

Rhetorical Grammar for Expository Reading and Writing

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TEACHER VERSION

MODULE 2: RHETORIC OF THE OP-ED PAGE

Sentence Fundamentals: Complete and Incomplete Sentences

Focus: This chapter focuses on two common sentence problems: sentences that run together and subjects and verbs that don't agree in number. Both problems can be confusing for readers. It also asks students to apply what they learned in Chapter 1 about sentence fragments. All activities in this chapter are based on John Edlund, "Three Ways to Persuade," Jeremy Rifkin, "A Change of Heart about Animals," and John Edlund, "Letters to the Editor in response to 'A Change of Heart about Animals.'"

Alignment with Standards: The Rhetorical Grammar Concepts and activities in this unit align with both California's Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy and the California English Language Development Standards. The activities in this unit are designed to provide students with command of the grammar and usage conventions of academic English. Students analyze how language functions in different contexts and how writers make grammatical choices that are appropriate for their purpose and audience. After analyzing language structures in the texts of others, students apply this knowledge to edit their own writing by using language resources such as varying verb tenses, expanding verb and noun phrases, modifying to add details, combining clauses to link ideas, and using cohesion devices to create arguments that are coherent and persuasive.

AT A GLANCE

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Guided Composition

The following activity should be introduced before you move on to Exploring Key Concepts in the module, Rhetoric of the Op-Ed Page. You will need to save your students' guided compositions from Activity 1 for Activity 6, Editing Your Guided Composition.

Guided Composition

The purpose of this guided composition activity is to elicit a paragraph on the topic of Rhetoric of the Op-Ed Page that contains varied sentences. Using these paragraphs, you can informally diagnose students' ability to create complete sentences while avoiding run-ons and to make subjects and verbs agree. At the end of the unit, students will edit their Guided Compositions, applying what they have learned from the chapter. Students will then compare their paragraphs with the original, paying particular attention to sentence boundaries and subject-verb agreement.

1. Instruct students to listen as you read the following paragraph at a normal rate of speed. Then ask students to take notes while you read the paragraph again; emphasize that the notes will be essential when they write their paragraphs. Alternatively, write a series of key words or phrases on the board to guide the students.
2. Ask students to reconstruct what they heard using their notes or the key words. Students should compare with each other what they have written and make changes as necessary.
3. Collect the paragraphs at the end of the activity, and save them. You will return them to students to edit at the end of the chapter.
4. Discuss the "Noticing Language" sentences.

Paragraph to read:

Over 2,000 years ago, the Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that there were three basic ways to persuade an audience. One way to convince an audience is through the character or image that the writer projects. Another way is through the use of logical arguments. Writers can also appeal to our emotions. Advertisers and politicians still use these appeals today. A politician often questions the character and values of an opponent. Advertisers frequently appeal to our desire to be attractive to the opposite sex. Recognizing these appeals helps us decide if we agree with an argument.

Activity 1: Guided Composition

This activity is based on John Edlund, “Three Ways to Persuade.”

The purpose of this activity is for you to write a paragraph on the topic of this module. Your teacher will read a paragraph while you listen, and then read it again while you take notes. You will then write your own paragraph based on what you heard using your notes.

Noticing Language

What is wrong with these sentences? How do you know?

1. Aristotle argued that there was three basic ways to persuade an audience.
Aristotle argued that there were three basic ways to persuade an audience. (“Ways” is the subject so “were” has to agree with it. Since it is plural, the verb needs to be plural also. “There” is never a subject.)
2. The rhetorical appeal of ethos refers to the speaker’s character pathos is an appeal to emotion.
The rhetorical appeal of ethos refers to the speaker’s character. Pathos is an appeal to emotion. (This is a run-on sentence. The two independent clauses could also be joined with a conjunction and the appropriate punctuation or with a semicolon.)
3. A politician often question the character and values of an opponent.
A politician often questions the character and values of an opponent. (“Politician” is the subject. Since it is singular, the verb needs to be singular also.)
4. Many advertisements aim to make us insecure about our attractiveness, they offer a remedy in the form of a product.
Many advertisements aim to make us insecure about our attractiveness, and they offer a remedy in the form of a product.

Rhetorical Grammar Instruction

Integrate the rhetorical grammar instruction for Activities 2-6 into the Reading, Postreading, and Connecting Reading to Writing portions of the module, as appropriate for your students’ needs. Each rhetorical grammar activity should take approximately 10 to 20 minutes.

Run-On Sentences

Preparation for Activity 2

You can prepare students to do the run-on sentence activities in this chapter by reviewing what they have learned about complete sentences. Consider going over the sample sentences below (all of them are on the topic of Rhetoric of the Op-Ed Page) with the whole class and eliciting explanations from the students. Adjust the amount of instruction you provide according to how much students already know. Then do the example sentence in the

Rhetorical Grammar Concepts

Note: The materials labeled Rhetorical Grammar Concepts are for your reference as you plan instruction for this unit. Your students have an abbreviated version of these concepts in their materials.

activity before asking students to complete the activity in pairs. Rather than correcting the activities, you may want to ask a pair of students to present their answers to the class, at which point you can provide feedback and correct misunderstandings.

Run-on Sentences

A sentence must have a main clause with a subject and a verb. It may have more than one main clause (a compound sentence) or a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses (a complex sentence). A run-on sentence occurs when two sentences (two main clauses) are punctuated as though they form a single sentence. There are two types of run-on sentences:

- Two sentences that are joined with *no punctuation*
- Two sentences that are joined with *only a comma*

Both of these situations produce an error: a “run-on sentence.” The following sentences are examples of run-on sentences.

In our society celebrities are often seen as authorities this is an example of the power of image.

(Two sentences are joined together without any punctuation between them.)

We value logic and rationality, arguments based on logos are often persuasive.

(Two sentences are joined together with only a comma between them.)

Correcting Run-On Sentences

1. Make a **separate sentence** out of each main clause:
We value logic and rationality. Arguments based on logos are often persuasive.
2. Combine the clauses with a **comma and a coordinating conjunction**. This method is useful when you have two ideas of equal importance, and you want to show the relationship between them:

We value logic and rationality, **so** arguments based on logos are often persuasive.

Coordinating conjunctions are *and, for, yet, but, so, or, and nor*.

3. Make one clause a **subordinate clause**. This is an effective way to solve the problem if one of the clauses is less important than the other.
Because we value logic and rationality, arguments based on logos are often persuasive.

Common subordinating words are *because, since, when, whenever, even though, although, though, if, unless, while, before, where, as . . . as, who, which, that, whose, and whom*.

4. Combine the clauses with a **semicolon (;)**. This method is effective when the two clauses are very closely related and you don't want to break them up with another word. Be careful to use semicolons only when the ideas are closely related; don't use them simply as an alternative to periods.

We value logic and rationality; arguments based on logos are often persuasive.

5. Combine the clauses with a **semicolon and a transition word followed by a comma**. This method is also useful when you have two equally important ideas, and you want to show their logical relationship.

We value logic and rationality; consequently, arguments based on logos are often persuasive.

Common transition words are *therefore, thus, however, nevertheless, furthermore, consequently, and then*.

Correcting Run-On Sentences with Pronoun Subjects

Sometimes run-on sentences occur because the writer does not recognize that pronouns, especially the personal pronoun *it*, and demonstrative pronouns (such as *that, these, and those*) can be the subjects of sentences. These errors can also be corrected using the five methods listed above.

Incorrect:

Killing cats to stop the bubonic plague was a logical solution, it was based on a faulty assumption.

(This sentence is a run-on because the second clause is also a main clause. Its subject is the pronoun *it*, which refers to *solution* in the first clause.)

Correct:

Killing cats to stop the bubonic plague was a logical solution, but it was based on a faulty assumption.

(Join the two main clauses with a coordinating conjunction.)

Although killing cats to stop the bubonic plague was a logical solution, it was based on a faulty assumption.

(Join the two main clauses with a subordinating conjunction.)

Killing cats to stop the bubonic plague was a logical solution; however, it was based on a faulty assumption.

(Use a semicolon and a transition word followed by a comma.)

Activity 2: Correcting Run-On Sentences

For this activity, do the example sentence with your students before asking them to complete the rest independently. Rather than correcting the activities, you may want to have students work in pairs to arrive at a

consensus while you circulate to answer questions. Then ask pairs to share their answers with the class, at which point you can provide feedback and correct misunderstandings.

Activity 2: Correcting Run-On Sentences

This activity is based on Jeremy Rifkin, “A Change of Heart About Animals.”

Correct the following run-on sentences. Try to use each of the five options.

1. Researchers are finding that many of our fellow creatures are more like us than we ever imagined, these findings are changing how we view animals.

Researchers are finding that many of our fellow creatures are more like us than we ever imagined. These findings are changing how we view animals.

2. Fast food companies are being pressured by animal-rights activists, they are financing research into animal emotions and behavior.

Because fast food companies are being pressured by animal-rights activists, they are financing research into animal emotions and behavior.

3. Pigs crave affection and are easily depressed the lack of mental or physical stimuli can result in deterioration of health.

Pigs crave affection and are easily depressed, and the lack of mental or physical stimuli can result in deterioration of health.

4. In Germany farmers give pigs human contact each day, they also provide them with toys to prevent them from fighting.

In Germany farmers give pigs human contact each day; they also provide them with toys to prevent them from fighting.

5. New Caledonian crows make hooks from wire to snag food Koko, a gorilla in Northern California, understands several thousand English words.

New Caledonian crows make hooks from wire to snag food. Koko, a gorilla in Northern California, understands several thousand English words.

6. We thought tool-making and sophisticated language skills are exclusively human attributes, self-awareness is another.

We thought tool-making and sophisticated language skills are exclusively human attributes. Self-awareness is another.

7. Animal behaviorists argued that animals were not capable of self-awareness they lack a sense of individualism.

Animal behaviorists argued that animals were not capable of self-awareness because they lack a sense of individualism.

8. It is commonly believed other animals have no sense of their mortality they are unable to comprehend the concept of their own death.

It is commonly believed other animals have no sense of their mortality, and they are unable to comprehend the concept of their own death.

Rhetorical Grammar Concepts

Preparation for Activity 3

The basic rule of subject-verb agreement is that if the subject is singular, the verb should be singular; if the subject is plural, the verb should also be plural. Although it is usually natural to make subjects and verbs agree, if the subject is separated from the verb by other words or if there is more than one subject, it is more difficult.

Verb Forms That Need to Agree

Present tense: Scientists *study* whether animals feel emotions.

Present perfect tense: Some people *have argued* that animals have rights.

Helping verbs: Does an elephant *feel* grief for a dead mate?

Main verb *to be*: Daily play *is* essential for happy pigs.

Pay particular attention when you have the following situations.

If two or more subjects are joined by the conjunctions *and*, *or*, or *nor*, the conjunction determines if you use a singular or a plural verb.

- When the subject of a sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by *and*, use a **plural verb**.

Incorrect: *Anger and pity is* powerful emotions.

Correct: *Anger and pity are* powerful emotions.

- When the subject of a sentence is composed of two or more singular nouns or pronouns connected by *or* or *nor*, use a **singular verb**.

Incorrect: Either *anger or pity are* an emotion that can cause us to take action.

Correct: Either *anger or pity is* an emotion that can cause us to take action.

- When the subject of a sentence is composed of a singular and a plural noun connected by *or* or *nor*, the noun closest to the verb determines whether it is singular or plural.

Incorrect: In the commercial, neither the *doctor* nor the *advertisers is* being completely honest.

Correct: In the commercial, neither the *doctor* nor the *advertisers are* being completely honest.

If the subject and verb are separated by a phrase or clause, make sure the verb still agrees with the true subject of the sentence—not with a noun or pronoun in the phrase or clause.

Examples

One of the philosophers <u>is</u>	“philosophers” is not the subject
The <u>people</u> who understand rhetoric <u>are</u>	“rhetoric” is not the subject
The <u>farmer</u> , as well as his neighbors, <u>is</u>	“neighbors” is not the subject
The <u>farmer</u> with all the pigs <u>is</u> playing	“pigs” is not the subject

Some words that might sound plural are actually singular and take a singular verb. These words are **each, each one, either, neither, everyone, everybody, anybody, anyone, nobody, somebody, someone, and no one.**

Examples

- Each of these animals is
- Either of the philosophers is
- Everyone is

(“Everyone” seems plural, but the verb agrees with “one,” which is singular.)

In sentences beginning with “there is” or “there are,” be aware that “there” is not the true subject. Therefore, the verb has to agree with the noun that *follows* the verb.

Examples

- There are many arguments
- There is an argument

Many words in English that were originally Greek end with an –s but are singular. Some examples are **ethos, pathos, logos, ethics, and mathematics.** Other singular words that end in –s include **news** and **measles.**

Examples:

- The ethos of a writer helps determine whether we believe his or her argument.
- The ethics of doctors forbids them to do harm.
- The good news is that toys prevent pigs from fighting.

Activity 3: Correcting Subject-Verb Agreement Errors

For this activity, do the example sentence with your students before asking them to complete the rest independently. Rather than correcting the activities, you may want to have students work in pairs to arrive at a consensus while you circulate to answer questions. Then ask pairs to share their answers with the class, at which point you can provide feedback and correct misunderstandings.

Activity 3: Correcting Subject-Verb Agreement Errors

This activity is based on John Edlund, “Three Ways to Persuade.”

Double-underline the verb and underline the subject in these sentences. Then correct the subject-verb agreement problems. Note: All verbs should be in the present tense. When you are finished, compare your answers with a partner. If you are not sure about a sentence, ask your teacher for help.

1. For Aristotle, a speaker’s character contribute to whether the audience will believe the speaker’s argument.

For Aristotle, a speaker’s character contributes to whether the audience will believe the speaker’s argument.

2. There is several other reasons why an audience might believe an argument.

There are several other reasons why an audience might believe an argument.

3. Advertising, both for products and in politics, depend on the ethos of the person in the advertisement.

Advertising, both for products and in politics, depends on the ethos of the person in the advertisement.

4. One of the advertisements use a slender movie star to sell a new diet drug.

One of the advertisements uses a slender movie star to sell a new diet drug. (“One” is the subject so the verb must be singular.)

5. Each of the advertisements that rely on celebrities are really deceptive.

Each of the advertisements that rely on celebrities is really deceptive. (“Each” is the subject. It is singular and needs a singular verb.)

6. *Ethos*, largely created through word choice and style, help establish a writer’s credibility.

Ethos, largely created through word choice and style, helps establish a writer’s credibility. (Ethos is a foreign—Greek—word and is singular although it ends in –s. The italics are a clue that it is not an English word.)

7. Everyone, including student writers, want to communicate an image of authority.

Everyone, including student writers, wants to communicate an image of authority.

8. Using difficult and unusual words seem like a good way to sound like an expert, but this strategy can backfire.

Using difficult and unusual words seems like a good way to sound like an expert, but this strategy can backfire.

9. Sometimes a writer or a speaker attack the character of the opponent, a tactic called an ad hominem argument.

Sometimes a writer or a speaker attacks the character of the opponent, a tactic called an ad hominem argument.

Sentence Combining

Activity 4: Combining Sentences

Complex texts often include complex sentences with multiple clauses and complicated modification. Helping students figure out how to deconstruct these sentences can be a powerful way of improving their ability to comprehend the texts. Practice combining sentences not only gives students a tool to tackle these difficult sentences but also transfers to their own writing as they work to construct sentences that pack in more meaning in a succinct way. The following sentence-combining activity asks students to recombine deconstructed sentences from Rifkin’s “A Change of Heart About Animals.” Model for students how to combine the first set of sentences. When students do this activity, make sure they don’t have access to the Rifkin article since the point is for them to try to combine the sentences independently before seeing how a professional writer did it.

When students have created their new sentences, ask them to share them with the class. Discuss whether the sentences are correct, contain all the information in the kernel sentences, and are easily understood by a reader. Highlight the issues of forming sentences that express complete ideas, are punctuated correctly, and whose subjects and verbs agree. Then show students the original sentences, and ask them to discuss the differences between the set of short sentences, their correct sentences, and the originals. As you do this activity, you can also take advantage of the opportunity for the incidental teaching of additional vocabulary.

The sentences in this activity were identified by the Test Document Readability tool at http://www.online-utility.org/english/readability_test_and_improve.jsp.

This is a valuable online tool both to identify difficult sentences in texts that can be used instructionally, as in this activity, and as a tool for students to use when editing their own writing to identify sentences that need to be rewritten, often because of grammatical errors.

Activity 4: Combining Sentences

This activity is based on Jeremy Rifkin, “A Change of Heart about Animals.”

The sentences below are complete, but they are short and choppy. Combine them to make one or more sentences that are longer and more interesting. Make sure your new sentences are complete, that their subjects and verbs agree, and that they contain all the ideas in the original sentences. Also make sure they are punctuated correctly. There is more than one way to combine the sentences correctly. When you have finished, look back at the article and observe how the writer composed his sentences. Number 1 appears below as an example.

1. Much of big science has centered on breakthroughs.

The breakthroughs have been in biotechnology and nanotechnology.

They have also been in more esoteric questions.

One esoteric question is the age of our universe.

A quieter story has been unfolding.

The story has been unfolding in laboratories around the world.

The story's effect on human perception is likely to be profound.

The story's effect on our understanding of life is likely to be profound.

New sentence(s):

Much of big science has centered on breakthroughs in biotechnology and nanotechnology and also on more esoteric questions such as the age of our universe. A quieter story has also been unfolding in laboratories around the world. Its effect on human perception and our understanding of life is likely to be profound.

Original:

Though much of big science has centered on breakthroughs in biotechnology, nanotechnology, and more esoteric questions like the age of our universe, a quieter story has been unfolding behind the scenes in laboratories around the world, one whose effect on human perception and our understanding of life is likely to be profound.

2. Until very recently, scientists were still advancing an idea.

The idea was that most creatures behaved by sheer instinct.

The idea was that some things appeared to be learned behavior.

Those things were merely genetically wired activity.

New sentence(s):

Until very recently scientists were still advancing an idea that most creatures behaved by sheer instinct while some things that appeared to be learned behavior were merely genetically wired activity.

Original:

Until very recently, scientists were still advancing the idea that most creatures behaved by sheer instinct and that what appeared to be learned behavior was merely genetically wired activity.

3. In fact, we are finding that learning is passed on.

The passing on is from parent to offspring.

The passing on happens far more often than not.

Most animals engage in all kinds of experience.

The experience is learned.

The experience is brought on by continued experimentation.

New sentence(s):

In fact, we are finding far more often than not that learning is passed on from parent to offspring. Most animals engage in all kinds of learned experience brought on by continued experimentation.

Original:

In fact, we are finding that learning is passed on from parent to offspring far more often than not and that most animals engage in all kinds of learned experience brought on by continued experimentation.

4. There are recent studies in brain chemistry.

The brain chemistry is of rats.

The studies show the rats' brains release large amounts of dopamine.

This happens when they play.

Dopamine is a neurochemical.

The neurochemical is associated with pleasure and excitement.

The pleasure and excitement is in human beings.

New Sentences:

Recent studies in the brain chemistry of rats show that the rats' brains release large amounts of dopamine when they play. In human beings dopamine is a neurochemical associated with pleasure and excitement.

Original:

Recent studies in the brain chemistry of rats show that when they play, their brains release large amounts of dopamine, a neurochemical associated with pleasure and excitement in human beings.

5. Some philosophers have argued for a long time.

Some animal behaviorists have argued for a long time also.

They have argued that other animals are not capable of self-awareness.

They have argued it is because other animals lack a sense.

The sense is of individualism.

New Sentences:

Because other animals lack a sense of individualism, some philosophers and animal behaviorists have argued for a long time that they are not capable of self-awareness

Original:

Some philosophers and animal behaviorists have long argued that other animals are not capable of self-awareness because they lack a sense of individualism.

Editing Student Writing

In activities 5-7 students will apply what they have learned in order to edit student writing. The activities should be taught in conjunction with the Revising and Editing activities in the module. Some of these activities could substitute for editing activities.

Activity 5: Editing Student Writing

In this activity students will identify sentences that are not complete within a piece of student writing and then edit them so that they are complete.

Activity 5: Editing Student Writing

This activity is based on a student Letter to the Editor in response to Jeremy Rifkin, “A Change of Heart about Animals.”

Make two passes through the passage below. (1) Check for complete sentences. Make a check (✓) next to fragments and an X where two sentences run together. (2) Underline subject-verb agreement errors. Then rewrite the passage, correcting the run-on sentences, fragments, and subject-verb agreement errors.

Jeremy Rifkin makes some very good points about how complex the thinking of animals are. ✓How they might feel emotions similar to humans. However, putting animals on the same level as humans distract us. ✓From the beneficial roles animals can play in research. Many of the drugs we use today was developed by using animals. ✓To test the drugs’ safety for humans. Modern technology has allowed us to evaluate drugs and medical techniques more without animals, Xsome experimentation using animals are unavoidable. I wonder how anyone would feel if their child were sick, Xa medicine that might help could not be developed. ✓Because no experiments on animals were allowed.

Edited paragraph:

Jeremy Rifkin makes some very good points about how complex the thinking of animals is and how they might feel emotions similar to humans. However, putting animals on the same level as humans distracts us from the beneficial roles animals can play in research. Many of the drugs we use today were developed by using animals to test the drugs’ safety for humans. Modern technology has allowed us to evaluate drugs and medical techniques more without animals, but some experimentation using animals is unavoidable. I wonder how anyone would feel if their child were sick, but a medicine that might help could not be developed because no experiments on animals were allowed.

Activity 6: Editing Your Guided Composition

In this activity, students will edit their guided composition from Activity 1.

1. Project the original guided composition paragraph and ask students to read along as you read it out loud.

2. Then project a student paragraph, and discuss with the class the differences between the original and the student paragraph (both paragraphs need to be projected simultaneously).
3. Return the student paragraphs, and ask students to edit based on what they've learned by doing the exercises in the chapter. Don't give the students access to the original while they are doing this. Direct students to make sure their sentences are complete (have both subjects and verbs) and to add any needed coordinating words and punctuation.
4. Ask students to compare their edited versions with the original.
5. "Debrief" by asking the students what they learned through the comparison and what they can apply to their own writing.

Activity 6: Editing Your Guided Composition

Return to your guided composition from Activity 1.

- Check for complete sentences. Make a check (✓) next to fragments and an ✕ where two sentences run together.
- Check for subject-verb agreement. Underline subjects and double-underline verbs. Then rewrite the paragraph, correcting the run-on sentences, fragments, and subject-verb agreement errors.
- Exchange your paragraph with a partner and discuss your questions. Check with your teacher if you can't agree on an answer.

Activity 7: Editing Your Own Writing

Now ask students to apply what they have learned to editing their own writing assignment. For students who are still developing editing skills, it's often best to ask them to edit as a separate step. Once students have revised, and they and you are satisfied with their drafts, they can then edit for whatever rhetorical grammar features you have been teaching. Their ability to apply what you have taught will become part of your assessment of their final draft. Then you can revisit concepts and continue to hold students accountable in subsequent modules for these features as well as the new ones that you will teach.

Activity 7: Editing Your Own Writing

Select a paragraph from your writing assignment for Rhetoric of the Op-Ed Page.

- Double-underline the main verbs and underline the subjects.
- Make sure the sentences are complete (have both subjects and verbs) and are connected and punctuated correctly. Rewrite any sentences that you think are incomplete. Put a question mark in the margin next to anything that you are unsure about.

- Exchange your paragraph with a partner and discuss your questions.
- Check with your teacher if you can't agree on an answer.
- Now edit the rest of your essay for sentence run-ons and fragments and for subject-verb agreement.