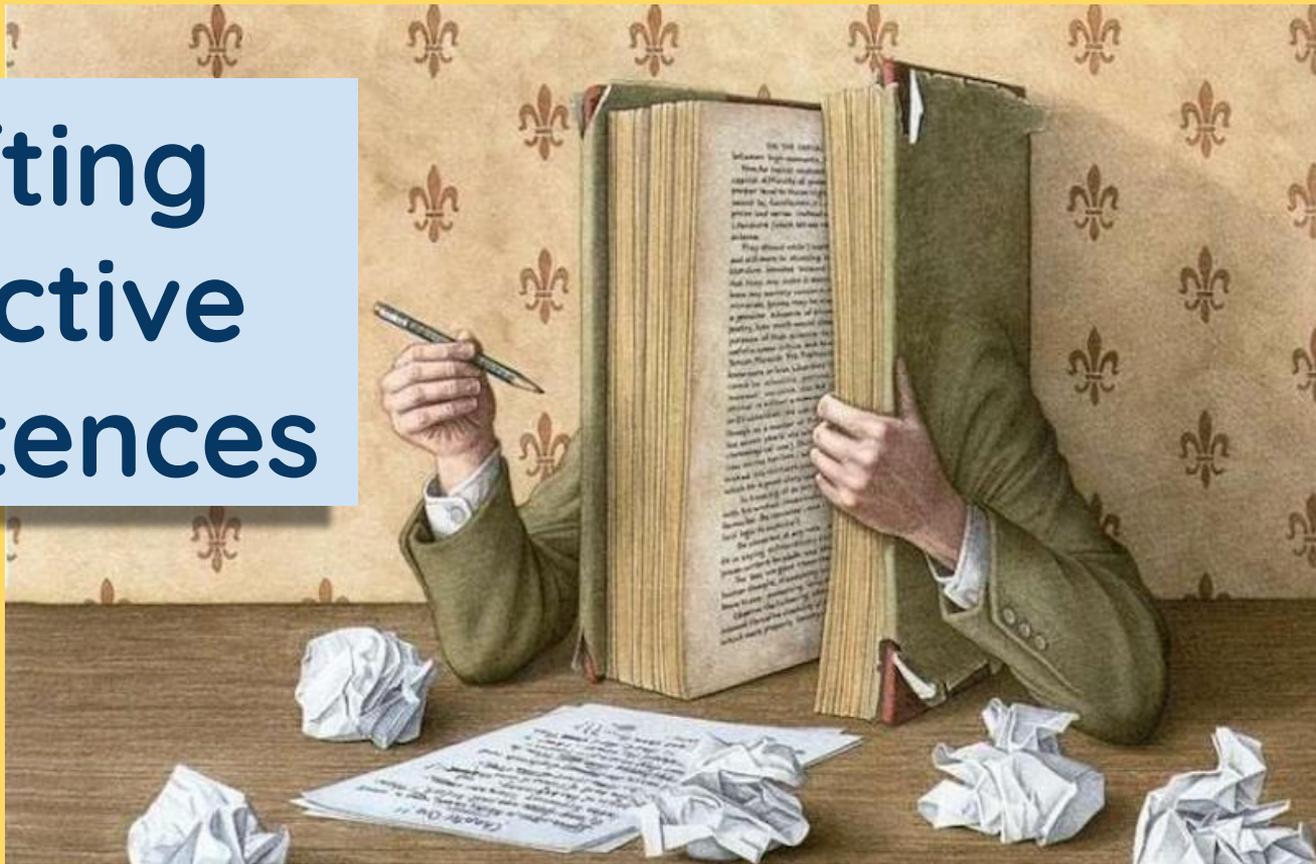


Crafting Effective Sentences



Lesson 3: Dependent Clauses in a Series

Effective Sentences for Claims

#3: Dependent Clauses in a Series

Lesson 3: Dependent Clauses in a Series

As you begin to practice with a variety of ways to craft a thesis or claim statement, you may want to consider how rhythm and sound can have an impact.

This pattern utilizes parallel structures as well as repetition of words or phrases to create a rhythm that can then be used to move a reader to a specific conclusion.

This pattern is also flexible enough in that it can be used to begin or end the sentence. It also compacts a writer's work.

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The pattern looks like this:

If . . . , if . . . , if . . . , then **S V**.

When . . . , when . . . , when . . . , **S V**.

OR It can happen at the end

S V that . . . , that . . . , that

(omit the 3rd clause and have just 2, if you wish)

Because these appear in a series, a **comma** is most often used.

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Here are a couple of examples:

After . . . , after . . . , after . . . , then S V.

After we learn to consider the other, after we learn to lift that other up, after we realize the other's success is our own, only then is harmony possible.

S V that . . . , that. . . .

School violence decimates a community because it takes its lives, because it takes its security, and because it takes its hope.

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EXAMPLE 1

By beginning the sentence with a series of two or three dependent clauses, we can easily set up a parallel structure in our writing, a structure that provides an easily followed roadmap to the essay and can offer the conclusion up front. Our proof, then, becomes a matter of providing a specific example demonstrating each dependent clause.

After we learn to consider the other, after we learn to lift that other up, after we realize the other's success is our own, only then is harmony possible.

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EXAMPLE 2

This pattern in particular results in an echo effect so important in creating emphasis. The momentum of the writing resulting from the repetition and parallel structure builds to a powerful final concluding dependent clause. The problem here is to be sure and arrange your clauses for full effect.

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Why It Is Effective

The writer, by using this pattern, is paying attention to how rhythm can be created and used to move a reader. The compactness of the single sentence which uses multiple dependent clauses also demonstrates a writer's concision and ability to take what could be a long, unwieldy set of sentences, and in its stead offer an abbreviated and even lyrical single sentence.

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Writer's Craft Note

Constructing effective sentences using patterns like this one and the ones to follow in this series normally take place in the revision process for students. Do not be discouraged if these types of sentences do not come naturally in a first draft. Becoming an effective writer requires time because it demands patience and because it demands attention to craft.