

Writing - Class 2

February 6

Optional homework (throughout course):

- Send us articles or abstracts that are particularly well-written or particularly poorly-written

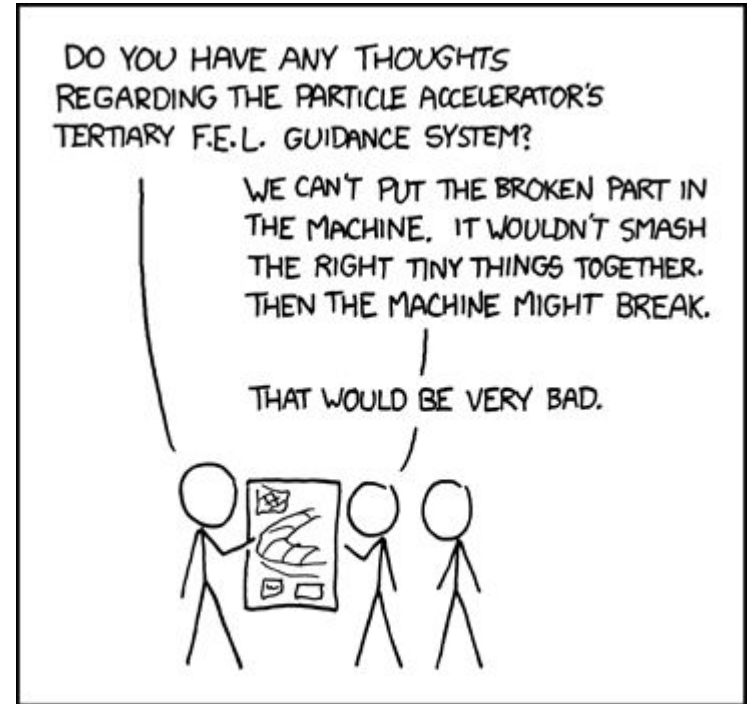
The next couple of weeks...

Last week:

- Noun
- Verb
- Adjective
- Nominalization

This week:

- Simple subject
- Whole subject



I SPENT ALL NIGHT READING SIMPLE.WIKIPEDIA.ORG, AND NOW I CAN'T STOP TALKING LIKE THIS.

Subject / Simple Subject The smallest unit of the phrase that the verb is saying something about. It must agree with the verb in number.

- In active sentences with action verbs it corresponds to the actor or cause of the action.

Examples:

- The boys are back in town.
 - LeBron James is tall.
 - The baby ate a slug.
 - Debbie broke the violin.
 - And how did he kill Wagner?
- In passive sentences it is usually the entity that is being affected by the verb.

Examples:

- A slug was eaten.
- The violin was broken by Debbie.
- How was Wagner killed?

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- The violin was broken by Debbie.
- How was Wagner killed?

Whole Subject The simple subject, along with any words that modify it. To identify the whole subject, put a *who* or a *what* in front of the verb and turn the sentence into a question.

Examples:

- The ability of the city to manage education is an accepted fact.
 - Question: “What is an accepted fact?”
 - Answer: “The ability of the city to manage education.”
 - Simple subject is ability.

- Our dinner guests seemed to enjoy their meal.
 - Question: “Who seemed to enjoy their meals?”
 - Answer: “Our dinner guests.”
 - Simple subject is guests.

- Any fair-minded person looking at this would say that some terrible mistakes were made. (Obama)

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 - Question: “Who seemed to enjoy their meals?”
 - Answer: “Our dinner guests.”
 - Simple subject is guests.

- Any fair-minded person looking at this would say that some terrible mistakes were made. (Obama)

Underline the simple subjects and bracket the (*verbs*):

Once upon a time, as a walk through the woods *was taking place* on the part of Little Red Riding Hood, the Wolf's jump out from behind a tree *occurred*, causing her fright.

Once upon a time, Little Red Riding Hood *was walking* through the woods, when the Wolf *jumped* out from behind a tree and *frightened* her.

Underline the simple subjects and bracket the (*verbs*):

Once upon a time, as a walk through the woods *was taking place* on the part of Little Red Riding Hood, the Wolf's jump out from behind a tree *occurred*, causing her fright.

Characters:
Little Red Riding Hood
Wolf
her

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Who are the main characters of each sentence? (circle)

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Actions:
walk
jump
frighten

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Who are the main characters of each sentence? (circle)

What are the main actions? (box)

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Who are the main characters of each sentence? (circle)

What are the main actions? (box)

Underline the simple subjects, bracket the (*verbs*),
Circle the **characters**, box the **actions**:

The Federalists' argument in regard to the destabilization of government by popular democracy was based on their belief in the tendency of factions to further their self-interest at the expense of the common good.

Underline the simple subjects, bracket the (verbs),
Circle the characters, box the actions:

The Federalists' argument in regard to the destabilization of government by popular democracy *was based* on their belief in the tendency of factions to *further* their self-interest at the expense of the common good.

Whole subject:

The Federalists' argument in regard to the destabilization of government by popular democracy

Verb:

was based

Characters:

federalists
popular democracy
government
factions

Actions:

argue
destabilize
believe
tend

Underline the simple subjects, bracket the (verbs),
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The Federalists' argument in regard to the destabilization of government by popular democracy *was based* on their belief in the tendency of factions to *further* their self-interest at the expense of the common good.

Whole subject:

The Federalists' argument in regard to the destabilization of government by popular democracy

Verb:

was based

The Federalists argued that popular democracy destabilized government, because they believed that factions tended to further their self-interest at the expense of the common good.

Characters:

federalists
popular democracy
government
factions

Actions:

argue
destabilize
believe
tend

Underline the simple subjects, bracket the (verbs),
Circle the characters, box the actions:

The Federalists' argument in regard to the destabilization of government by popular democracy *was based* on their belief in the tendency of factions to *further* their self-interest at the expense of the common good.

Whole subject:

The Federalists' argument in regard to the destabilization of government by popular democracy

The Federalists *argued* that popular democracy *destabilized* government, because they *believed* that factions *tended to* *further* their self-interest at the expense of the common good.

Whole subject:

The Federalists

Characters:
federalists
popular democracy
government
factions

Actions:
argue
destabilize
believe
tend

Principles of Clarity

- 1) Make main characters subjects
- 2) Make important actions verbs

Handout - Exercise 2

- Underline subjects, bracket verbs, circle characters, and box actions.
- Rewrite the unclear sentence into one in which the actions are verbs, using its paired version as a model.

1a) Some people argue that atmospheric carbon dioxide does not elevate global temperature.

1b) There has been speculation by educators about the role of the family in improving educational achievement.

2a) The store's price increases led to frustration among its customers.

2b) When we write concisely, reader understand easily.

3a) Complaints by editorial writers about voter apathy rarely offer suggestions about dispelling it.

3b) Although critics claim that children who watch a lot of television tend to become less able readers, no one has demonstrated that to be true.

Responses

1a) Some people argue that atmospheric carbon dioxide does not elevate global temperature.

1b) There has been speculation by educators about the role of the family in improving educational achievement.

Improved:

Educators speculate that the family improves educational achievement.

Educators speculate about the role of the family in improving education.

2a) The store's price increases led to frustration among its customers.

2b) When we write concisely, reader understand easily.

Improved:

When the store's price increased, its customers were frustrated.

The customers were frustrated by the store's price increases.

3a) Complaints by editorial writers about voter apathy rarely offer suggestions about dispelling it.

3b) Although critics claim that children who watch a lot of television tend to become less able readers, no one has demonstrated that to be true.

Improved:

How to revise

The automation of manufacturing, assembly, and shipping processes by corporations means the loss of jobs for many blue-collar workers.

1. Analyze

- Underline the first 7-8 words in each sentence (ignore short, 4-5 word introductory phrases)
The automation of manufacturing, assembly, and shipping processes by corporations means the loss of jobs for many blue-collar workers.
- Ask:
 - i. Did you underline any abstract nouns as simple subjects? *automation*
 - ii. Did you underline 7-8 words before getting to a verb? *means* - 10 words
- If “yes” to either, revise.

2. Assess

- Decide who or what your main characters are (more next class)
corporations, blue-collar workers
- Look for actions the characters perform, especially actions hidden in nominalizations
automation, loss

3. Rewrite

Rewrite

The automation of manufacturing, assembly, and shipping processes by corporations means the loss of jobs for many blue-collar workers.

- If actions are nominalizations, make them verbs.

automation → *automate*, *loss* → *lose*

- Make the characters the subjects of those verbs

corporations automate, *blue-collar workers lose*

- Rewrite the sentence with characters as subjects and actions as verbs
Use words such as *because*, *if*, *when*, *although*, *why*, *how*, *whether*, *that*, to show relationships among ideas

Many blue-collar workers are losing their jobs because corporations are automating their manufacturing, assembly, and shipping processes.

Some consequences

1) **Sentences are more concrete.**

- There was an affirmative decision for expansion.
- The director decided to expand the program.

2) **Sentences are more concise.**

Nominalizations require articles & prepositions like *a, the, of, by, in*, that are not necessary for verbs and conjunctions.

- A revision of the program will result in increases in our efficiency in the servicing of clients.
- If we revise the program, we can serve clients more efficiently.

3) **Logic is clearer.**

Fuzzy preposition & phrases	→	precise links between ideas
<i>of, by, on the part of</i>	→	<i>because, although, if</i>

- Our more effective presentation of our study resulted in our success, despite an earlier start by others.
- Although others started earlier, we succeeded because we presented our study more effectively.

4) **Sentences are more coherent.**

Nominalizations let you distort the sequence of actions.

- **Sentences are more coherent.**

Nominalizations let you distort the sequence of actions.

Numbers are the real sequence of events:

- Decisions⁴ in regard to administration⁵ of medication despite inability² of irrational patients appearing¹ in a Trauma Center to provide legal consent³ rest with the attending physician alone.
- When patients appear¹ in a Trauma Center and behave² so irrationally that they cannot legally consent³ to treatment, only the attending physician can decide⁴ whether to medicate⁵ them.

(Bonus consequence...)

- **It can save lives!**

A warning sticker on a portable generator:

Mild Exposure to CO can result in accumulated damage over time.

Extreme Exposure to CO may rapidly be fatal without producing significant warning symptoms.

Infants, children, older adults, and people with health conditions are more easily affected by Carbon Monoxide and their symptoms are more severe.

A sticker on an updated model:

Using a generator indoors CAN KILL YOU IN MINUTES.

Generator exhaust contains carbon monoxide. This is a poison you cannot see or smell.

NEVER use inside a home or garage, EVEN IF doors and windows are open.

Only use OUTSIDE and far away from windows, doors, and vents.

Handout - Exercise 3

- 1) Lincoln's hope was for the preservation of the Union without war, but the South's attack on Fort Sumter made war an inevitability.
- 2) Attempts were made on the part of the president's aides to assert his immunity from a congressional subpoena.
- 3) There were predictions by business executives that the economy would experience a quick revival.

Responses

- 1) Lincoln's hope was for the preservation of the Union without war, but the South's attack on Fort Sumter made war an inevitability.
 - a)
 - b)
- 2) Attempts were made on the part of the president's aides to assert his immunity from a congressional subpoena.
 - a) **
 - b)
- 3) There were predictions by business executives that the economy would experience a quick revival.
 - a) **
 - b)

Homework

- Exercise 3, questions 5&6, and one more of your choice.
- Exercise 4 - send to Miranda by email. (Possibly: Update directly on slides.) Due Feb 13.
- (Optional) Read Lesson 3 of Williams & Bizup.
- (Optional) Send Good & Bad articles & abstracts