Clarity and Concision Part IV:
Exercises

Paula Rawlins, Assistant Director, UGA Writing Center
Christina Lee, GradsWrite Studio Graduate Writing Consultant
University of Georgia Writing Center

WRITINGCENTER@UGA.EDU
Several of the exercises included in this PowerPoint come from the sources listed to the right.

See these resources for more help with the issues discussed in this series, along with other writing topics!


Let’s Practice!
Exercise 1: Revise the following paragraph to eliminate unnecessary words.

As dogs became tamed and domesticated by humans over many thousands of years, the canine species underwent an evolution into hundreds of breeds designed to perform particular, specific tasks, such as pulling sleds and guarding sheep. Over time, there was a decreased need for many breeds. For example, as humans evolved from hunter-gatherers into farmers, it was no longer necessary for them to own hunting dogs.
Exercise 1: Revise the following paragraph to eliminate unnecessary words.

As **humans domesticated dogs** over thousands of years, the canine species **evolved** into hundreds of breeds designed to perform specific tasks, such as pulling sleds and guarding sheep. **Eventually, the need for many breeds decreased.** For example, as humans evolved from hunter-gatherers into farmers, **they** no longer **needed** hunting dogs.
This exercise provides examples of sentences that might prove best written in the passive voice.

**Exercise 2:** Improve these sentences by rewriting them in the passive voice. Why is the passive voice sometimes more effective?

1. People often ignore online ads.

2. Many experts believe that the internet has dramatically changed society.
Exercise 2: Improve these sentences by rewriting them in the passive voice. Why is the passive voice sometimes more effective?

1. People often ignore online ads. **Online ads are often ignored.**

2. Many experts believe that the internet has dramatically changed society. **Society has dramatically changed because of the internet.** OR **The internet has dramatically changed society.**

Keep in mind that no matter which version of this second sentence you chose, it would need to be followed by cited evidence to support your claim, so doing away with “many experts” should not cause a problem.
Exercise 3: Rewrite the following sentences so that they use active voice.

1. Healthy eating is thought to lead to a longer life.

2. Eating fish is linked to higher IQs, according to a recent study.
**Exercise 3:** Correct the errors in the form and use of the passive and active voice in these sentences.

1. Healthy eating is thought to lead to a longer life. *Healthy eating leads to a longer life.*

2. Eating fish is linked to a higher IQ, according to a recent study. *A recent study links eating fish to a higher IQ.*
Exercise 4: Complete the following sentences with your own ideas, paying attention to parallel form.

1. The authors attempted to identify, study, and _____ the phenomenon.

2. Good teachers correct errors efficiently, consistently, and ________.

3. The authors concluded that neither ________
   nor ______________________ was/were effective.
Fixing errors in parallelism

**Exercise 5:** Find and correct errors in parallel structure in the following sentences.

1. People who have a sense of purpose in their life tend to make healthier lifestyle choices and reporting feeling better about their health.

2. Participants’ sense of purpose was positively associated with their reports of physical activity, good nutrition, and they sleep well.

3. Future research should disentangle whether the specific health behaviors are directly responsible for better health or they are simply indicators for other health behaviors.
Exercise 5: Find and correct errors in parallel structure in the following sentences.

1. People who have a sense of purpose in their life tend to make healthier lifestyle choices and reporting feeling better about their health.

2. Participants’ sense of purpose was positively associated with their reports of physical activity, good nutrition, and they sleep well adequate sleep.

3. Future research should disentangle whether the specific health behaviors are directly responsible for better health or they are simply indicators for other health behaviors.
Exercise 4: Complete the following sentences with your own ideas, paying attention to parallel form.

1. The authors attempted to identify, study, and __explain____ the phenomenon.

2. Good teachers correct errors efficiently, consistently, and ______kindly______.

3. The authors concluded that neither __listening to music______

   nor __talking to counselors____ was/were effective.
Time to practice with your own writing, and come see us in the Writing Center for more help!
Receive feedback from graduate students trained as writing consultants.

Help at any stage of the writing process and with any writing project.

Schedule up to two weeks in advance.

Free!
Make an appointment online

uga.mywconline.com

Click “Register for an account” if a new client

Find us on Facebook (facebook.com/ugawriting) and Instagram (@UGAwritingcenter)!

For more information, visit our website:

https://www.english.uga.edu/writing-center
Educational Resources for Writing from beyond UGA

- UNC Chapel Hill's Writing Center: Tips and Tools
- Purdue Writing Lab
- Naval Post Graduate Writing Center
- Writing Commons