

Exercises

A. Misplaced modifiers. See if you can straighten out these sentences and place the modifiers where they belong.

1. Being in a dilapidated condition, I was able to buy the house very cheap.
2. Two people, including a 15-year-old boy who was in critical condition, were shot as they walked along a South Side street Thursday night.
3. Turning the corner, the jackhammer grew louder and louder until it hit a shattering crescendo.
4. Single, no children, age 28 is thinking of children at a later time in her life.
5. A few brave souls job in a nearby park dressed in summer clothes.
6. Turning onto Lake Shore Drive, the lure of this city begins to be revealed.
7. The late Carl Sagan began researching the origins of life in the 1960s.
8. The Democratic National Committee released a list of visitors who stayed overnight at the White House at the invitation of the Clintons, including daughter Chelsea.
9. U.S. Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) pledged to work for increased gun control during his campaign.
10. In 1935 he joined the embryonic Basie group and remained with what many consider the greatest jazz organization until 1948.

B. Redundancies. Rewrite these sentences or phrases to eliminate redundancy.

1. Some of these projects include:
2. He grew up traveling throughout his lifetime.
3. She lived overseas for five years and crisscrossed Europe and Asia as well.
4. She says she hopes to eventually own her own magazine in the future.
5. Walking by the alley, you get an unpleasant smell of garbage.
6. He says he is not certain at this stage if he wants to become an attorney.

7. He continued on in the tradition of DePaul University, where he has obtained both a BS as well as an MBA from the School of Commerce.

8. Bond was set at \$900,000 Wednesday for an 18-year-old man charged with killing two men dead and wounding another.
9. In addition, he also edits. ...
10. Not only had she competed in Boston, but also around the nation.

C. Wordiness. Rewrite these sentences to eliminate unneeded words.

1. The ice has melted and the water has taken on the kind of bright, blue color that is more likely to be seen in the South Pacific.
2. We are starting to approach the library which I notice is quite a large building.
3. While the taxpayer must deal with the mighty hand of the Internal Revenue Service for failing to pay his taxes, whatever the amount, these Savings and Loan criminals have a lesser force to contend with in the collection of their fines. Probation and parole officers have been left to collect restitution.
4. She made the decision to ...
5. She is in fact interested in the media, this idea came about by a stray remark made by one of her high school teachers. She felt high school was "definitely" a place that this all started when the teacher said, "You have the nicest voice I've ever heard."
6. ... often giving reviews of movies.
7. He does not believe that many people place value on language skills.
8. I would like to call your attention to the fact that, in spite of the fact that this mountain highway is curving, your car is in the process of going straight.

Sometimes wordiness and redundancy amount to the same thing. Here are a couple of examples for you to rewrite:

9. They are considering San Antonio as a possible home for the future.
10. Dr. Malone is currently at the hospital, where he is engaged in delicate surgery involved in removing a patient's tonsils.

Suggested Rewrites or Edits

A. Misplaced modifiers

1. Because the house was in a dilapidated condition, I was able to buy it very cheap.
2. Two people were shot as they walked along a South Side street Thursday night. One of them, a 15-year-old boy, is reported in critical condition.
3. Around the corner, the jackhammer grew louder until it reached a shattering crescendo.
4. She is single, 28, and someday she might want children.
5. A few brave souls dressed in summer clothes jog in a park nearby.
6. As I turn onto Lake Shore Drive, the city begins to reveal its allure.
7. During the 1960s, the late Carl Sagan began researching the origins of life.
8. The Democratic National Committee released a list of visitors who stayed overnight the White House. The DNC said the guests came at the invitation of the Clintons, including Chelsea.
9. During his campaign, Sen. Richard Durbin (D-Ill.) pledged to work for increased gun control.
10. In 1935 he joined the embryonic Basie group and remained until 1948 with what many consider the greatest jazz organization.

B. Redundancies

1. These projects include:
2. He grew up traveling. He still travels.
3. She lived in Europe five years and crisscrossed Europe and Asia.
4. She says she want to own a magazine.
5. The smell of garbage wafts out of the alley.
6. He says he is not certain if he wants to become an attorney.
7. He earned both a bachelor's degree and a master's in Business Administration degree from the School of Commerce at DePaul University.
8. Bond was set at \$900,000 Wednesday for an 18-year-old man charged with killing two men and wounding another.

9. In addition, he edits ... -or- He also edits ...
10. Not only had she competed in Boston, but around the nation.

C. Wordiness

1. The ice has melted and the water has taken on a bright blue more like to be seen in the South Pacific.
2. We approach the library, a large building ... -or- We approach the imposing library.
3. Taxpayers must deal with the mighty Internal Revenue Service when they fail to pay taxes, whatever the amount. But these Savings and Loan criminals need only face probation and parole officers.
4. She decided to ...
5. She says her interest in the media began in high school when a teacher made a stray remark: "You have the nicest voice I've ever heard."
6. ... often reviewing movies.
7. He believes most people place no value on language skills.
8. This mountain highway is curving but your car is going straight. -or- Watch out for that curve! -or- Stop!
9. They might move to San Antonio.
10. Dr. Malone is at the hospital removing a patient's tonsils. -or- Dr. Malone is at the hospital performing a tonsillectomy.

Note that this last sentence is in danger of being over-edited. Many journalists would succumb to the temptation of eliminating "at the hospital." But the prepositional phrase is needed. Dr. Malone could be performing the tonsillectomy at a clinic or maybe a M*A*S*H unit.