

Expanding, Combining, and Reducing Sentences for Style

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: _____ / 10



Quick Review

Strong writers tune sentence length to fit the moment. Short sentences punch. Long ones flow. You can **combine** choppy sentences with conjunctions or relative clauses, **reduce** wordy ones by cutting empty phrases, and **expand** bare ones with vivid detail — without changing the meaning.

PRACTICE

Choose the version that best combines, reduces, or expands the original sentence(s) as described. Each option is grammatically correct; only one keeps the meaning AND fits the style goal.

1. Which is the BEST combined version of the two sentences?

The fog rolled in from the bay. It blanketed every street downtown.

- A. The fog rolled in from the bay, and it blanketed every street downtown.
- B. Rolling in from the bay, the fog blanketed every street downtown.
- C. The fog rolled in from the bay; it blanketed every downtown street.
- D. The fog, which rolled in from the bay, it blanketed downtown.

2. Which is the BEST REDUCED version?

Due to the fact that the bus arrived late, we ended up missing the very beginning of the play.

- A. Owing to the fact that the bus was late, we missed the play's beginning.
- B. The bus was late, and as a result we ended up missing the start of the play.
- C. The bus was late, so we missed the start of the play.
- D. Because of the bus arriving late, we missed the very beginning of the play.

3. Which expanded version adds VIVID DETAIL without changing the meaning?

The dog ran across the yard.

- A. The hungry, eager dog raced across the freshly cut yard toward its food bowl.
- B. The dog ran across the yard, which was a yard with grass.
- C. The dog ran across the yard and then the dog kept running across the yard.
- D. Across the yard, the dog ran, and that is what the dog did across the yard.



4. Which is the BEST combined version?

Marisol forgot her umbrella. She still walked to school. She did not mind the rain.

- A. Marisol forgot her umbrella, and she still walked to school, and she did not mind the rain.
- B. Marisol forgot her umbrella; she walked to school; she did not mind the rain.
- C. Although she forgot her umbrella, Marisol walked to school and did not mind the rain.
- D. Marisol, who forgot her umbrella and walked to school, did not mind the rain.

5. Which is the BEST REDUCED version?

In my personal opinion, I really and truly think that the new schedule is something that is going to help students a lot.

- A. In my opinion, I think the new schedule is going to help students a lot.
- B. I really think that the new schedule is something to help students.
- C. Personally, I truly think the new schedule will help students.
- D. I think the new schedule will help students a lot.

6. Which expanded version adds detail WITHOUT distorting the meaning?

The cat watched the bird.

- A. The cat, which had once been a stray, finally caught the bird.
- B. Crouched perfectly still on the windowsill, the cat watched the small brown bird hopping across the lawn.
- C. The cat watched the bird and decided it would not bother chasing it that morning.
- D. The cat slept while the bird flew across the yard.

7. Which is the BEST combined version?

The package arrived on Monday. It was wrapped in brown paper. It was addressed to my grandmother.

- A. On Monday, the package arrived, and it was in brown paper, and my grandmother got it.
- B. The package, wrapped in brown paper and addressed to my grandmother, arrived on Monday.
- C. The package arrived; the package was wrapped in brown paper; the package was for my grandmother.
- D. Wrapped in brown paper, addressed to my grandmother, on Monday the package arrived.

8. Which is the BEST REDUCED version?

At this point in time, the committee members are currently in the process of reviewing the proposal.

- A. At this time, the committee is currently reviewing the proposal.
- B. Right now, the members of the committee are reviewing the proposal at this time.
- C. The committee is reviewing the proposal.
- D. The committee members, at this point, are in the process of reviewing the proposal.



9. Which expansion adds the MOST VIVID detail without changing the meaning?

The river was loud.

- A. The river was loud, and it was a river that ran fast.
- B. The river roared over the smooth stones, drowning out our voices on the bank.
- C. The river was very, very loud, louder than anything else.
- D. The river was loud, but it was peaceful in the woods.

10. Which is the BEST combined version?

Devon studied for three hours. He still felt nervous about the test.

- A. Devon studied for three hours; however, he still felt nervous about the test.
- B. Devon studied for three hours and felt nervous about the test.
- C. Devon, who studied for three hours, he still felt nervous about the test.
- D. After studying for three hours, Devon still felt nervous about the test.



Answer Keys

- 1 A B C D
- 2 A B C D
- 3 A B C D
- 4 A B C D
- 5 A B C D


- 6 A B C D
- 7 A B C D
- 8 A B C D
- 9 A B C D
- 10 A B C D

Explanations

1. B	B uses a participial phrase (<i>Rolling in...</i>) to fold the first idea smoothly into the main clause — tighter and more graceful. A is grammatical but just glues the sentences with <i>and</i> . C is a correct semicolon join but still two equal-weight clauses (no streamlining). D is ungrammatical (the relative clause makes <i>it</i> redundant).
2. C	C cuts every empty phrase: <i>Due to the fact that</i> → <i>so</i> (simple cause), <i>ended up missing</i> → <i>missed</i> , <i>the very beginning</i> → <i>the start</i> . A only swaps <i>Due to</i> for <i>Owing to</i> — same wordiness. B trades one wordy phrase for another. D keeps <i>the very beginning</i> and adds an awkward gerund.
3. A	A adds sensory and specific detail (<i>hungry, eager... freshly cut... toward its food bowl</i>) while keeping the action. B repeats <i>yard</i> uselessly; C just restates the same action; D is wordy and circular.
4. C	C uses <i>although</i> to show the relationship (forgot — but went anyway), then a clean compound predicate. A and B just stack the ideas with the same weight. D's relative clause hides the cause-and-effect and reads awkwardly.
5. D	D cuts every empty phrase. <i>In my personal opinion + I really and truly think</i> = redundant (an opinion is yours; <i>think</i> already shows belief). <i>Something that is going to help</i> = <i>will help</i> . A and C still keep one redundancy; B distorts the meaning by dropping <i>a lot</i> AND adds nothing.
6. B	B ADDS detail (where, how, what kind of bird) but keeps the same action — <i>watched</i> . A invents a new event (<i>caught</i>) — meaning changed. C invents the cat's decision. D contradicts the original (cat slept, bird flew).
7. B	B folds both descriptive details into a single participial phrase around the main action. A just chains the ideas with <i>and</i> . C repeats <i>the package</i> three times. D piles up modifiers awkwardly before the subject.
8. C	C cuts every empty phrase: <i>at this point in time</i> , <i>currently</i> , and <i>in the process of</i> all just mean <i>now</i> , which is built into the present tense. A and B keep at least one redundancy; D keeps two.
9. B	B shows the loudness with sensory detail — <i>roared, drowning out our voices</i> . A adds an unrelated fact and is clunky. C only repeats <i>loud</i> . D contradicts the loudness with <i>peaceful</i> .
10. D	D uses a participial phrase (<i>After studying...</i>) to combine the ideas tightly AND keep the contrast (despite the studying, he was nervous). A is correct but heavier. B drops the contrast — it sounds like the studying made him nervous. C is ungrammatical (the relative clause leaves a stranded <i>he</i>).



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