

Course: Written expression

Level: 2nd year LMD.

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Choppy Writing

Choppy sentences are too short sentences which come together. Words are repeated. They are tedious and hard to understand. Short sentences are not errors, but writing too many of them together is not a good style. Readers have to work hard to understand the relationship among the ideas because there are no connecting words to help them.

Fixing Choppy Sentences

1. **Using coordination:** to correct choppy sentences, combine sentences coordinating equal ideas using coordinating words: “fanboys” and conjunctive adverbs.

Example:

➤ **Choppy:** She took dance classes. She had no natural grace or sense of rhythm. She eventually gave up the idea of becoming a dancer.

Revised: She took dance classes, **but** she had no natural grace or sense of rhythm **so**, she eventually gave up the idea of becoming a dancer.

2. **Using subordination:** We subordinate using subordinating conjunctions. We subordinate these ideas by writing dependent clauses using relative pronouns and adverbs.

Example:

➤ **Choppy:** I like dogs. Dogs make good pets. Dogs are friendly. Dogs are loyal.

Revised: I like dogs **because** they are good pets. They are friendly **and** loyal.

➤ **Choppy:** Bears emerge from hibernation in the spring. They wander through wetlands. They feed mainly on grasses.

Revised: **When** bears emerge from hibernation in the spring, they wander through wetlands **and** feed mainly on grasses.

3. **Embedding:** embedding is the working of additional words and phrases into a sentence.

- **Using an appositive:** phrases which add information about a noun before it.

Example:

➤ **Choppy:** Buzz Aldrin was an astronaut. He was the second person to walk on the moon.

Revised: Buzz Aldrin, an astronaut, was the second person to walk on the moon.

4. **Integration of minor details:** we do not need separate sentences for each piece of information.

➤ **Choppy:** The boy got sidetracked on his way to school. He was six years old. He ended up at a park this morning.

Revised: The six-year-old boy ended up at the park rather than going to school this morning.

➤ **Choppy:** The boy asked his father a question. The boy is five years old. The question was about death.

Revised: The five-year-old boy asked his father a question about death.

5. **Modifying Phrases:** another way to combine two sentences is by turning one of them into a modifying phrase. This involves using a verb in the *-ing/ed* form.

Example:

➤ **Choppy:** The politician spoke to the high school students. She urged them to get informed and get involved with their local government.

Revised: The politician spoke to the high school students, urging them to get informed and get involved with their local government.