To sleep all night* is an infinitive phrase acting as a noun. It is the subject of this sentence.

*To sleep all night* was his only wish.

Here, *To take an unpopular stand* is an infinitive phrase acting as a noun. It is the direct object of the predicate *didn’t want.*

The representatives didn’t want *to take an unpopular stand.*

Next, the infinitive phrase *to spend foolishly* acts as an adjective modifying the noun *money.*

He had plenty of money *to spend foolishly.*

In the following sentence, the infinitive phrase *to clear her mind* acts as an adverb modifying *drove.*

After the confrontation, she drove miles *to clear her mind.*

**Appositives and Appositive Phrase**

An appositive is a noun or pronoun that renames another noun or pronoun. Appositives are placed directly after the nouns or pronouns they identify.

Appositive phrases are nouns or pronouns with modifiers.

Jack Kerouac , *one of the most famous of the Beat Generation writers,* came to symbolize the era he wrote about. The appositive phrase "*one of the most famous of the beat Generation*" renames the noun Jack Kerouac.

**Types of Clauses**

Like a phrase, a **clause** is a group of related words, but unlike a phrase, a clause has a subject and predicate. An **independent clause,** along with having a subject and predicate, expresses a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence. On the contrast, a **subordinate** or **dependent clause** does not express a complete thought and therefore is *not* a sentence. A subordinate clause standing alone is the most common type of sentence fragment.

**Independent clauses**

*He saw her, The Washingtons hurried home, Free speech has a price.* Grammatically complete statements like these are sentences and can stand alone. When they are part of longer sentences, they are referred to as **independent** (or **main**) **clauses.**

Two or more independent clauses can be joined by using coordinating conjunctions *(and, but, for, nor, or, so,* and *yet)* or by using semicolons. The most important thing to remember is that an independent clause *can* stand

alone as a complete sentence.

In the following example the independent clause is a simple sentence.

*Erica brushed her long, raven hair.*

Here, the coordinating conjunction *and* joins two independent clauses:

*Elizabeth left, and Erica brushed her long, raven hair.*

Here, a semicolon joins two independent clauses:

*Elizabeth left; Erica brushed her long, raven hair.*

All sentences must include at least one independent clause.

**Subordinate clauses**

A **subordinate clause** has a subject and predicate but, unlike an independent clause, cannot stand by itself. It *depends* on something else to express a complete thought, which is why it is also called a **dependent** **clause.** Some subordinate clauses are introduced by relative pronouns *(who,* *whom, that, which, what, whose)* and some by subordinating conjunctions *(although, because, if, unless, when,* etc.). Subordinate clauses function in sentences as adjectives, nouns, and adverbs.

**Relative clauses**

A **relative clause** begins with a relative pronoun and functions as an adjective.

In the following sentence, the relative pronoun *that* is the subject of its clause and *won* is the predicate. This clause couldn’t stand by itself. Its role in the complete sentence is to modify *novel,* the subject of the independent clause.

The novel *that won the Pulitzer Prize* didn’t sell well when it was first published.

In the next example*, which* is the relative pronoun that begins the subordinate clause. *Celebrities* is the subject of the clause and *attended* is the predicate.

In the complete sentence, this clause functions as an adjective describing *ceremony.*

The ceremony, *which several celebrities attended,* received intense coverage.

**Adverbial clauses**

Many subordinate clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions called **adverbial clauses**. Examples of these conjunctions are *because, unless*, *if,* *when,* and *although.* What these conjunctions have in common is that they make the clauses that follow them unable to stand alone. The clauses act as adverbs, answering questions like *how, when, where, why, to what extent,* and *under what conditions.*

In the following sentence, *because* introduces the adverbial clause in which *van* is the subject and *needed* the predicate. This clause is an incomplete thought. What *happened* because the van needed repairs? The independent clause *The group of tourists decided to have lunch in the village* is necessary to complete the thought. Again, the subordinate clause as a whole acts as an adverb, telling why the tourists decided to have lunch in the village.

The group of tourists decided to have lunch in the village *because the van needed repairs.*

**Activity one** : Add meaning to each sentence by adding a phrase from the list.

**Up the mountain , with an open mouth , in his soup, for boredom, one good reason, should always wear , a tall mysterious stranger, around midnight , in the salesman’s face will be playing .**

1. The steam engine chugged \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. The robbery occurred \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Motorcycle riders \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ protective helmets.

4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ entered the room.

5. Give me \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to eat beets.

6. Tony often puts ketchup \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

7. It is rude to chew \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

8. The angry homeowner slammed the door \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

9. Hard work is a sure cure \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

10. Rocky Von Rockford \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the leading role.

**Activity two:** Identify the following underlined phrases as prepositional phrase, participial phrase, gerund phrase, or infinitive phrase and state its function in the sentence:

**a.** Dreaming about mice is my cat Mocha’s favorite hobby.

**b.** Kevin wants to make the world a better place.

**c.** Lying on his bed, Richard felt better.

**d.** Ted sneezed in church.

**e.** Dr. Tucker planned to have read that book.

Activity three: Determine whether the **boldfaced** phrase is a gerund phrase or a participial

phrase.

**1. Trying to be protective**, Charlotte put her parakeet back into its cage.

**2.** The decision to change jobs you need to do **some deep thinking**

**3. Snoring with contentment**, Hallie’s cat slept on the bed by her feet.

4. **Having to wait at the bus stop** for over an hour every day was becoming

tiring.

5. **Painting during holidays** is Jim’s favorite hobby.

6. **Singing with a country band** occupies most of my brother’s weekend.

7. **Selling the company** was complicated.

8. With a **cramped leg**, the screaming boy waded out of the pool.

9. Outside the Halloween spook house, dozens of **grinning skeletons greeted the visitors.**

10. **Built to last**, the great pyramids of Egypt may be around for the next millenium.

**Activity 4**: Read the following independent and subordinate clauses and punctuate with comma when it is appropriate.

1. Jason took a nap before he left for his friend’s house.

2. You can keep your privileges as long as we continue to see progress.

3. Although you may disagree I still say Sheila is the best person for the

job.

4. There would be less tension between them if they could just see eye to eye.

5. I’m bringing my homework along even though we don’t plan to stay

long.

6. Golam whom I’ve never met before seemed like a pretty nice guy.

7. In order that we may be respectful of the presenters please turn off your

cell phones.

8. I knew this was going to be an exciting game when Andrew took his first

swing.

9. Margaret, whose earrings I borrowed last week told her dad that she

was tired and wanted to go home.

10. Before you go would you please be sure to clean up the mess you make?

12. Since she was only just around the corner Paula decided to walk to the

store instead of driving.

15. Whoever she is she sure seems to know what she’s doing.

**Second section of activities:**

**1)**Underline the complete subject in the following sentences.

a. My cousin Andy, a shy man, was married last summer.

b. The office will be closed on Thursday.

c. Get ready!

2)Underline the complete predicate in the following sentences.

a. Through the quiet, dark streets came Lizz, determined not to get lost.

b. After a deep winter sleep, the bears emerged hesitantly.

c. Andrei visited the Grand Canyon last summer.

3) Circle the compound predicate in each sentence.

1. We ate and danced at the party.
2. Maurice wrote and mailed the party invitations on Tuesday.

3. Josie and Bill will dance and sing to entertain us.

4. Should we drive or walk to the party?

5. Let’s eat and visit before the entertainment begins.

6. After dinner some guests swam and played games.

**The Sentence**

The standard definition of a **sentence** is that it is a group of words containing a subject and a predicate and expressing a complete thought. But for this definition to be helpful, you must be able to recognize a subject

and a predicate and understand what is meant by “a complete thought.”

**Subject and predicate**

A sentence has a **subject** (what or whom the sentence is about) and a predicate. The **predicate** tells what the subject does or is or what is done to the subject *(*for example, The books *were left* outside). The **simple subject** is a noun or pronoun. The **complete subject** is this noun or pronoun and the words that modify it. The **simple predicate** is a verb or verb phrase (for example, *has walked, will have walked).* The **complete predicate** is the verb or verb phrase and the words that modify or complete it.

Merriam and Sahar are best friends and always support each other. *Are* and *support* are the predicates.

In the following example, *Brielle* is the simple subject. Brielle, an artist, | sold some of her art at the auction.

the subject, *Brielle*, and the appositive phrase that gives more information about Brielle—*an artist*—form the complete subject of the sentence. Likewise, the complete predicate is made up of the verb that tells what Brielle

did, *sold*, and other words that give more information about what she sold and

where she sold it—*some of her art at the auction*.

In this sentence*, The argument that money is a burden* is the complete subject. *Argument* is the simple subject modified by the adjective clause *that* *money is a burden.* The rest of the sentence is the complete predicate. The simple predicate is the verb *originated.*

*The argument that money is a burden probably originated with a rich man who was trying to counter the envy of a poor man.*

In the first sentence, subject and predicate are easy to identify. In the second sentence, you can still pick out the simple subject and verb fairly easily, despite the modifiers. But the third sentence is more complicated. As

you begin to write more sophisticated sentences, the simple subject and simple predicate may seem to get lost in a web of modifying words, phrases, and clauses. To ensure that you have a complete sentence, however, you

still should be able to identify the core noun or pronoun and the core verb or verb phrase.

**Expressing a complete thought**

In addition to having a subject and predicate, a sentence must be able to stand on its own. It can’t depend on something else to express a complete thought.

**Sentence Types: Simple, Compound, and Complex**

Your ability to vary sentence types in your writing will allow you to control the pacing and clarity of your paragraphs. Using a variety of sentence types also makes for more interesting reading.

A **simple sentence** has one independent clause and no subordinate clauses.

*Old-growth forests in the United States are disappearing.*

*Citizens must act.*

A **compound sentence** has two or more independent clauses, joined by coordinating conjunctions, and no subordinate clauses.

*Old-growth forests in the United States are disappearing, and citizens must act.* (two independent clauses joined by *and*)

A **complex sentence** contains one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

*Because old growth forests in the United States are fast disappearing, citizens*

*must act now. (Because old growth forests in the United States are*

*fast disappearing* = subordinate clause beginning with subordinating conjunction; *citizens must act now* = independent clause)

*Forests that have existed for thousands of years are in danger.* (*that haveexisted for thousands of years* = subordinate clause beginning with relative pronoun; *Forests . . . are in danger* = independent clause)

A **compound-complex sentence** joins two or more independent clauses with one or more subordinate clauses.

*Forests that have existed for thousands of years are in danger, and citizens*

*must take action.* (*Forests are in danger* and *citizens must take action* = independent clauses; *that have existed for thousands of years* = subordinate clause)

Make use of all these types of sentences. Don’t string together a long series of simple sentences, but, on the other hand, don’t always write compound and complex sentences. Try beginning with a simple sentence, or try following several long compound and complex sentences with a simple one.

**1) Combine the following simple sentences to create a compound sentence.**

**1**. It rained for three days. The streets in my neighborhood flooded.

2. I got to ball practice late. I forgot to set my alarm.

3. Kyle completed his homework. He put it in his binder.

4. Luke mowed the lawn. He earned ten dollars.

5. I stayed up late last night. I am tired today.

6. Neil doesn’t like seafood. He doesn’t like cabbage.

7. My pencil was broken. I borrowed one from Jake.

8. I like apples. I like pears more.

9. Eight people got into the elevator. It was crowded. Three people got off.

10. Georgia gathered the pictures. She could arrange them in a special album

for her family.

**2**: Improve this paragraph, which contains too many compound sentences.  
Change compound sentences into complex sentences, using one of the subordinators listed. Use each subordinator once. Rewrite the paragraph on a separate sheet of paper. (after although because when)

**Equal Rights for Women**  
 Russian women started to gain equality earlier than women in the United  
States. The concept of equal rights and responsibilities for women was part of  
communist philosophy, so Russians of both sexes had equal access to  
education and jobs from the beginning of the Soviet Union. The 1937 Soviet  
constitution declared that women and men had equal rights and responsibilities,  
but women in the United States do not have legal equality even today. An  
admendment to the U.S. Constitution giving women equal rights has never been  
approved. Before World War II, few U.S. women worked outside the home.  
Millions of men left to become soldiers during the war, and women took over  
their jobs. Suddenly, women discovered that they could do anything. The men  
returned home, and women began to demand the equality that they had earned.

**We will conclude with the following correct use of preposition:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **correct** | **incorrect** |
| according *with* the plan  accuse *with* perjury  apologize *about*  bored *of*  capable *to*  comply *to* the rules  concerned *to*  conform *in* standards  in search *for*  in accordance *to* policy  independent *from*  interested *about*  jealous *for* others / puzzled on  outlook *of* life / similar with | according *to* the plan  accuse *of* perjury  apologize *for*  bored *with*  capable *of*  comply *with* the rules  concerned *about, over, with*  conform *to, with* standards  in search *of*  in accordance *with* policy  independent *of*  interested in , by  jealous *of* others/ puzzled at, by  outlook *on* life/ similar to |