Grammar for College Writing
For Jenny, a model for all that is good to imitate, with love.
—Don

“I wanted to write, and I did not even know the English language. I bought English grammars and found them dull. I felt that I was getting a better sense of the language from novels than grammars.”
—Richard Wright, Black Boy

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“Perhaps it is time to return to grammar [through novels and other literature].”
—C. S. Lewis, The Chronicles of Narnia
Grammar for College Writing
A Sentence-Composing Approach—
A Student Worktext

DON and JENNY KILLGALLON
“If the new grammar is to be brought to bear on composition, it must be brought to bear on the rhetoric of the sentence. . . . With hundreds of handbooks and rhetorics to draw from I have never been able to work out a program for teaching the sentence as I find it in the work of contemporary writers.”
—Francis Christensen, “A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence”

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To the memory of Francis Christensen, the first to see the light: Christensen’s life’s work made possible this “program for teaching the sentence as [it is found] in the work of contemporary writers.” We are deeply grateful to him, our silent partner, for helping us work out the program found in the sentence-composing approach.
—Don and Jenny Killgallon
PREVIEW: THE SENTENCE-COMPOSING APPROACH
A merging of grammar, composition, and literature, the sentence-composing approach uses authors as mentors in an apprenticeship in sentence carpentry. Through that approach, you will learn the grammatical tools authors use to build their sentences. Here, you’ll learn more.

ADDITIONS: TOOLS FOR ELABORATION
The most important part of sentences isn’t the subject, isn’t the predicate. It’s the additions, the sentence parts that add more information about the subject, the predicate, or both. Here, you’ll see why.

IMITATION: A STEP TO CREATION
A widespread learning method, imitation helps you build better sentences through analyzing then imitating model sentences by authors. Here, you’ll study how.

THE SENTENCE-COMPOSING TOOLBOX

“Good writing is about making good choices when it comes to picking the tools you plan to work with.”
Stephen King, On Writing

NOUN GROUP: THE NAMING TOOLS
Previewing the Noun Tools
Nouns name someone or something. Noun tools enhance writing by providing detail and elaboration.

APPOSITION PHRASE
Composition: Technical Paper
GERUND PHRASE
Composition: Gerund Poem
INFINITIVE PHRASE
Composition: Resume
NOUN CLAUSE
Composition: Political Speech

Reviewing the Noun Tools
VERB GROUP: THE NARRATING TOOLS

Prevising the Verb Tools

Verbs narrate an action, incident, event, or process. Sometimes skillful writers use a series of verbs within a sentence, or place a verb before its subject rather than after it.  

MULTIPLE VERB
Composition: Cinematic Paragraph

INVERTED VERB
Composition: Photographic Paragraph

Reviewing the Verb Tools

ADJECTIVE GROUP: THE DESCRIBING TOOLS

Prevising the Adjective Tools

Adjectives describe someone or something. Adjective tools help readers virtually see, hear, feel, taste, or touch images.  

OPENING AND DELAYED ADJECTIVES
Composition: Travel Essay

PARTICIPIAL PHRASE
Composition: Action Paragraph

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE (adjectival)
Composition: Descriptive Paragraph

INFINITIVE PHRASE (adjectival)
Composition: Advertisement

ABSOLUTE PHRASE (adjectival)
Composition: Sports Report

ADJECTIVE CLAUSE
Composition: Jigsaw Puzzle Paper

Reviewing the Adjective Tools

ADVERB GROUP: THE EXPLAINING TOOLS

Prevising the Adverb Tools

Adverbs explain when, where, how, or why something happened. Adverb tools provide more information for readers.  

OPENING AND DELAYED ADVERBS
Composition: Performance Review

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Reviewing the Adverb Tools

REVIEWING THE SENTENCE-COMPOSING TOOLBOX
This activity reviews all the sentence-composing tools and emphasizes two features of many well-built sentences: two or more of the same or different tools within a sentence.

MULTIPLE TOOLS
Composition: Magazine Article

MIXED TOOLS
Composition: News Report

ADDITIONS: TOOLS FOR BETTER WRITING
Perhaps now you know that grammar is easy and good and useful for building better sentences—and better writing. Now put the sentence-composing tools to work in a longer paper (750–1,000 words).

Composition: Process Essay

“Grammar is a piano I play by ear: all I know about grammar is its power.”
—Joan Didion, writer
We thank the hundreds of authors—mentors in this apprenticeship in sentence composing—whose model sentences transform literature into a legacy of lessons, providing for students voices of enduring value, voices that will help them discover their own.
A Merger of Grammar, Composition, and Literature

Grammar is easy. Grammar is good. Even though those sentences are stylistically anemic, they are the most important sentences in this book. Keep them in mind. If you think—perhaps because of negative associations in your earlier schooling—that grammar is useless and hard, substitute those two little sentences. Then, through the varied practices in this worktext using grammatical tools, you will learn to build better sentences than you've ever written, built like those of authors. Grammar, then, is useful.

“English grammar is so interesting because it is so simple.”
—Gertrude Stein, avant-garde author

Although grammar is easy and good, writing is good, but isn’t easy. How can something easy, like grammar, make something difficult, like writing, easier?

“Writing is easy: All you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper [or a blank screen] until drops of blood form on your forehead.”
—Gene Fowler, writer

Since writing unfolds one sentence at a time, learning to build better sentences—the goal of Grammar for College Writing: A Sentence-Composing Approach—makes writing easier. It does so by giving you mentors in sentence composing, authors like Stephen King, J. K. Rowling, Ernest Hemingway, Toni Morrison, Ian McEwan, Jhumpa Lahiri, Barack Obama, James Joyce, Mitch Albom, Stephenie Meyers, John Steinbeck, Ray Bradbury, and hundreds more who serve as your mentors in your apprenticeship in building better sentences. Their sentences, the basis for all the practices in this worktext, reveal the tools they use to build those sentences. The practices in this worktext teach those tools. Through literary sentences as models for grammatical tools, you will learn the sentence in the story, and the story in the sentence, linking grammar, composition, and literature.

Zooming in on literary sentences in your reading creates a user’s guide to sentence carpentry for building better sentences.

“Jack Kerouac probably learned how to construct his astonishing sentences through his extensive reading: he haunted the local library, gobbling down everything he could get his hands on.”
—Kitty Burns Florey, Sister Bernadette’s Barking Dog
The heart of this worktext, the sentence-composing toolbox, contains tools used frequently by authors, infrequently by many students—grammatical structures easy to learn, practice, and use to build better sentences through the sentence-composing approach used in thousands of classrooms, from elementary school through college. That approach uses, systematically and exclusively, model sentences by authors for practices in building better sentences.

It works mainly through imitation. Think about how you learned to pitch a baseball, sew a button, do the latest dance, style your hair, tie a tie, shave your face, make a bed, or almost anything. Probably someone demonstrated how to do it. In this worktext, authors demonstrate how you can build better sentences by using the same tools they do.

Most authors learned to write through reading and imitating, at least to a certain extent. You’ll go through a similar process in the practices in this worktext.

“It is by imitation, far more than by precept, that we learn everything.”
—Edmund Burke, author

Imitating examines authors’ sentences under a microscope, where you can see, clearly and easily, their parts, arrangements, and relationships to each other. Through imitation, that magnification is an enormous help in demonstrating that good sentences are composed carefully, not written spontaneously. Good writers don’t write the way they speak, or speak the way they write. Good writers build sentences; they don’t say them.

“I am sick to death of the wide gap of embarrassing differences between my writing and speaking voices!”
—J. D. Salinger, “Hapworth 16, 1924”

You’ll begin your apprenticeship in building better sentences by first learning how to imitate sentences of authors, and then opening the sentence-composing toolbox to learn the tools authors use to build their sentences.

Writing unfolds one sentence at a time. Sentences unfold one part at a time. Good sentences are the result of good sentence parts. Good sentence parts are the result of sentence-composing tools like the ones authors use, those in this worktext, an indispensable collection for mastering sentence carpentry.
“Read, read, read. Read everything, and see how they do it. Just like a carpenter who works as an apprentice and studies the master. Read! You’ll absorb it. Then write.”

—William Faulkner, novelist

Learning, practicing, and especially using the tools of sentence carpentry are the purposes of Grammar for College Writing: A Sentence-Composing Approach. Study how the master carpenters—the hundreds of authors in this worktext—use those tools. Fill your toolbox with their tools. Then write.
How many sentence parts do sentences need? Sentences need two: a subject and a predicate. How many sentence parts do almost all sentences have? Sentences have three, a subject, predicate, and additions.

As almost everyone realizes, the two required parts are a subject and a predicate. Not much to say there. A subject is the topic of the sentence, and a predicate is a comment about that topic.

As almost no one realizes, those two parts are almost never the most important. The most important parts are the additions, which are the sentence parts that carry most of the sentence's meaning, providing more information about the subject, the predicate, or both. Because additions generate sentence power through elaboration, most authors' sentences but relatively few students' sentences contain them. This worktext aims at bridging that gap by zooming in on those additions, which are the sentence parts that expand, amplify, deepen the meaning within a sentence. Additions are the tools that all skillful writers use to build their sentences. Those tools are the focus of this worktext, Grammar for College Writing: A Sentence-Composing Approach.

Contrast the pairs of sentences below. In each pair, the first sentence has just two sentence parts: subject and predicate. The second sentence in each pair, the original sentence by J. K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series, uses additions (in boldface) for elaboration. Think of subjects and predicates as just the frame for a picture, and think of the additions, far more important than the frame, as the picture.

**SUBJECT AND PREDICATE**

Dudley turned to Harry.

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

The troll was advancing on her.

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*

Then they visited the Apothecary.

J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*

**ADDITIONS**

Dudley, *who was so large his bottom drooped over either side of the kitchen chair*, turned to Harry.

The troll was advancing on her, *knocking the sinks off the wall as it went*.

Then they visited the Apothecary, *which was fascinating enough to make up for its horrible smell, a mixture of bad eggs and rotted cabbages*.
They studied Red Caps.
   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

They studied Red Caps, the nasty little goblinlike creatures that lurked wherever there had been bloodshed, in the dungeons of castles, in the potholes of deserted battlefields, waiting to bludgeon those who had gotten lost.

Harry sat motionless in his chair.
   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

Harry sat motionless in his chair, stunned by the serpent’s stare.

She flicked her wand.
   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

She flicked her wand, casually, at the dishes in the sink, which began to clean themselves, clinking gently in the background.

The snake slithered.
   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

Enraged, hissing furiously, the snake slithered straight toward Justin Finch-Fletchley, its fangs exposed, poised to strike.

The snake raised its head.
   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

Slowly, very slowly, the snake raised its head until its eyes were on a level with Harry’s.

Neville hobbled off with Madame Hooch.
   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

His face tear-streaked, clutching his wrist, Neville hobbled off with Madame Hooch, who had her arm around him.

Harry watched.
   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

Harry watched, amazed, as a portly ghost approached the table, crouched low, and walked through it, his mouth held wide so that it passed through one of the stinking salmon.
Professor Dumbledore was standing by the mantelpiece.

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

He got to his feet.

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

Dobby stood.

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

Snape smirked.

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

Clearly, the additions, not the subjects and predicates, create well-built sentences. J. K. Rowling, the author of the sentences, whose Harry Potter series has sold over 400 million books so far, would not have made publishing history with just subjects and predicates. With only them and nothing else, J. K. Rowling would have sold none of her books. With subjects, predicates, and additions, the books made history.

Forget subjects and predicates. Emphasize tools instead—for additions, for building better sentences through elaboration—sentences like those of J. K. Rowling and, in the next activity and throughout the rest of this worktext, many other authors.

“Composition is essentially a process of addition.”

—Francis Christensen, the pioneering linguist whose work kindled the sentence-composing approach

The following activity emphasizes two qualities of well-written sentences. The first is additions, which means *inserting sentence parts for elaboration and variety*. The second is positions, which means *varying the places within the sentence where those additions occur*. 
Directions: Below are thirty stripped-down sentences, minus additions. Put the additions back into the sentences, in any effective positions. Then, a second time, put them back into different places. Use commas where needed.

Example:
The grass was high.
   a. around the old gravestones
   b. unattended

   E. L. Doctorow, The Waterworks

Two Acceptable Arrangements:
1a. Around the gravestones, the grass, unattended, was high.
1b. Unattended, the grass around the gravestones was high.

   (Other acceptable arrangements are possible.)

1. I awoke.
   a. feeling able to talk to him
   b. finally

   Octavia E. Butler, Kindred

2. Gramps had been thrown out of high school for misbehavior.
   a. punching the principal in the nose
   b. by the age of fifteen

   Barack Obama, Dreams from My Father

3. You know that you read.
   a. actively
   b. when you’ve finished reading a book
   c. if the pages are filled with your notes

   Mortimer Adler, “How to Mark a Book”

4. Sandy Glass smiled most.
   a. brimming with the irrepressible joy of his own intelligence
   b. cheerful
   c. when he was angry

   Allegra Goodman, Intuition
5. Burnham demanded.
   a. that the steward return to the wireless room for an explanation
   b. footsore and irritable

   Eric Larson, *The Devil in the White City*

6. He rolled up his shirt and placed it under his head.
   a. tilting it just enough for the rain to flow down about his face
   b. to keep the rain out of his nose

   Edward P. Jones, *The Known World*

7. The girls hovered around her.
   a. after their father's death
   b. watched everything she did, followed her through the house

   Marilynne Robinson, *Housekeeping*

8. Joy leapt in his father's heart for his son.
   a. thirsty for knowledge
   b. who was quick to learn

   Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*

9. He liked shooting things.
   a. and wrestling with his father
   b. hammering things, smashing things

   Jeffrey Eugenides, *Middlesex*

10. They stood.
    a. in the gathering shadows
    b. in front of the barracks
    c. while their American friend came forward

    Tracy Kidder, *Mountains Beyond Mountains*

11. They stood in the dead city
    a. a heap of boys
    b. daring each other in shrieky whispers
    c. their hiking lunches half devoured

    Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles*
12. Her father carried the water.
   a. through the kitchen door outside
   b. slowly and carefully
   c. taking oddly small steps

   Jhumpa Lahiri, *Unaccustomed Earth*

   a. and examined his forest plan
   b. on a log in the sun
   c. his boots half-buried in slushy snow

   Perri Knize, *A Piano Odyssey*

14. The voice that answered had an Indian lilt to its Canadian accent.
   a. unmistakable
   b. like a trace of incense in the air
   c. light

   Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*

15. To the left was a doorway.
   a. where twenty ranch hands used to eat dinner in the hot summer nights of harvest
   b. off the kitchen
   c. and lay the screened porch

   Joyce Weatherford, *Heart of the Beast*

16. Below the pulpit sat the congregation, and lay the casket.
   a. pearly gray
   b. stood the minister
   c. decorated with a spray of white flowers

   Anne Tyler, *Saint Maybe*

17. Sarah kissed Mack on the forehead.
   a. and then held on to Nan when she again broke into sobs and moans
   b. simply
   c. tears rolling down her cheeks

   William P. Young, *The Shack*
18. Josef took him into his arms, and thought suddenly how long it had been.
   a. a sound that had once been as common in the house as the teakettle whistle
   b. since he had heard the sound of Thomas freely crying
   c. stiffly

   Michael Chabon, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*

19. I crept over to the bedroll.
   a. which was battered both front and back
   b. and tried to find a comfortable place for my head
   c. when Walter finished cleaning my cuts and removing glass from my hair

   Sara Gruen, *Water for Elephants*

20. We laughed, too.
   a. to make him happy
   b. which were rusty way before I had him
   c. when our teacher laughed at his own jokes
   d. forcing it sometimes

   Alice Sebold, *The Lovely Bones*

   a. where the team had spent the night with their cache of stolen goods
   b. two pack animals and a half dozen horses
   c. in a side canyon, on a late February morning
   d. across the rocks below the overhang

   Aron Ralston, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*

22. Each tooth was still there.
   a. intact
   b. later
   c. when he found the courage to check with his fingers
   d. to his relief

   Markus Zusak, *The Book Thief*

23. She came to greet him.
   a. kissing him on the cheek
   b. barefoot
24. I rode my bicycle to the delivery point.
   a. where Eugene Haverford used to sit in the darkness talking about the news of the day
   b. at five the next morning
   c. with skill and swiftness
   d. as I folded newspapers

   Pat Conroy, *South of Broad*

25. A baseball is made of a composition-cork nucleus.
   a. which is held together with 216 slightly raised red cotton stitches
   b. encased in two thin layers of rubber
   c. surrounded by 12 yards of tightly wrapped blue-gray wool yarn, 45 yards of white wool yarn, 54 more yards of blue-gray wool yarn, 150 yards of fine cotton yarn, a coat of rubber cement, and a cowhide (formerly horsehide) exterior
   d. one black and one red

   Roger Angell, *Five Seasons*

26. There he stood.
   a. beaming at his discovery, sharing it with me
   b. the most recent eructation (belching) of the ruling corporate elite
   c. without thinking or even dreaming for a moment that I might actually understand what he was referring to
   d. a class that reproduces itself solely by means of virtuous and proper hiccups

   Muriel Barbery, *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*

27. There was no foundry, no vehicle company, or no manufacturer.
   a. to make a locomotive or a gun or powder
   b. in early California
   c. to make iron products like railroad tracks
   d. to make carriages horse-drawn or for a train

   Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nothing Like It in the World*
28. The dog's valor had one flaw.
   a. because if the intruders were armed, his head dropped, his tail turned in
   b. alert
   c. although he was a good sentry
   d. ever ready to raise Cain

   Truman Capote, *In Cold Blood*

29. The garden vegetation rose up.
   a. whose steady motion of advance and withdrawal made sounds of gentle
      thunder, then sudden hissing against the pebbles
   b. sensuous
   c. and tropical in its profusion
   d. an effect heightened by the gray, soft light and a delicate mist drifting in
      from the sea

   Ian McEwan, *On Chesil Beach*

30. Claude lay in the middle of the messy barn.
   a. fingers half curled beside a liquor bottle
   b. on a hastily improvised bed of straw bales
   c. palm up
   d. one hand hanging slackly to the floor

   David Wroblewski, *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*

Contrast the Dick-and-Jane sentences below with the originals. By contrast,
the originals are filled with sentence-composing tools that add meaning, texture,
style, variety, and elaboration. *Additions and positions of tools make all the differ-
ence in composing well-written sentences.*

**Sentences Minus Tools:**

1. I awoke.
2. Gramps had been thrown out of high school for misbehavior.
3. You know that you read.
4. Sandy Glass smiled most.
5. Burnham demanded.
6. He rolled up his shirt and placed it under his head.
7. The girls hovered around her.
Additions: Tools for Elaboration

8. Joy leapt in his father’s heart for his son.
9. He liked shooting things.
10. They stood.
11. They stood in the dead city.
12. Her father carried the water
14. The voice that answered had an Indian lilt to its Canadian accent.
15. To the left was a doorway.
16. Below the pulpit sat the congregation, and lay the casket.
17. Sarah kissed Mack on the forehead.
18. Josef took him into his arms, and thought suddenly how long it had been.
19. I crept over to the bedroll.
20. We laughed, too.
21. Indian Ed climbed across the rocks below the overhang.
22. Each tooth was still there.
23. She came to greet him.
24. I rode my bicycle to the delivery point.
25. A baseball is made of a composition-cork nucleus.
26. There he stood.
27. There was no foundry, no vehicle company, or no manufacturer.
28. The dog’s valor had one flaw.
29. The garden vegetation rose up.
30. Claude lay in the middle of the messy barn.

After learning in the next section how to imitate sentences by authors, you will in the rest of this worktext learn, practice, and use all of the sentence-composing tools from the activity on additions and positions. Throughout Grammar for College Writing: A Sentence-Composing Approach, with authors as master craftsmen for your mentors, you’ll learn the tools they use for sentence carpentry. With those tools, you’ll be able to build better sentences.
“There is a kind of carpentry in sentence-making, various ways of joining or hooking up modifying units to the base sentence that preserve us from the tedium of Dick-and-Jane sentences.”
—Mina P. Shaughnessy, Errors and Expectations
You now know that it’s not the subject and predicate that make good sentences. It’s the additions.

You can learn the tools authors use for additions. A good way to begin is to imitate the way authors use those tools to build their sentences. What follows are practices in sentence imitating.

After you learn how to imitate sentences, throughout the rest of this worktext you’ll use sentence imitating and other methods to learn grammatical tools hundreds of authors use to build their sentences. All of those tools develop the most important part of any sentence: the additions.

**CHUNKING TO IMITATE**

In these activities, based on sentences by J. K. Rowling from the Harry Potter series of novels, you will become aware of meaningful divisions within sentences, an awareness you’ll need to imitate model sentences. You will learn that authors compose their sentences one “chunk” or meaningful sentence part at a time.

**Directions (Part One):** Copy the sentence divided into meaningful chunks.

1a. Dudley, who was so large his / bottom drooped over either side of the kitchen / chair, turned to Harry.

1b. Dudley, / who was so large his bottom drooped over either side of the kitchen chair, / turned to Harry.

   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

2a. The troll was advancing on her, / knocking the sinks off the wall / as it went.

2b. The troll was / advancing on her, knocking the / sinks off the wall as it went.

   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*

3a. Then they visited the Apothecary, which / was fascinating enough to make up for its / horrible smell, a mixture of bad / eggs and rotted cabbages.

3b. Then they visited the Apothecary, / which was fascinating enough / to make up for its horrible smell, / a mixture of bad eggs and rotted cabbages.

   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*
Directions (Part Two): Copy the model and then copy the sentence that can be divided into chunks that match the chunks in the model.

1. MODEL: Enraged, hissing furiously, the snake slithered straight toward Justin Finch-Fletchley, its fangs exposed, poised to strike.
   
   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

   a. Near the ladder, the open paint can presented a hazard, with small children on the playground in jeopardy.
   
   b. Frightened, hiding nervously, the rabbit burrowed backward in the bush, its eyes blinking, ready to bolt.

2. MODEL: She flicked her wand, casually, at the dishes in the sink, which began to clean themselves, clinking gently in the background.

   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

   a. Juan nodded his head, slowly, at the toddler in the corner, who started to approach him, smiling confidently on the way.

   b. All of a sudden, the moon turned green on the horizon, an amazing phenomenon that went unexplained by scientists.

3. MODEL: They studied Red Caps, the nasty little goblinlike creatures that lurked wherever there had been bloodshed, in the dungeons of castles, in the potholes of deserted battlefields, waiting to bludgeon those who had gotten lost.

   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

   a. In the course, we studied sentence structure, analyzing the sentences of master authors, whose sentences served as models for us to imitate, a process that was the beginning of our quest for mastery of sentence variety.

   b. Cranston sought special spiders, the stealthy bulbous vampirelike species that lived wherever they could weave webs, in the high eaves of barns, in the bushes of nearby bogs, hoping to capture flies that had grown fat.

Directions (Part Three): Copy the model and then copy the sentence that imitates it. Then chunk both into meaningful sentence parts, using slash marks (/).

1. MODEL: Slowly, very slowly, the snake raised its head until its eyes were on a level with Harry’s.

   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*
a. Tense, very tense, Alfredo approached his boss, someone he always consid-
ered a sarcastic, unpleasant curmudgeon.
b. Quietly, very quietly, Bridgette crossed the room until her hands were on
the diary of her sister.

2. MODEL: His face tear-streaked, clutching his wrist, Neville hobbled off with
Madame Hooch, who had her arm around him.

   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*

   a. Her performance over, holding the trophy, Kelly walked into the wings to-
   ward her mom, who extended her arms in congratulations.
b. A new wireless vehicle, that invention was a techno-gadget unequalled by
   the competition because it could teleport its owner anywhere.

3. MODEL: Harry watched, amazed, as a portly ghost approached the table,
crouched low, and walked through it, his mouth held wide so that it passed
through one of the stinking salmon.

   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

   a. Samantha listened, astonished, as a younger player raised her violin, con-
centrated deeply, and played through the piece, her bow moving perfectly
so that she perfected each note of the demanding concerto.
b. His right pant leg torn from catching on the nail, Jameson inspected the
tear, considered mending it himself but decided instead to ask his mom,
who would kid him about his lack of sewing skill.

**IMITATING MODEL SENTENCES**

In the following activities here and throughout the worktext, you’ll build your
sentences like those by authors through imitating their sentence structure but
using your own content. Before beginning each imitation, first think of interesting
content—maybe a situation or character from a book, movie, TV show, or news
event—or use your imagination to create original content.

**Directions (Part Four):** Match the model and its imitation. Copy both sentences.
Then chunk both, using a slash (/) between sentence parts. Finally, write your own
imitation of each model.
1. MODEL: Professor Dumbledore was standing by the mantelpiece, beaming, near Professor McGonagall, who was taking great gasps, clutching her chest.

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

**Imitations:**

a. The parent was looking down the table, smiling, beside the host, who was showing unvarnished pride, describing the recipe.
b. Once in a while, when time hung heavy, I would take a walk in the woods not far from my house, listening to nature’s music.

2. MODEL: Dizzy, covered in soot, he got to his feet, gingerly, holding his broken glasses up to his eyes.

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

**Imitations:**

a. Alone, alarmed by noises, he walked down the stairs, quietly, hearing some strangers’ voices in the next room.
b. In twilight, before the new moon, the romance began, a strange relationship that confused but enthralled her.

3. MODEL: Cowering behind, his legs wrapped heavily in bandages, Dobby stood.

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*

**Imitations:**

a. Running at his fastest pace, nearing the finish line, he dodged a little kid.
b. Standing nearby, his patient covered lightly in blankets, the surgeon waited.

**Directions (Part Five):** Study the models and sample imitations, and then write an imitation of each model sentence so good that nobody can tell your sentence from the J. K. Rowling’s sentence.

1. MODEL: As they drew nearer to the silhouetted figure at the table, Voldemort’s face shone through the gloom, hairless, snakelike, with slits for nostrils and gleaming red eyes, whose pupils were vertical.

J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*

**Sample:** While the kids approached closer to the pacing tiger in its cage, the trainer’s voice barked suddenly at the audience, loud, clear, with cautions about safety and threats to the children, whose parents were nearby.
2. MODEL: Harry leaned forward to see Hagrid, who was ruby-red in the face and staring down at his enormous hands, his wide grin hidden in the tangle of his black beard.

   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

   **Sample:** The coach looked over to calm the player's little brother, who was very upset at the catcher and glaring at theumpire on the mound, his angry eyes flashing in the triangle of his little face.

3. MODEL: Harry twisted his body around and saw a grindylow, a small, horned water demon, poking out of the weed, its long fingers clutched tightly around Harry's leg, its pointed fangs bared.

   J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

   **Sample:** Frank plumbed his thoughts thoroughly and got an idea, an amazing, little devious strategy, popping out of his mind, its emerging details flowing easily from his brain, its salient points brilliant.

   “*Imitation precedes creation.*”
   —Stephen King, *On Writing*
Previewing the Noun Tools

Nouns name. This section introduces you to the noun group of sentence-composing tools: words, phrases, and clauses that name someone or something.

After this introduction, you’ll focus on the particular naming tools in the noun group, learn about each tool in depth, practice using the tool through varied activities, and apply the tool in a piece of your writing.

NOUN WORDS
Basketball is fun.

NOUN PHRASES
Playing basketball is fun.
or
To play basketball is fun.
or
The best sport, the game of basketball, is fun.

NOUN CLAUSES
How I play basketball is fun.
or
Fun is why I play basketball.
or
That I play basketball is fun.

SENTENCES FROM CHILDREN’S LITERATURE
“There are perhaps no days of our childhood we lived so fully as those we spent with a favorite book.”
—Marcel Proust, author

In the rest of this section, you’ll study noun tools—the tools that name—in sentences from famous children’s literature, stories like A Wrinkle in Time, Holes, Bridge to Terabithia, How to Eat Fried Worms, The Chronicles of Narnia, and others. Their authors, like writers of literature for any age group—children, adolescents, or adults—use noun tools to add detail, variety, maturity, and sophistication to their sentences. Study, imitate, and learn from their sentences while taking a memory trip down childhood’s Literary Lane.

Noun Phrases: There are three kinds of noun phrases: gerund, infinitive, appositive. All of them name someone or something.

1. Gerund Phrase—begins with an ing word: searching for lost coins, memorizing new poems, climbing mountains.
Examples:

Being bitten by a scorpion or even a rattlesnake is not the worst thing that can happen to you. *(Names what isn’t the worst thing that can happen.)*

Louis Sachar, *Holes*

Harry was a white dog with black spots who liked everything except getting a bath. *(Names the exception.)*

Gene Zion, “Harry the Dirty Dog”

The velveteen rabbit grew to like sleeping in the boy’s bed, for the boy made nice tunnels for him under the bedclothes that he said were like the burrows the real rabbits lived in. *(Names what the rabbit grew to like.)*

Margery Williams, *The Velveteen Rabbit*

2. **Infinitive Phrase**—Begins with the word to plus a verb: to study bugs, to get a new haircut, to take a computer apart.

**Examples:**

To get Janice Avery without ending up squashed or suspended was their problem. *(Names their problem.)*

Katherine Paterson, *Bridge to Terabithia*

Now Tom began to scrawl something on the slate, hiding the words from the girl. *(Names what Tom began to do.)*

Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

Violet turned on a light and began to sketch out her idea on a pad of paper. *(Names what Violet began to do.)*

Lemony Snicket, *A Series of Unfortunate Events: The End*

3. **Appositive Phrase**—Usually begins with one of these words—a, an, the—and identifies something named elsewhere in the sentence, often next to the appositive phrase.

**Examples:**

Bess led the way around the house to the spring house, a windowless adobe structure built onto the back wall of the kitchen. *(Names what the spring house was.)*

Carolyn Keene, Nancy Drew series, *The Secret of Shadow Ranch*
After they had licked their paws and whiskers, Butterfly, the lovely Persian cat, brought out her nose flute and began to play. *(Names what Butterfly was.)*

Esther Averill, *Jenny and the Cat Club*

Brigitte could see what a sad and abandoned child Lucky was, an orphan whose Guardian was too busy for hugging. *(Names who Lucky was.)*

Susan Patron, *The Higher Power of Lucky*

**Noun Clauses:** Usually begin with one of these words—*what, how, that, why.* They are sentence parts *(not complete sentences)* containing a subject (underlined once) and a predicate (underlined twice).

```
what humidity measures
what Mars is like
how the earth formed
how a baby laughs

that math began long ago
that pizza is American
why people enjoy dessert
why dogs bark
```

**Examples:**

Prince Caspian knew that he had done a terrible thing. *(Names what Prince Caspian knew.)*

C. S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia*

Harry the dog fell asleep in his favorite place, happily dreaming about how he thoroughly enjoyed getting dirty. *(Names what Harry the dog was dreaming about.)*

Gene Zion, “Harry the Dirty Dog”

No grown-up will ever understand that this is a matter of so much importance! *(Names what grown-ups don’t understand.)*

Antoine de Saint Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

I still understood why I had always hated Lucinda's gift. *(Names what was still understood.)*

Gail Carson Levine, *Ella Enchanted*
Noun Group: The Naming Tools

**Review**

**Directions:** For sentences with **boldfaced** noun tools, exchange one of your own for the author's. For sentences with **deleted** noun tools, expand the sentence by adding one of your own at the caret (^).

**EXAMPLE OF EXCHANGING**

*Author’s:* Pushing **the handcart up to the man’s house** was difficult.

  John Hersey, *Hiroshima*

*Yours:* Carrying our sick sheepdog into the vet’s office was difficult.

**EXAMPLE OF EXPANDING**

*Author’s Sentence with Deleted Tool:* Arranging ^ can give a sense of quiet in a crowded day, like writing a poem, or saying a prayer.

*Your Added Tool:* Arranging a **schedule without lots of activities** can give a sense of quiet in a crowded day, like writing a poem, or saying a prayer.

*Original Sentence:* Arranging a **bowl of flowers in the morning** can give a sense of quiet in a crowded day, like writing a poem, or saying a prayer.

  Anne Morrow Lindbergh, *Gift from the Sea*

**Noun Phrases:** Exchange the first five. Expand the next five.

1. They all saw the strange creature, a **whiskered furry face that looked out at them from behind a tree.**

   C. S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia*

2. Mrs. Myers tried **to figure out where to put the extra desk.**

   Katherine Paterson, *Bridge to Terabithia*

3. He started **waking up before the alarm that week,** fresher in the morning and stronger.

   Robert Lipsyte, *The Contender*

4. She periodically tried **to dress the cat in doll clothes and to make it sit at picnics.**

   Gary Paulsen, *The Time Hackers*
5. Maybe their father would bring presents, a package of colored paper for Ramona, a paperback book for Beezus.
   Beverly Cleary, *Ramona and Her Father*

6. Being a ^ doesn’t excuse you from having to learn.
   Bill and Vera Cleaver, *Where the Lilies Bloom*

7. May always liked the weird ones best, the ones ^.
   Cynthia Rylant, *Missing May*

8. He preferred visiting ^ and listening ^.
   Louis Sachar, *Holes*

9. Most of the natives Tommy knew did their shopping on King Street, the ^, a ^.
   Tracy Kidder, *Home Town*

10. On this planet everything is in perfect order because everybody has learned to ^, to ^, to ^.
    Madeleine L’Engle, *A Wrinkle in Time*

**Noun Clauses**: Exchange the first five. Expand the next five.

11. What Jim Thatcher had said about her man could have been a trick.
    Hal Borland, *When the Legends Die*

12. Up until I turned twelve years old, the kind of friends I had were what you’d expect.
    Joseph Krumgold, *Onion John*

13. Mr. Monroe sat down in a daze as if he were wondering how he came to be sitting in his own living room in a wet raincoat with a strange bunny on his lap.
    Deborah and James Howe, *Bunnicula*

14. Agnes had long red hair that fell rather greasily to her waist, and when she sidled up to Gilly on the playground, the first thing Gilly noticed was how dirty her fingernails were.
    Katherine Paterson, *The Great Gilly Hopkins*
Noun Group: The Naming Tools

15. His parents concluded that something dreadful must have happened and that they would probably never see their son again.
   William Steig, “Sylvester and the Magic Pebble”

16. Because of the routines we follow, we often forget that.
   Maya Angelou, Wouldn’t Take Nothing for My Journey Now

17. What was a box in one corner of the room, a box with dials and a small light shining on the front.
   Robert C. O’Brien, Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH

18. The three children did not understand how, or how.
   Lemony Snicket, A Series of Unfortunate Events: The End

   Mildred D. Taylor, Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry

20. There was a terrible moment when Father insisted that, that, and that.
   Kate DiCamillo, The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane

“When I said, ‘A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose,’
I completely caressed and addressed a noun.”
   —Gertrude Stein, avant-garde writer

In the next pages, you’ll learn and practice how authors use each of the tools in the noun group to build their sentences, and how you can use them, too.
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