Scope of the presentation

- Sentence fragment
- Coma splice
- Fused sentence
- Variety
- Exactness
- Wordiness
Sentence fragment (Frag)

- An incomplete sentence lacking either the subject or the predicate.

1. No sun for a month. The flowers will never bloom.
2. The twins are almost identical. The only difference being that Sara's face is longer than Susan’s.
3. She used to overeat. Though she was a popular, well-liked girl.
Ways of correcting sentence fragments

- Add a subject or a verb to complete the sentence.

1. There has been no sun for a month. The flowers will never bloom.

2. The twins are almost identical. The only difference is that Sara's face is longer than Susan’s.
• Add the dependent clause to the independent clause or change the dependent clause into an independent one.

1. She used to overeat, though she was a popular, well-liked girl.
2. She used to overeat; she was a popular, well-liked girl.
3. She used to overeat. She was a popular, well-liked girl.
Comma splice (CS or CF)

- Two independent clauses joined by a single comma

1. Hobbes was able to explain rationally every phenomenon of the supernatural, he was afraid of the dark.
2. The theater was very crowded, we decided not to wait in line.
3. The automobile crashed headlong into the culvert, however none of its occupants were injured severely.
Ways of correcting comma splices

• Connect the main clauses with a simple conjunction.
Hobbes was able to explain rationally every phenomenon of the supernatural, but he was afraid of the dark.

• Replace the comma with a semicolon.
Hobbes was able to explain rationally every phenomenon of the supernatural; he was afraid of the dark.
• Make a separate sentence of each clause.
Hobbes was able to explain rationally every phenomenon of the supernatural. He was afraid of the dark.

• Change one of the main clauses into a dependent clause.
Although Hobbes was able to explain rationally every phenomenon of the supernatural, he was afraid of the dark.
Use a semicolon plus a conjunctive adverb. Hobbes was able to explain rationally every phenomenon of the supernatural; nevertheless, He was afraid of the dark.
Fused sentence (run-on or run-together) (FS)

- Two independent clauses joined by no separating punctuation

1. The city tried to get rid of pigeons they fined everyone who fed them.
2. It has been said that the best way to sell a book is to have it banned then public will clamor for it.
1. The city tried to get rid of pigeons, so they fined everyone who fed them.
2. The city tried to get rid of pigeons; they fined everyone who fed them.
3. The city tried to get rid of pigeons. They fined everyone who fed them.
4. The city tried to get rid of pigeons. Therefore, they fined everyone who fed them.
5. Since the city tried to get rid of pigeons, they fined everyone who fed them.
Variety (VAR)

- Length of the sentences
  - Avoid overuse of short simple sentences.

Jack approached the mare warily. She saw the bridle in his hand. He stood still. The mare waited. Jack tried to toss the reins over her head. But she galloped away.

Revised: Jack warily approached the mare, who saw the bridle in his hand. He stood still and the mare waited, but, when Jack tried to toss the reins over her head, she galloped away.
Avoid the overuse of long compound sentences.

The stagecoach rounded a bend, but two masked horsemen blocked the road, and they covered the driver with their rifles, and then they ordered him to raise his hands.

Revised: As the stagecoach rounded a bend, two masked horsemen blocked the road. Covering the driver with their rifles, they ordered him to raise his hands.
Structure of the sentences

Use various sentence structures as follows:

A. Vary the beginning of the sentences through the following ways:

Deer grazed peacefully in the valley and were unaware of the advancing hunter.

1. Begin with a prepositional phrase

In the valley, deer grazed peacefully and were unaware of the advancing hunter. Or in the valley grazed deer peacefully and were unaware of the advancing hunter.
2. Begin with a participle phrase.
Grazing peacefully, the deer in the valley were not aware of the advancing hunter.

There were deer grazing peacefully in the valley, unaware of the advancing hunter.

4. Begin with a subordinate clause.
As they grazed peacefully in the valley, the deer were unaware of the advancing hunter.
B. Vary the normal subject-verb-object pattern of sentences.

1. Subject-verb → Verb-subject
   Henry leaped over the hedge. → Over the hedge leaped Henry.

2. Subject-verb-object → Object-subject-verb
   Helen adores Siamese cats. → Siamese cats Helen adores.

3. subject-verb-complement → complement-subject-verb
   We shall never be wealthy. → Wealthy we shall never be.

Burnish his candidacy, however, he probably did not.
Exactness (EX)

- Carefully distinguish between nearly synonymous words.

1. The man gained great *renown* as a gangster.
   Improved: The man gained great *notoriety* as a gangster.

2. His *obstinacy* in the face of danger saved us all.
   Improved: His insistence in the face of danger saved us all.
Make your writing vivid by using specific and concrete words.

Defects in the pavement made driving hazardous. Besides, the weather made visibility poor.

More concrete: Bumps in the pavement made driving hazardous. Besides, the thick fog made visibility poor.
Steer a middle course in your level of diction. Fears based on ignorance can sometimes be conquered by scientific fact. In 1938, a radio program called *War of the Worlds* actually terrified large numbers of Americans by pretending to report that the Earth was being invaded from Mars, but, as we know from instrumental exploration of Mars itself, the idea that “Martians” could invade the Earth is groundless.
Avoid overusing clichés.

At this point in time, we should let bygones be bygones, bury the hatchet, and put our shoulders to the wheel. We cannot stand idly by; we must make hay while the sun shines. In the final analysis, if we fail, we will have only ourselves to blame.

Replace clichés with carefully chosen words or phrases.

1. At this point in time, we can not get a loan.
   Replaced: we cannot get a loan now.
2. In rural areas, doctors are *few and far between*. Replaced: In rural areas, doctors are *scarce*.

3. **Busy as a bee**, the cobbler worked from dawn to sundown.

   Replaced: The *industrious* cobbler worked from dawn to sundown.
Avoid using jargons and pretentious words

A. jargons: technical terminology

1. Horticulture as a sub branch of agriculture is a field of study mainly concerned with grafting, pruning, etc.

2. The out-patient was afflicted with the renal failure, tachycardia, dyspnea, and constipation.
• Pretentious words: too long and high-flown for the meanings they express

1. Were it not for the lucrative financial rewards, she would have tendered her registration.
Revised: were it not for the money, she would have quit.

2. Large size passenger vehicles utilize excessive quantities of fuel.
Revised: Big cars use too much gas.
Avoid using wordiness.

- Repeating a word.

Of all the different topics of controversy, from politics to religion to environmental questions, nothing appears to get people so inflamed as those questions dealing with sex.

Revised: Of all the different topics of controversy, from politics to religion to environment, nothing appears to get people so inflamed as the topic of sex.
Using redundancy

1. The defendant was accused of six illegal crimes.
2. The cheetah was chasing the deer in a secret manner.

- Starting sentences with there is and it is

1. There are many women who have to work.
2. It is This that makes cities flourish.
Using nouns instead of verbs

1. The crew had an encounter with an emergency. (encountered)

2. The reason for his decision to visit Spain was his desire to see a bullfight. (He decided/because he wanted)

Using reduced adjective clauses instead of full adjective clauses

Students who are in the band have to practice twice a week.
Using prepositional phrases instead of single words

1. She spoke in regard to water pollution.(about)
2. We are in need of players with intelligence.(We need intelligent players)

Avoid using the fact that

Due to the fact that my paper was wordy, I had to rewrite it. (because)
Faulty reference of pronouns (REF)

- Avoid using two possible antecedents for a pronoun.

Ambiguous: Jack told Carl that he was ungrateful.
Clear: Jack said to Carl, “you are ungrateful.”
Clear: Jack said to Carl, “I am ungrateful.”
Avoid references to remote antecedents.
The birds sang in the forest where the undergrowth was thick, and a brook wound slowly in the valley. *They* were of many colours.

Clear: The birds sang in the forest where the undergrowth was thick, and a brook wound slowly in the valley. *The birds* were of many colours.

Clear: *The birds, which were of many colours*, sang in the forest where the undergrowth was thick, and a brook wound slowly in the valley.
Avoid the vague use of *this, that, and which* to refer to the general idea of a preceding clause or sentence.

1. The profits from the investment would be large, *which* I realized almost immediately.

2. People should always vote on election day. *This* is an indication of their desire to have good government.

3. Some people eat too much, grow stout, and have difficulty finding clothes that fit well. *That* affects their dispositions.
Clear: I realized almost immediately that the profits from the investment would be large. (elimination of the pronoun)
Avoid the indefinite use of *they, you, and it.*

1. In the guarantee, *it* says that the pen will write under water. (The guarantee says that the pen will write under water.)

2. In some states, *you* are not allowed to drive more than fifty miles an hour. (In some states, motorists are not allowed to drive more than fifty miles an hour.)

3. At the state university, *they* require all students to take a course in composition. (At the state university, *the rules* require all students to take a course in composition.)
Misplaced parts (MIS PT)

Avoid squinting modifiers: they are placed where they could modify either of the two possible words or word phrases.

1. The street vendor she saw on her way to school occasionally sold wild mushrooms.
Corrected: The street vendor she occasionally saw on her way to school sold wild mushrooms.

2. His physician told him frequently to exercise.
Corrected: His physician frequently told him to exercise.
Avoid misplaced restrictors.

The Fabulous Fork *only* serves brunch on Sundays.
(Does it mean that brunch is the only meal it serves on Sundays or Sunday is the only day on which it serves brunch?)

Corrected sentences:
1. **Only the Fabulous Fork** serves brunch on Sundays.
2. The fabulous fork serves *only brunch* on Sundays.
3. The fabulous fork serves brunch *only on Sundays*.
4. **The fabulous fork serves brunch on Sundays only**.
Avoid gapping the antecedent and its modifying adjective clause

1. She borrowed an egg from a neighbour that was rotten.
   Clear: From a neighbour, she borrowed an egg that was rotten.

2. There was a canary in the cage that never sang.
   Clear: In the cage, there was a canary that never sang.
Do not split infinitives awkwardly.

1. The foreman ordered the worker to immediately stop the conveyor belt.
2. The class intends to, if the principal recovers, dedicate a baseball diamond to him.

Corrected:

1. The foreman ordered the worker to stop the conveyor belt immediately.
2. If the principal recovers, the class intends to dedicate a baseball diamond to him.
Dangling constructions (DGL)

- Avoid dangling participles
  Staggering into the stage, the bottle of champagne fell off his grip.
  Corrected: Staggering into the stage, the drinking boy dropped the bottle of champagne.
Avoid dangling infinitives

To illustrate the harmful effects of smoking, some pictures of patients whose lungs were severely affected by smoking were shown to the audience.

Corrected: To illustrate the harmful effects of smoking, the speaker showed some pictures of people whose lungs were severely affected by smoking to the audience.)
Avoid dangling appositives

1. A distinguished linguist and a seasoned politician, the American governments and policies have been severely criticized by Noam Chomsky. Corrected: A distinguished linguist and a seasoned politician, Noam Chomsky has been criticizing the American governments and policies severely.

2. Too smart not to be misled by his cunning friends, his excuses are always made not to join them. Corrected: Too smart not to be misled by his cunning friends, he always makes excuses not to join them.)
Out of their reach, the monkeys had to devise a way to get the bananas.
Corrected: Out of their reach, the bananas could not be eaten.
Avoid dangling gerunds

On receiving the draft notice, tears filled his mother’s eyes.
corrected: When his mother received the draft notice, tears filled his mother’s eyes.

• Avoid dangling elliptical clauses

While rowing on the lake, the boat overturned.
Corrected:
1. While we were rowing on the lake, the boat overturned.
2. While we were rowing on the lake, we overturned the boat.
General advice on writing

• Do not end a sentence with a preposition.
  1. Which month were you born in?
  2. My ex-movie producer was the most disgusting man I had been working for.

• Do not use “get” as an alternative for passive voice.
  1. The glass fell down the table and got broken.
  2. The solders got injured in battlefields.
Avoid using a series of words where you can use single words.

1. The bus came to a halt in the bus stop. (stop or halt)
2. The speaker drew to the conclusion that not all languages followed the same rule. (concluded)

• Use active voice for emphasis.

The rioters tried to disturb the city’s peace.
• Use colloquialism sparingly and avoid using slang.
  1. The room we rented was dingy. What is more, its roof was leaking. (Besides)
  2. Don’t talk to him now. He is a little bit miffed. (annoyed or upset)
• Use gender-inclusive terms to designate any job or position held by both sexes.
  1. The stewardess checked her list of passengers. (flight attendant)
  2. The head master punished the impolite student. (principal)
• Replace man or man-words referring to both sexes with alternatives such as person, human, or people.

1. Modern man takes electricity for granted. (people)

2. Mankind as we know it first appeared about forty thousand years ago. (humankind)

• Replace a pronoun referring to an unspecified gender with plural nouns and pronouns.

A doctor needs years of training before he is ready to operate. (doctors need/ they are)