

## Lesson 107

# Writing Effective Sentences

**Effective sentences** are one of the most powerful tools a writer can use. You can vary the tone and style of a piece by changing the patterns of your sentences. When writing, consider these strategies for making your sentences as effective as possible. Vary the length of your sentences. Don't use all long sentences or all short sentences. Also vary the structure of the sentences. Following a rigid sentence pattern quickly becomes repetitive and boring. Parallelism is deliberate repetition of certain words, phrases, or sentence structures to achieve certain effects. Another strategy is to use interruption for emphasis. A sudden break in thought calls attention to itself. Use this device to emphasize an important point or detail. One more way to add emphasis is to use an unusual sentence pattern that stands out from all the other sentences.

A **topic sentence** states the main idea of the paragraph. Be sure it is specific and interesting enough to arouse the reader's interest.

Use the **active voice** as often as possible. In a sentence in the active voice, the subject performs the action (*It eats*). In a **passive-voice** sentence, the subject is acted on (*It is eaten*). Active verbs are stronger than passive verbs. As a general rule, only use passive when the "doer" of an action is not known, is unimportant, if you do not wish the doer to be known, or when you want to emphasize something other than the subject.

► **Exercise 1** Reword the sentences below into an effective topic sentence of a paragraph.

Silk has been cultivated from silkworms for thousands of years. It is one of nature's marvels.

**Cultivated from silkworms for thousands of years, silk is one of nature's marvels.**

1. Knowledge of color is important. Interior decorators have to know all about it. They use it in their work. Their work is designing rooms. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Santa Fe is fascinating. It is the capital of New Mexico. It has been strongly influenced by three cultures. They are Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo-American. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Being a lifeguard is not one big party. Many people think this. Lifeguards have important responsibilities. They may be called on to save a life at any time. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

4. Charles Babbage was a great inventor. He is little known today. He developed a “Difference Engine.” It was one of the world’s first computers. \_\_\_\_\_

5. My mom and I visited colleges. We visited several. I liked Piedmont College best. Mom preferred Southern Tech. \_\_\_\_\_

6. Chariot races were popular in Ancient Rome. People cheered for one of the four teams. The four teams were the Blues, Greens, Reds, and Whites. They were all owned by the emperor. \_\_\_\_\_

7. The door of the house creaked open. It was extremely dark. I couldn’t see anything. I began to feel more than a little frightened. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Kangaroos are marsupials. They are the largest members of this order. They have become a symbol of Australia. Australia is the only country where they are found. \_\_\_\_\_

9. Jeanine stood at the free throw line. Her team was down by one point. She had two foul shots. There was no time left on the clock. \_\_\_\_\_

10. More and more people are working at home. It is more convenient. It cuts down on commuting time. Computers have made much of this possible. \_\_\_\_\_

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