

SENTENCE COMBINING

Varying the length and structure of your sentences makes your papers easier to read and helps you establish your authority as a writer. Notice how choppy and unsophisticated the following passage sounds:

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-on-Avon. He married Anne Hathaway. They had three children. He moved to London. He became an actor and a dramatist.

Now see how much smoother the same ideas sound when these sentences are revised and combined:

Born in Stratford-on-Avon, William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway and fathered three children. He left them for London, becoming an actor and dramatist.

Below are several techniques you can use to reword and combine your shorter sentences.

Create a Compound Sentence

Use a semicolon or use a comma before the words **and**, **or**, **so**, **for**, **nor**, **but**, or **yet** to combine two shorter sentences.

He married Anne Hathaway; they had three children.
He married Anne Hathaway, **and** they had three children.

Create a Dependent Clause

Use a word like **which**, **that**, **since**, **because**, **if**, **when**, **while**, **unless**, **as**, or **although** to change one sentence into a dependent clause. Connect it to another sentence.

He moved to London, **where** he became an actor and a dramatist.
After he moved to London, he became an actor and a dramatist.

Or, by turning the main verb of a sentence into its **-ing** form, you can turn it (and the words after it) into a clause that connects to another sentence

Moving to London, he became an actor.
He moved to London, **becoming an actor and dramatist**.

Create an Adjective

Sometimes a whole sentence can be reduced to a single word or group of words that describe a noun in another sentence:

The **Stratford-born** William Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway.
Stratford-born husband and father William Shakespeare moved to London.

Explain a Noun

You can also reduce a sentence to a group of words following the noun they describe in another sentence, putting commas around them.

Shakespeare, **the London actor and dramatist**, was born in Stratford-on-Avon.
Shakespeare, **the father of three children**, left them for London.

Create a Series of Verbs

If several sentences in a row have the same subject, they can often be combined:

Shakespeare **married** Anne Hathaway, **fathered** three children, and **moved** to London.

Practice

Use each of the strategies below to combine two or more of the following six sentences:

The rodeo will be in town soon. The rodeo draws people from across the western United States. The rodeo has many events. These events include calf-roping and barrel-racing. These events also include mutton-busting. Mutton-busting is for children.

1. Create a compound sentence: _____

2. Create a dependent clause by adding a word: _____

3. Create a dependent clause by changing the verb to its -ing form: _____

4. Create an adjective: _____

5. Explain a noun: _____

6. Create a series of verbs: _____

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