



Writing Sample Quick Tips

Paragraph and Sentence Length

Aim to keep your paragraphs to no more than three-quarters of a page. **Four to twelve sentences are generally an appropriate length for a paragraph.** Fewer than four sentences are not enough and more than twelve is usually too many.

Aim to keep your sentences to **no more than two-and-a half or three lines.**

Variety is key in sentence length to keep the text interesting for your reader.

Active vs. Passive Voice

Active Voice is when verbs are preceded by their actor or actors.

Active: Lionel Messi and Argentina won the World Cup.

Passive Voice is when the actor appears after its verb or the verb has no actor

Actor After: The World Cup was won by Lionel Messi and Argentina.

Hint: Passive Voice is not related to Past Tense.

Actor After in Future Tense: The World Cup is going to be won by Lionel Messi and Argentina.

No Actor: The World Cup was won.

Hint: All verbs in your sentence need actors and not just those that belong to the subject

Active then Passive: Kylian Mbappé watched the World Cup being won.

Active and then Active: Kylian Mbappé watched Lionel Messi and Argentina win the World Cup.

Adverbial Conjunctions

Frequently Used Adverbial Conjunctions

accordingly, furthermore, moreover, similarly, also, hence, namely, still, anyway, however, nevertheless, then, besides, incidentally, next, thereafter, certainly, indeed, nonetheless, therefore, consequently, instead, now, thus, finally, likewise, otherwise, undoubtedly, further, meanwhile.

Adverbial Conjunctions CANNOT be used to link two Independent Clauses. One should use a period or semicolon instead.

Incorrect (Comma Splice): Kylian Mbappé scored a hat trick in the World Cup final, however, Lionel Messi and Argentina won the match.

Correct: Kylian Mbappé scored a hat trick in the World Cup final. However, Lionel Messi and Argentina won the match.

Avoid Stacking Dependent Clauses

Two Consecutive Dependent Clauses (Prepositional Phrases)

- **On Sunday, at the World Cup Final,** Emiliano Martinez saved two penalty shots.

One Straight Dependent Clause

- **At the World Cup Final on Sunday,** Emiliano Martinez saved two penalty shots.

One Straight Sentence

- Emiliano Martinez saved two penalty shots **at the World Cup final on Sunday.**

One Dependent Clause (Subordinating Conjunction)

- **Because Emiliano Martinez saved two penalty shots,** Argentina won the World Cup.

One Straight Sentence

- Argentina won the World Cup **because Emiliano Martinez saved two penalty shots.**

Prepositions and Subordinating Conjunctions

Prepositions

above, across, against, along, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, by, down, from, in, into, near, of, off, on, to, toward, under, upon, with and within.

Subordinating Conjunctions

after, although, as, as if, as long as, because, before, despite, even if, even though, if, in order that, rather than, since, so that, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whereas, whether, and while.