



## **2. Sentence problems and how to fix them**

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# 1. Sentence problems and how to fix them

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## 1.1. Sentence fragments

Fragment	Good sentence
Three dogs and a goat.	Three dogs and a goat ate all the food.
Studying too hard on weekends.	My friend was studying too hard on weekends.
Because I could not find my shoes.	I felt sad because I could not find my shoes.

## 1.2. Choppy sentences

Choppy	Good
<p>Our results were inconsistent.</p> <p>The program obviously contains an error.</p> <p>We need to talk to Paul Davis.</p> <p>We will ask him to review the program.</p>	<p>We will ask Paul Davis to review the program for errors because it produced inconsistent results.</p>

## **1.3. Run-on sentences**

1. Fused sentences
2. Comma-splice sentences



## 1.3.1. Fused sentences

Fused	Good
The experiment failed it had been left unobserved for too long.	The experiment failed <b>because</b> it had been left unobserved for too long.
	The experiment had been left unobserved for too long, <b>so</b> it failed.

## 1.3.2. Comma-splice sentences

Comma splice	Good
The experiment failed, it had been left unobserved for too long.	The experiment failed <b>because</b> it had been left unobserved for too long.
	The experiment had been left unobserved for too long, <b>so</b> it failed.



## 1.4. Loose sentences

Loose	Good
<p>We got the contract, according to which we must be ready by June 1 with the necessary personnel and equipment to get the job done, so with this in mind a staff meeting that all group managers are expected to attend, is scheduled for February 12.</p>	<p>We must close the contract by June 1, so a mandatory staff meeting is scheduled for February 12.</p>

## 1.5. Inappropriate or excessive coordination

Inappropriate or excessive	Good
John had a drinking problem, <b>and</b> he dropped out of school.	John had a drinking problem, <b>so</b> he dropped out of school.
Roses are a popular flower, <b>and</b> they are difficult to grow, <b>so</b> many people choose to purchase them as cut flowers instead, <b>but</b> that can be expensive.	Roses are a popular flower that are difficult to grow. So, many people buy cut roses, <b>but</b> that can be expensive.

## 1.6. Inappropriate or excessive subordination

Excessive	Good
<p><b>Although</b> Bwana thought that he was prepared, he failed the examination, <b>which</b> meant that he had to repeat the course <b>before</b> he could graduate <b>which</b> he did not want to do <b>because</b> it would conflict with his summer job.</p>	<p>Bwana thought that he was prepared, <b>but</b> he failed the examination. Therefore, he would have to repeat the course <b>before</b> he could graduate. He did not want to do that <b>because</b> it would conflict with his summer job.</p>



## 1.7. Non-parallel structures

Non-parallel	Parallel
I like to swim, to sail, and rowing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I like to swim, to sail, and to row.</li><li>• I like swimming, sailing, and rowing.</li></ul>
This report is an overview of the processes involved, problems that we encountered, and how they were solved.	This report is an overview of the processes involved, the problems encountered, and the solutions implemented.

## 2. How to make your subject effective?

1. Avoid nominalization
2. Use actors or concrete objects
3. Place your subject early in the sentence

## 2.1. Avoid nominalization

- Nominalizations - nouns made of verbs or adjectives
- Do not use nominalizations for subjects combined with any form of “BE”

BAD	GOOD
Optimization of our work force is a key goal of our company.	Our company aims at optimizing our work force.



# How to spot a nominalization?

1. Can you change a noun into a verb or into an adjective?
2. If yes, it's a nominalization.

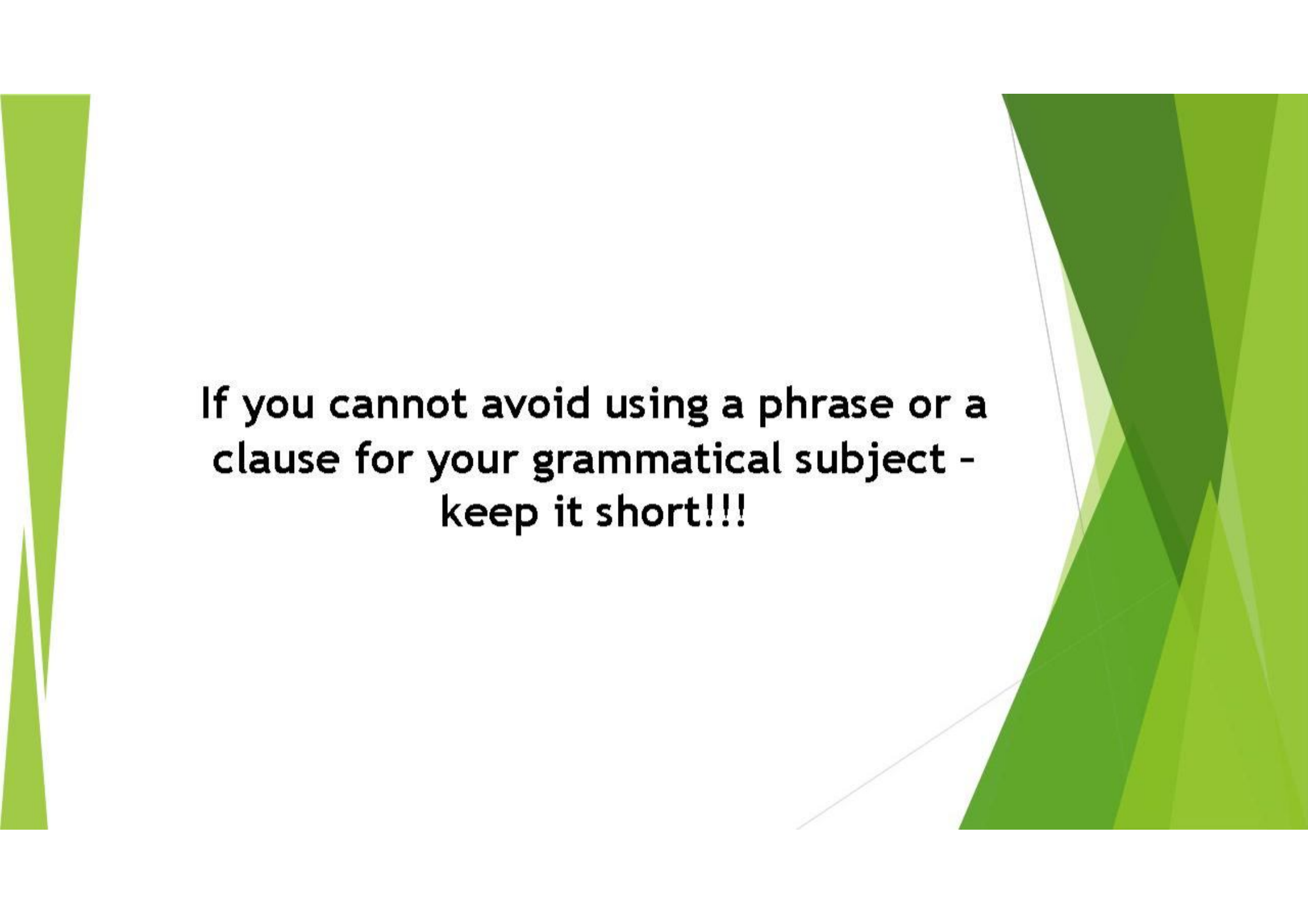
**utilization** – **use**

**development** – **develop**

**redness** - **red**

## 2.2. Use actors or concrete objects

BAD	GOOD
<b>Eating uncooked horse meat</b> can cause health problems with students.	If <b>students</b> eat uncooked horse meat, they can have health problems.
<b>There</b> are 3 ways to solve this problem.	<b>This problem</b> has 3 solutions.
<b>This</b> seems to be a mistake.	<b>This tactics</b> seems to be a mistake.



**If you cannot avoid using a phrase or a  
clause for your grammatical subject -  
keep it short!!!**

## 2.3. Place subjects early in the sentence

BAD	GOOD
The short longevity of most common restorations and especially those of resin-based composite <b>materials</b> calls for the detailed studies of factors which may lead to an extension of the lifetime of restorations	Resin-based composite <b>materials</b> fail to last long.

### **3. How to make your verb effective?**

1. Prefer active to passive
2. Make your verbs show action
3. Place your verb close to your subject



### 3.1. Prefer active to passive

BAD	GOOD
<p>The papers <b>were graded</b> by the <b>teacher</b>.</p>	<p>The <b>teacher</b> <b>graded</b> the papers.</p>



**As a matter of style, passive voice is typically, though not always, inferior to active voice.**

*The Chicago Manual of Style*

**Never use the passive where you can use the active.**

George Orwell,  
*Politics and the  
English Language*

**The active voice is usually more direct and vigorous than the passive.**

William Strunk,  
*The Elements of Style*

# When to use passives?

1. when you describe research methods
2. when the actor is unknown or unimportant
3. when you want to hide the actor

## 3.2. Make your verbs show action

BAD	GOOD
Chess Aviation <b>has</b> an excellent concept. The idea of catering any service to an extremely wealthy <b>has</b> always <b>been</b> a viable idea. Airline service <b>is</b> necessary for most wealthy individuals. The airline service that <b>is provided</b> by commercial carriers <b>is</b> extremely poor.	The management team <b>has built</b> Chess Aviation around an excellent concept: catering to the extremely wealthy. Many high-net-worth individuals <b>fly</b> frequently. However, commercial air carriers <b>tend to provide</b> poor service, falling far short of what affluent people expect.

### 3.3. Place your verb close to your subject

BAD	GOOD
<b>Lecturers</b> in the electronics department of the university where interviews took place <b>took</b> a similar view to those in biology.	The <b>interviews took place</b> both in the electronics and in the biology departments of the university. In both departments, the <b>lecturers took</b> a similar view.



# References

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