

# 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

<p>1 <input type="radio"/> A <input checked="" type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>2 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input checked="" type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>3 <input checked="" type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>4 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input checked="" type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>5 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input checked="" type="radio"/> D</p>	<p>6 <input type="radio"/> A <input checked="" type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>7 <input type="radio"/> A <input checked="" type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>8 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input checked="" type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>9 <input type="radio"/> A <input checked="" type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>10 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input checked="" type="radio"/> D</p>
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Explanations	
<b>1. B</b>	<b>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).
<b>2. C</b>	<b>C</b> 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.
<b>3. A</b>	<b>A</b> 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.
<b>4. C</b>	<b>C</b> 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.
<b>5. D</b>	<b>D</b> 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.
<b>6. B</b>	<b>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).
<b>7. B</b>	<b>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.
<b>8. C</b>	<b>C</b> 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.
<b>9. B</b>	<b>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> .
<b>10. D</b>	<b>D</b> 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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