

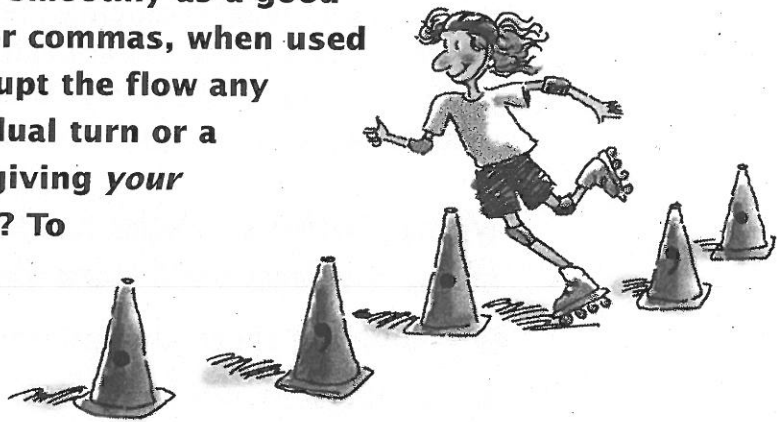
Lesson 17

name:

date:

Rolling Along

How much fun would skateboarding, inline skating, or riding your bicycle be if you had to stop and restart every five feet? It probably would be no fun at all! Good writing needs to roll along as smoothly as a good bicycle ride. Periods or commas, when used with care, don't interrupt the flow any more than a nice, gradual turn or a small bump. Are you giving *your* readers a smooth ride? To find out, read your writing aloud. If it doesn't flow well, it's time to revise.



Sharing an Example: "The Rules of the Game"

Read the following passage aloud if you can. As you read, ask yourself, *Does this passage roll along smoothly?* If your answer is no, look closely to find out why.

The Rules of the Game

I think there's no better sport than ice hockey. Ice hockey is the King of Sports for me. Hockey is an exciting game. It's exciting because of the speed. The players move fast. The puck moves fast. It's also exciting because of the physical contact.

name: date:

The contact is called checking. Some of the rules make it exciting, too. There are referees on the ice. The referees enforce the rules. Players can get a penalty. They get a penalty for breaking a rule. Players who break rules have to sit in the penalty box. Players may have to sit for two minutes or more. This gives the other team a player advantage. The advantage is called a "power play." Power plays often lead to goals. Hockey is a great game. It's an even better game when you understand the rules.

Your Response

How did this paragraph look and sound to you?

- It's too full of starts and stops!
- It looks and sounds OK to me, but I might combine *some* sentences.
- It's rolling and flowing along, gliding like a skater on the ice!

Locating the Problem

How did you rate "The Rules of the Game"? Did you notice any fluency problems? Look at this list of possible problems, and put a check by any that you feel describe the example.

- The sentences are way too long.
- The writer uses too many connecting words to link sentences.
- The sentences are too short and choppy.
- The writer tries to include too much information in each sentence.
- The writer doesn't put enough information in each sentence.
- Sentences begin in too many different ways; they should all be the same.

Revised: "The Rules of the Game"

After a careful reading of "The Rules of the Game," it's likely that you will think the sentences are too short and a little

skimpy on information. Writing that looks and sounds like this can be revised to combine (bring together) some of the sentences to improve the rhythm and flow. Sentence combining usually makes the information easier to understand, too. Read aloud this revised version of "The Rules of the Game." Can you see and hear sentence combining in action?

I think ice hockey is the King of Sports. The speed of the players and the puck, along with the hard physical contact called checking, make hockey an exciting game. Some of the rules, enforced by referees on the ice, make it exciting, too. Players who get penalties for breaking a rule must sit in the penalty box for two minutes or more. This gives the other team a player advantage called a "power play," which often leads to goals. Hockey is a great game. It's even better when you understand the rules.

What Did You Notice?

- _____ It sounded about the same. I didn't hear any difference.
- _____ It sounded as if some of the sentences might have been combined. I'm not sure.
- _____ Many sentences were combined, and the revision was much more fluent.

How to Combine

As you have very likely discovered, combining sentences is a great way to smooth out writing that isn't rolling along. When you combine sentences, imagine that you're doing an addition problem. Look how sentence combining works, using four sentences from "The Rules of the Game."

- Players can get a penalty.
 - + They get a penalty for breaking a rule.
 - + Players who break rules have to sit in the penalty box.
 - + Players may have to sit for two minutes or more.
-
- = A player who gets a penalty for breaking a rule must sit in the penalty box for two minutes or more.

Get the Writing Rolling

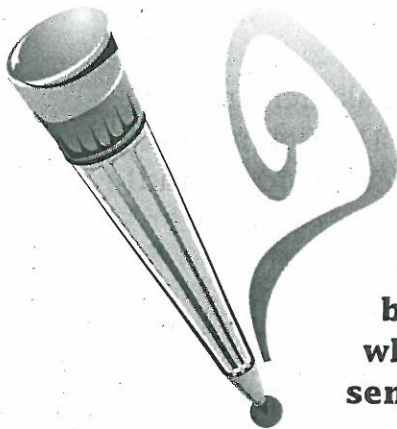
Carefully read the following passage aloud. Look and listen for sentences you could combine to get this writing rolling.

May Flower Service Project

My school has a tradition. The tradition we have is delivering flowers on May 1. We deliver the flowers to people in the neighborhood. The neighborhood is around our school. We don't knock or ring doorbells. We leave the flowers on people's porches. There is a note attached to the flowers. The note says "Happy May Day from your friends at Whitford Middle School." The flowers we leave are for planting. The flowers could be planted in flower beds or a garden. Some people write notes. They send the notes to the school. The notes say how much they appreciate the flowers. The notes reinforce the importance of the project. They are only little flowers, but they can really brighten someone's day.

Rolling with Revision

Read "May Flower Service Project" once more with a pencil in your hand. Insert a plus sign (+) between any sentences you think should be combined. Then, write your revised version. You may have to change the wording or add linking words to make some combinations work.



A Writer's Question

Reading short choppy sentences is like being fed a delicious meal one tiny spoonful at a time. The food might be tasty, but the slow pace is maddening! What becomes of the writer's message (or story) when it's dished out one short, choppy sentence at a time?