

Practice Pages for Improving M4M Transcripts: WNAP Conference May 2009

Mangled Modifiers: Rewrite each of the sentences below so the correct message is conveyed.

She handed out brownies to the children stored in tupperware.

I smelled the oysters coming down the stairs for dinner.

Mrs. Daniel sews evening gowns just for special customers with sequins stitched on them.

Although exhausted and weary, the coach kept yelling, "Another lap!"

She carefully studied the Picasso hanging in the art gallery with her friend.

I brushed my teeth after eating with Crest Toothpaste.

Freshly painted, Jim left the room to dry.

He held the umbrella over Janet's head that he got from Delta Airlines.

Grocery shopping at Big Star, the lettuce was fresh.

Driving like a maniac, the possum was hit and killed.

It's an antique dresser for woman with thick legs and large drawers.

Coming out of the market, the bananas fell on the pavement.

I saw the accident driving down the interstate.

Holding a bag of groceries, the roach flew out of the cabinet.

Emitting thick black smoke from the midsection, I realized something was wrong.

The girl was consoled by the nurse who had just taken an overdose of sleeping pills.

I saw the police car walking down the street.

Drinking beer at a bar, the car would not start.

Playing pool in the living room, the radio was turned on by Jim.

Frustrated by diagonal movement, the set was turned off.

Having an automatic stick shift, Nancy bought the car.

Oozing slowly across the floor, Marvin watched the salad dressing.

Confusing Pronouns: Reword the sentences below to make the intended message clear.

1. The company needs accurate data for its estimates. This is the purpose of the task force.

Problem: Does "This" refer to accurate data or estimates?

Intended meaning: task force is to determine accuracy of the data

2. To encourage the recruits to blend in with veteran players, the coaches let them play in summer leagues.

Problem: Does "them" refer to recruits or veteran players?

Intended meaning: recruits *and* veteran players

3. Fred told Tony that polka-dotted underwear was showing through the ripped seat of his dress pants.

Intended meaning: Fred's pants were torn, not Tony's.

4. The snail produced a trail of slime. It smelled a little, too.

Problem: Did the snail or the slime smell?

Intended meaning: The snail smelled.

5. What did you do today to get ready for school today? How would they be different in the 1700s?

Problem: "They" is a plural pronoun, but there are no plural antecedents given.

6. When we talk about low tension, we're talking about syntax that offers immediate gratification. Sorry my handwriting is hard to read today! It won't gratify every desire, but it will satisfy the desire for closure.

Problem: "It" refers to the teacher's handwriting, instead of a type of syntax.

7. [On board.] "The thing the farmer rescued after it had been stranded was the pig." Here is our keyword.

Problem: The reader does not know at which word the teacher was pointing when he/she said "here".

8. The inventory has remained steady in the store for some time. That's the reason we have to sell it.

9. Paul likes to have his back rubbed but Jack doesn't so he won't schedule one.

10. John loves Hawaii just as much as Mike does. That's part of the reason we need him to come home.

11. Maria told all of her secrets to Juanita. She didn't want to think she'd never speak to her again.

12. Rob said that he'd do it if Tom would. Even though he'd been in jail, and he could be in a lot of trouble if he went along with it.

13. He stole the eggs from the children and ate them.

Fragments: Read the fragment error text first, to demonstrate how hard it is for a reader to figure out the intended meaning. Then read the verbatim text. Then rewrite the fragments to be full sentence, to clarify the speaker's intended meaning.

1. Fragment errors: Evaporation is the conversion from a liquid to a gas. If leave a beaker of water here and come back later. Water level down, evaporated. Molecules at the surface compared to the interior? More tight or less-tight? Yes! They are less tight, can break free to gas, faster evaporation.

Verbatim: Evaporation is the conversion from a liquid to a gas. Alright, so if I leave a beaker of water here, and we came back to it day after day, what would happen? The level of the water would go down. It would evaporate. And, what's happening there? What do you think about molecules right at the surface compared to the molecules at the interior? Are they held more tightly or less tightly than the ones at the interior? They are held less tightly. So it turns out that those can break free into the gas phase. That's called evaporation.

Your full-sentence corrected version:

2. Fragment Errors: The sentence flowing nicely through the air. A well-kicked punt. High tension could be very tense. Moderate tension, closure fairly soon. Introduces some suspense, and keep some desire at play. Feel involved emotionally, as the reader, rather than just being handed the information like peanuts.

Verbatim: You could just feel that sentence arcing through the air, like a well kicked punt. That's high tension. How tense could high tension be? It could be very tense.

Moderate tension, as you can guess, gives closure fairly soon; but occasionally introduces a little bit of suspension, suspense, and actually keeps just enough desire at play in the unfolding of a sentence that you feel as a reader that you're being involved emotionally in the unfolding of the idea, rather than simply being handed this stuff, handed this information like so many peanuts.

Your full-sentence corrected version:

Correctly rewrite the fragmented sentences below.

Arrow University offers many majors in engineering. Such as electrical, chemical, and industrial engineering.

Coach Dietz exemplified this behavior by walking off the field in the middle of a game. Leaving her team at a time when we needed her.

I need to find a new roommate. Because the one I have now isn't working out too well.

The current city policy on housing is incomplete as it stands. Which is why we believe the proposed amendments should be passed.

Run-on Sentences: Properly punctuate the information below, to avoid any sentences with more than two clauses (i.e., avoid any run-on sentences).

1. Now please take out some paper and I'll ask you to write for the remainder of the class time, and we might share your writings later with the class to get some feedback from your peers about the writings you are about to create, using in at least one place a periodic sentence. Use a periodic sentences someplace or you can use more than one if you wish, or even you could try to use all periodic sentences. But they would be hard and sound artificial but it could be a valuable experience for you to try, so do so if you wish.
2. I wish I could give you another ten more minutes to write your essays but our time is up now and we need to move on to sharing our work with each other and getting feedback to help us write better periodic sentences, and sentences of any of the types we've talked about during this semester so far. Who wants to go first?
3. And remember that next time we meet I want you to bring your works in progress, and it might be this piece you were working on today, or another that you began before, or that you will write especially for our next class meeting. But from this time forward I want you to bring all your works in progress and also bring things that you wrote before and that I already graded, and bring in your unfinished work along with things you want any help to improve or that you don't know how to vary the sentences for more impact. This will give us more material to work with in class do you have any questions about the assignment for next time?
4. Paul likes to have his back rubbed but Jack doesn't when Paul gets one don't give Jack one.
5. I like to go to the movies ask me to go with you when you go.
6. He likes to take a walk on the beach she likes to swim in the surf.
7. He will come tomorrow she told me she will come later today.
8. You say all is for naught I say too bad for all that is.
9. Take two steps to the left then past the place where you last curtsied take a right.
10. Pour the liquid into the flask the pipette should be inserted there when you're finished.

Noun Strings: Reword the phrases below to express a message clearly.

Drug user rehabilitation sponsor program definition checklist Plant society schedule calendar secretary

Emergency egress regulation manual orientation Retreat agenda item brainstorm session meeting

Invasive specifiers proliferation education proposal draft filing notice

Biochemistry terminology definition section outline

Notorious Confusables: Choose the correct word to convey the obvious meaning. (Don't peek at the answers, below!)

1. I couldn't tell _____ she was serious or not. (whether, weather)
2. _____ are too many possible answers to this question. (They're, There, Their)
3. _____ going to help me with this? (Whose, Who's)
4. Reading that book had a peculiar _____ on Evelyn. (effect, affect)
5. I am completely _____ in this course. (uninterested, disinterested)
6. I'm afraid she's going to _____ her grandmother's wedding band. (loose, lose)
7. My mother has been _____ in bed all morning. (lieing, laying, lying)
8. She has apparently found it difficult to _____ the circumstances. (accept, except)
9. She apparently doesn't care about _____ origins in antiquity. (it's, its)
10. It's usually hotter _____ this in July. (than, then)
11. The politicians can't find an appropriate _____ for the new community college. (cite, sight, site)
12. I've never known the library to be _____ this empty. (quite, quiet, quit)
13. Do you know _____ coat this is? (whose, who's)
14. Her remarks seemed _____, and we chose to ignore them. (insipid/incipient)
15. We try to keep the President _____ of recent developments in the economy. (appraised/apprised)
16. What is the _____ event in this short story? (climatic/climactic)
17. When you are finished, _____ to the next part of the exam. (precede/proceed)
18. We need some new _____ for our office. (stationary\stationery)
19. The key was made _____ for his use. (especially/specially)
20. Please be sure to _____ your references at the end of your term paper. (sight, cite, site)

Answers: 1. whether; 2. There; 3. Who's; 4. effect; 5. uninterested; 6. lose; 7. lying; 8. accept; 9. its; 10. than; 11. site; 12. quit; 13. whose; 14. insipid; 15. apprised; 16. climactic; 17. proceed; 18. stationery; 19. especially; 20. cite

Agreement: Subject+Verb Number and Verb Tense: Correct the errors in each sentence below.

1. Many men was sitting on the bank of the river tomorrow.
2. He eat more vegetables than anyone else I know.
3. Counting money and spending it is her favorite pastime!
4. The scientists will do the experiment yesterday, but they isn't doing it today.
5. Stretchy fabric make good and comfortable pants.
6. The math equations was hard for him.
7. He walked out the door, and she sees him immediately.
10. Talking too loud and being rude make the travelers stand out in the crowd.
11. I will call the repairman, and he said he is fixing the problem.
12. She said she is coming yesterday.
13. When they heard that, they run faster.
14. They knocked on the door, and someone opens it.
15. He sends his bill after the job was done.
16. She went to the store after she sees the advertisement on the morning news.
17. The purpose of the assignment are to develop competency.
18. The light over the hills make everything glow.
19. Counting sheep are a good way to get to sleep.
20. None of the work are finished.
21. Store closings in the Fireside Mall is increasing.
22. The mother and father of the child who want to help are here.
23. Paul said he and John likes to play video games.
24. How much do a ream of paper cost?

Parallel Structure: Select the sentence from each pair that uses correct parallel construction.

Phuong Tran has wit, charm, and she has an extremely pleasant personality.

Phuong Tran has wit, charm, and a pleasing personality.

In English class, Tashonda learned to read poems critically and to appreciate good prose.

In English class, Tashonda learned to read poems critically and she appreciated good prose.

Raoul's QPA is higher than Ralph.

Raoul's QPA is higher than Ralph's.

He wanted three things out of college: to learn a skill, to make good friends, and to learn about life.

He wanted three things out of college: to learn a skill, to make good friends, and learning about life.

Coach Espinoza was a brilliant strategist, a caring mentor, and a wise friend.

Coach Espinoza was a brilliant strategist, a caring mentor, and friend.

We found the film repulsive, offensive, and we thought it was embarrassing.

We found the film repulsive, offensive, and embarrassing.

Mr. Nguyen kept his store clean, neat, and he made it conveniently arranged.

Mr. Nguyen kept his store clean, neat, and conveniently arranged.

Chemical interactions can be dangerous, finished slowly, or over quick.

Chemical interactions can be dangerous, slow or quick.

Correct the Parallel Structure errors in the sentences below:

First, clean the surface. Second, sand well. Thirdly, apply the paint.

I need to be diligent, honest, and speaking with integrity.

Starting each day with a smile, keeping a smile all day, and to end with a smile is a challenge.

First off, sift the dry ingredients. Second, the liquid ingredients go into the dry ingredients and thirdly, mix well.

Remember each of these four things: Number one, Love; number two, Hope; number three, Trust; and last, Joy.

Incorrect Punctuation: Properly punctuate the information below.

The boy's coats disappeared from the cloakroom, nobody knew how.

When Marlene who looks like Marilyn Monroe comes into the room people turn their heads' and stare.

You above all know that a-lot has been done in that arena you know its true.

I asked him if he wanted to come with us?

He said so, he meant it. Its' too complicated to think otherwise do you agree.

After the lights went out nobody went home because it was too dark they didn't want to get lost outside.

When he said: I said where are you and she answered I don't know, why wouldn't that help?

Ones his worst fault and the others too mild to talk about.

How can so many people disagree with me when, I am so right.

Heres the list of everyones donations.

Chocolate is your favorite, right!

Fred's and Sarah's cousin, is coming to supper with them.

Alexander Graham Bell invented what famous tool in the 1800s.

The bloggers post was difficult to read; because her spelling was poor.

Totalitarian governments, independent nations, and monarchies: all different viewpoints.

Your assignment is due on Tuesday as well as all your class notes don't be late with them!

Selling the house kept her occupied nervous and worried.

His voice is one of those, you love or you hate.

The girl whose brother is here is my friend.

The professor was playing a video "Giant Whales."

Are those measures really as cost effective as they can be.