

5 Building up your sentences 1

Learning objectives

- Understand how simple sentences can be developed to give the reader detailed information
- Understand how coordinate clauses and coordinating conjunctions can link ideas to make information and explanation as clear as possible

1 In how many different sentence structures can you convey all this information to a reader? For example, can you write it in:

- four sentences
- two sentences
- three sentences
- one sentence?

Experiment to try creating as many different sentence structures as you can. You could try replacing some of the **nouns** with **pronouns** and adding adverbs such as 'first', 'next' and 'finally', to help make the information as clear as possible.

2 Look at all the different ways in which you have written the above information.

- a Which version sounds best?
- b Which version do you prefer?
- Write a sentence or two explaining your choice.

When you are informing or explaining to your reader, you have to think about the best way to structure your sentences to convey information as clearly as possible.

Activity 1

Look at the information about the Knaresborough Bed Race below.

Competitors:

- run along with the bed for 3 km
- push the bed up a hill
- push the bed down the hill
- get the bed across the River Nidd.



WRITER'S WORKSHOP: Structuring sentences to make information text as clear as possible

How should I use simple sentences to convey information clearly?

A **simple sentence** consists of one **main clause** which contains one **main verb**. It describes just one event or action. However, there are lots of ways in which further information can be added.

Look at the sentence below. It is from the web article *Out of the box, into the wild* on page 49. It is a simple sentence – it contains just one verb – but lots of information has been added using adjectives and adverbial phrases:

The first National Sheep Counting Championships were held in New South Wales, Australia in 2002.

- adjectives
- noun
- main verb
- adverbial phrase of place – tells you where it took place
- adverbial phrase of time – tells you when it took place
- How much information can you remove from the simple sentence above before it stops being a sentence?
- How much detailed information can you add to the simple sentence above without adding another verb? You will need to make the information up!

How should I use coordinate clauses to link information?

You can link the information in simple sentences by joining them together with a **conjunction**.

For example, you can use **coordinating conjunctions** such as 'and' or 'but'. Clauses joined with a coordinating conjunction are known as **coordinate clauses**.

Look at another sentence from the *Out of the box, into the wild* text on page 49. Two clauses have been joined together with the coordinating conjunction 'and':

The first person to cross the finish line at the bottom of the hill is declared the champion and wins the cheese.

- coordinate clause 1
- coordinating conjunction
- coordinate clause 2

The writer could have written it as two simple sentences:

The first person to cross the finish line at the bottom of the hill is declared the champion. They win the cheese.

Read both versions aloud: the original version which uses a coordinating conjunction and the rewritten version consisting of two simple sentences.

- Which one sounds better?
- Which version do you prefer – the original version or the rewritten version? Write a sentence or two explaining your choice.

Coordinating conjunctions include:

- and
- but
- or
- so

How else can I use coordinate clauses?

You can join more than one coordinate clause with commas and coordinating conjunctions. Look at another sentence from *Out of the box, into the wild*:

Competitors run along with the bed for 3 km, climb up a hill and then must run down towards the Nidd river and cross it.

- coordinate clause 1
- coordinate clause 2
- coordinating conjunction
- coordinate clause 3
- coordinate clause 4
- comma used to separate two coordinate clauses in a list

The writer could have chosen to write this sentence as four simple sentences. For example:

Competitors run along with the bed for 3 km. They climb up a hill.
They then must run down towards the Nidd river. They cross it.

Read both versions aloud: the original version which uses a coordinating conjunction and the rewritten version made up of two simple sentences.

- Which one sounds better?
- Which version do you prefer – the original version or the rewritten version? Write a sentence or two explaining your choice.

What do better writers do?

Better writers choose from a variety of sentence structures to convey information as clearly as possible. These include:

- simple sentences, featuring adjectives and adverbial phrases to add detailed information
- coordinate clauses and coordinating conjunctions to express the relationship between two pieces of information.

Activity 2

1 Look at the notes below. They are all facts about the unusual sport of welly wanging.

- The object of the sport of welly wanging is to throw a wellington boot as far as possible.
- 'Wanging' is a Yorkshire word for 'throwing'.
- The Official World Welly Wanging Championships are held in the village of Upperthong in Yorkshire.
- All contestants have to throw a Dunlop size 9 green non-steel-toecap wellington boot.
- The contestant can choose whether it's a right or left boot.
- Winners of the adults' championship receive a trophy.
- Winners of the children's championship receive a five-pound note.

- a To get ready to write about welly wanging, decide on the best order in which to use these facts.
- b Write a short informative text about welly wanging using only simple sentences. Remember: simple sentences contain only one clause and one verb. They describe just one event or action.
- c Rewrite your text about welly wanging using a variety of simple sentences and coordinate clauses joined with coordinating conjunctions. Aim to:
 - experiment with where and how you join your simple sentences
 - make your writing as clear and informative as possible.

