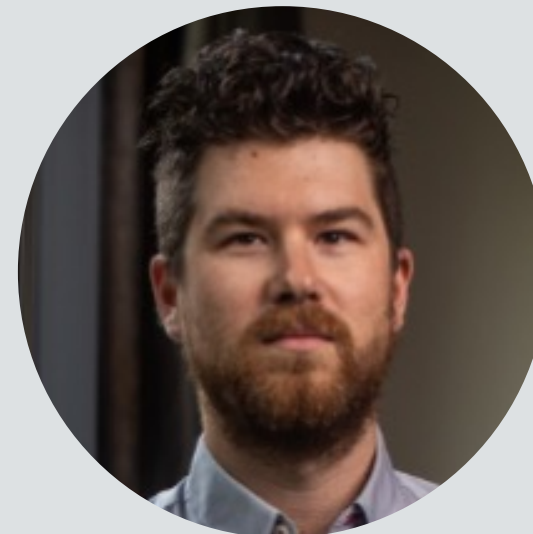




# **WRITING MASTERCLASS**



**Daisy Christodoulou**



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Fri 3 Mar 2023

Writing  
hub

## Improving Writing

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What makes good writing & what can we do to teach it?



The place to boost writing skills!



# Agenda

1. What is good writing?
2. What are the features of good writing?
3. Why do students make errors in their writing?
4. How can we teach good writing?



# What is good writing?



# What is good writing?

0 5

'People have become obsessed with travelling ever further and faster. However, travel is expensive, dangerous, damaging and a foolish waste of time!'

Write an article for a news website in which you argue your point of view on this statement.

(24 marks for content and organisation and  
16 marks for technical accuracy)  
**[40 marks]**

# Year 11 September mock high scores

Travel. You can go to the other~~s~~ side of the world and enjoy the change in climate, or you could go for a brisk walk in the park down the street to enjoy your day off. You don't need to travel far and wide to relax ~~or to~~ ~~take a~~, or even to ~~take~~<sup>go on</sup> an awesome adventure. ~~Let's~~ <sup>To begin with,</sup> let's be clear about one thing: travelling does not have to be expensive or ~~dangerous~~ dangerous and is not a waste of time.

# Year 11 September mock high scores

Let me ask you a question. Do you enjoy being part of the 67% of the population <sup>who</sup> ~~which~~ contributes ~~to~~ daily to the gradual deterioration of our planet? Is this something that you are subconsciously guilty of? I read a statement in the newspaper last week claiming that travel is expensive, dangerous, damaging and a foolish waste of time. ~~We~~ You must take a moment to consider the real impact <sup>of how</sup> ~~that~~ what you are doing today, may ~~disrupt~~ effect what will happen in the future.

# Year 11 September mock high scores

To start off with, the fact that people are becoming "obsessed" with travelling is strange to me. I understand wanting to travel ~~it~~ so that you can educate yourself but I do not understand the need to travel, for lying on a beach or by a pool the whole time. You're wasting your money! Travel and accommodation is far too pricey for you to just sit around a pool wearing basically nothing whilst you ~~drink~~ sip margaritas or some other overpriced alcoholic beverage that you find. If you're

**Answer Page: Don't write below here**

**Please do not write your name on this sheet**

going to pay thousands of pounds just for one, maybe two at a push, weeks then why on earth would you do absolutely nothing whilst you are there? You can do that at home on your couch. Not only are you wasting money, you're wasting opportunities. Even just going for a walk down local towns or to landmarks, that is worth it. THAT is what travel is about. Seeing new



## Year 11 September mock low scores

I agree with the statment I think transpore is too expensive and a waste of time being stood in the freezing cold waiting for a bus for it to be maybe cancelled. you dont know weather to trust transpore or not because half of the time they are striking. Allow me to introduce myself im Betty im 64 years old and i have no car so i have to take transpore wherever i go. transpore is very touch and go sometimes they are up and running on time sometimes their there are disructions i think transpore is a waste of time and it could save alot more money by just walking because then your keeping ~~off~~ site

# Year 11 September mock low scores

Have you ever been on a plane or travelled?  
I totally disagree with this statement because travelling is a great way to explore, try ~~new~~ new things and many more opportunities. Travelling can be great or bad you get to see good things in the world and bad things like how people have to live there lives.

Let me introduce myself my name is Harvey I am 16 years old and have only been to 2 countrys. and I am planning on going on many more trips around the world to see all the fantastic things that happen around the world.

## Year 11 September mock median scores

"Travelling impacted my education and now I must suffer the consequences". Jason-19  
Initially, this tells us further information from a more reliable source as, he has witnessed the declining impact of travelling first-hand and seemingly regrets his decision of allowing his mum to let him stay out of school for great periods of time as now Jason is attending a disadvantaged school, which will more than likely lead him to having a disadvantaged job in the future.

As they drifted like the rippling waves through candy gloss clouds, Joe realised how amazing the view was from up high. His jaw dropped; he had seen photos but the real thing was much better. Below him crystal-clear waters trickled onto smooth, rocky waterfalls, glimmering lakes shone as glorious sunsets glowed behind them and golden sandy hills shone like the evening sun.



## Year 4 high score

Have you ever wondered why so many people have dogs? Well, let me explain. A dog is like your best friend. Whilst they are kind and, when taught how to be, obedient, they are also Considerate and friendly. A dog has every quality you love fitted into one adorable package. For example: They love sports and relaxing just as much as you do!

## Years 4 – 7 lower scores

I put my flip s back on. Spiders, crocknoches, scorpions roamed the area. I climbed up one of the rocks (one of the tallest ones) I overlooked the village nearby; it was a lovely view. the sky was red like blood. our balloons filled the sky. There were yellow ones, purple ones red ones all sorts. I strolled around for a bit. I found a cave I went inside crystals diamonds, emeralds dazzled like Frognies in a cabinet.

About an hour later <sup>they</sup> we were sat in the middle of nowhere ~~my~~ her mum had fallen asleep and Hana was starting to get worried because the fire was running out! She looked around and

## Years 4 – 7 lower scores

They were in a bright yellow one. Yellow was Jeff's favourite colour. On the ride, they were informed that they would be going over sea! The view was ~~more~~ Mesmorizing Barbara ~~no~~ didn't want it to end.



# What are the features of good writing?

- **Coherent sentence structure**
  - Fragments, run-on sentences, and comma splices are very common, and improving these errors would improve students' writing.
- **Wide vocabulary**



# Why do students make writing errors?

- **Hypothesis one: students make these mistakes because they are forgetful**
  - Evidence for this hypothesis is that students often start out writing correct sentences, and the run-ons creep in later on.
  - If this is the problem, solution is to get students to proofread their work.
- **Hypothesis two: students make these mistakes because they don't understand what a sentence is**
  - Evidence for this hypothesis is that run-ons remain even after careful and diligent students have proofread their work.
  - If this is the problem, solution is to teach students what a sentence is.

# Testing each hypothesis

- We tested these hypotheses in the following way.
- We gave pupils a series of multiple choice questions focusing on these aspects of sentence structure.
- They were deliberately simple questions targeting very specific aspects of sentence structure.
- If students got them right, it would lend evidence to hypothesis 1 – that they are careless.
- If they got them wrong, it would lend evidence to hypothesis 2 – that they don't know what a sentence is.

heavy so people cant take you down. you need  
to be having a lot of protine goods like chicken  
Beef and pork. Also a lot of energy Bars.

5. Only one of the following sentences is correct. Select it.

- A) A great film. 2.2%
- B) A great film is. 1.9%
- C) Fascinating films. 0.9%
- D) Enjoyed the film. 2.5%
- E) She watched a great film. 91%**

6. Only one of the following sentences is correct. Select it.

- A) He scowled. 13%**
- B) The silent crowd. 12%
- C) The silent and unhappy crowd. 57%
- D) Scowled at the screen. 3%
- E) The silent crowd scowled at the camera and. 15%

## Run-on sentences

I think video games shouldn't be banned they should be encouraged here are my reasons.

rainforests, the environment. Everyone will be super fascinated they won't want to leave.

All at a sudden there was a boom the volcano had erupted lava was slowly seeping into the ocean will the friend make it cut alive....

# Run-on sentences

I think video games shouldn't be banned  
they should be encouraged here are my  
reasons.

**Only one of the following sentences is correct. Select it.**

- A) We went to the shops they played football.
- B) They like football.**
- C) I prefer tennis it's easier.
- D) The shops are warm the park is cold.
- E) The park is free the cinema costs money.

# Run-on sentences

I think video games shouldn't be banned  
they should be encouraged here are my  
reasons.

**Only one of the following sentences is correct. Select it.**

- A) We went to the shops they played football. 10%
- B) They like football. 24%**
- C) I prefer tennis it's easier. 30%
- D) The shops are warm the park is cold. 13%
- E) The park is free the cinema costs money. 21%

# Run-ons and fragments

LONG Long ago <sup>Page 1</sup> began things were  
happy I went on an adventure on  
the sea. In the dark blue sea. I saw

## Run-ons and fragments

the ~~scary~~<sup>scary</sup> brige. My friend was called samie  
 he comes with me. To help so the brige  
 just keep calapsing and it was to hard  
 So we got strong wood and we built  
 a brige. We had to be carefel we  
 crossed the brige. and the next brige  
 came but it was strong. then we was



# Comma splice

with little circles in. Amazingly, our boat  
matched the ocean they are both blue,  
my father was using the paddle to get  
us around. My father's name was Dave

run-on sentence

comma splice

**Only one of the following sentences is correct. Select it.**

- A. It rained, I got soaking wet.
- B. The weather is better now, I am drying off.
- C. **I am really cold.**
- D. I need to go home, it's too cold.
- E. It might rain again, the clouds are dark.

# Comma splice

with little circles in. Amazingly, our boat  
matched the ocean they are both blue,  
my father was using the paddle to get  
us around. My father's name was Dave

run-on sentence

comma splice

**Only one of the following sentences is correct. Select it.**

- A. It rained, I got soaking wet. 15%
- B. The weather is better now, I am drying off. 24%
- C. I am really cold. 14%**
- D. I need to go home, it's too cold. 26%
- E. It might rain again, the clouds are dark. 20%



Does any of this matter?



# Better writers get this right

The students who got this right averaged 514 for their writing

The students who got this wrong averaged 479 for their writing

That's a gap of over 12 months!

**Only one of the following sentences is correct. Select it.**

- A) A cheese sandwich. 8%
- B) I like cheese he prefers ham. 41%
- C) I like cheese. 37%**
- D) Cheese, ham, cucumber, and tomatoes. 10%
- E) Eating the sandwich. 3%

# Designing the distractors

Cautionously, I open the door. I gasp. I stare. I realise. They had got here as well. The Republic. They are here. And so is my mother. But she ~~was~~<sup>is</sup> tied up, her mouth gagged and her limbs tied to a chair.

They were very confused, there were talking animals.

**19. Only one of the following sentences is correct. Select it.**

- A) The bus was late I missed the register. 21.8%
- B) A lot of us were on that bus we were all late. 13.7%
- C) We all got a detention, it was so annoying. 54.2%
- D) All of us in the room. 4%
- E) **We left. 3.7%**

# The hardest question

Only one of the following sentences is correct. Select it.

- A. The bus was late I missed the register. 22% Run-on sentences
- B. A lot of us were on that bus we were all late. 14%
- C. We all got a detention, it was so annoying. 56% Comma splice
- D. All of us in the room. 4% Fragment
- E. We left. 4% Very short sentence

# Conclusion – hypothesis 2 is more likely!

- **Hypothesis one: students make these mistakes because they are forgetful**
  - Evidence for this hypothesis is that students often start out writing correct sentences, and the run-ons creep in later on.
  - If this is the problem, solution is to get students to proofread their work.
- **Hypothesis two: students make these mistakes because they don't understand what a sentence is**
  - Evidence for this hypothesis is that run-ons remain even after careful and diligent students have proofread their work.
  - If this is the problem, solution is to teach students what a sentence is.

# So why do students make writing errors?

- Students have a shaky understanding of what makes a sentence. It isn't just forgetfulness!
- They think that run-on sentences, fragments and comma splices are proper sentences. **Comma splices are a particular problem.**
- They also don't think that very short sentences are proper sentences. **Very short sentences are a particular problem.**
- Students who do have a stronger understanding of these sentence features are better writers.





# How can we improve writing?

- Wait for them to grow up?
- Get them to read more?
- Get them to write more – build their stamina?
- Teach the building blocks – subjects & verbs
- Examples not definitions
- Practice & repetition
- Because, but, so
- Appositives
- Multiple-choice questions

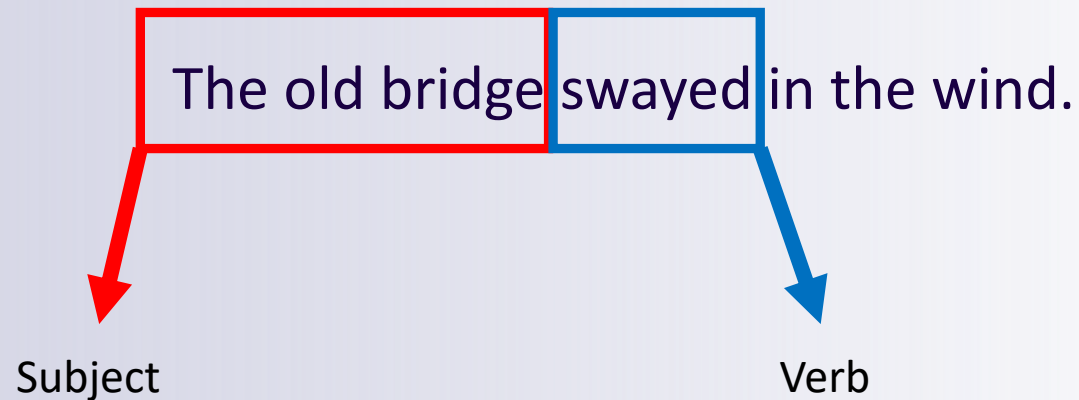


# Subjects and verbs

This ensures students know *where* to put a full stop!

# What makes a complete sentence?

- A sentence has to have a **subject**. The subject tells you what the sentence is about.
- A sentence has to have a **verb**. The verb tells you what the subject is doing



# Examples not definitions

- What is a verb?
- *A doing word.*
- What is the verb in the following sentence? **I run to the shops.**
- *Run*
- What is the verb in the following sentence? **I went for a run.**
- *...Run?*

# Examples not definitions

- What is a verb?
- *A doing word.*
- What is the verb in the following sentence? **I moved fast.**
- *Moved*
- What is the verb in the following sentence? **It was a moving target.**
- *...moving?*



# Key principle

- We are teaching the concepts of subjects & verbs through **examples** not definitions.
- Lots of students can tell you that a verb is a doing word. But they will often struggle to identify verbs in sentences, particularly in examples like the following:
  - He went for a run.
  - It was a moving target.
  - They like gymnastics.
- It's not that we think it is wrong to tell pupils a verb is a doing word, or that we think there is a 'better' definition. We think that for some concepts in life, definitions are quite limited in what they can do. So there is no point agonising over the 'best' definition – go with a simple definition, but follow up with lots and lots of examples!



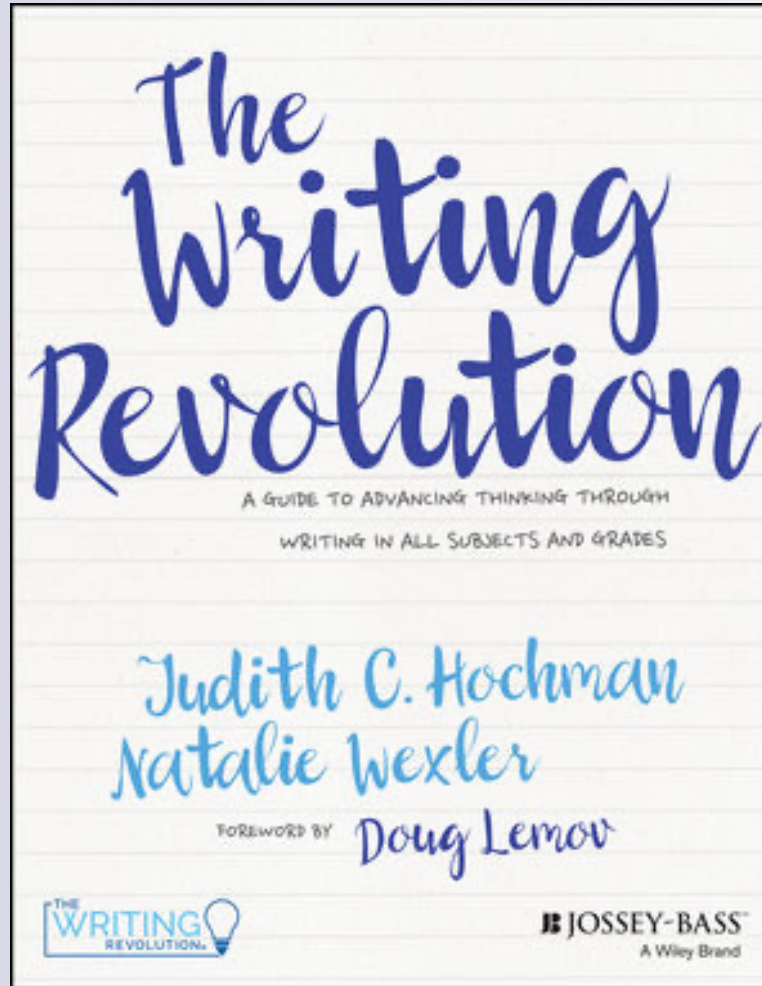
# Practice & repetition

Lots of examples

Lots of active practice



# The Writing Revolution





# Because, but, so

I walked to the shops.

- I walked to the shops because I wanted some milk.
- I walked to the shops, but they were out of milk.
- I walked to the shops, so I avoided the crowds on the bus.

A solid melts to form a liquid.

- A solid melts to form a liquid because heat or pressure causes the ordering of molecules to break down.
- A solid melts to form a liquid, but it can also sometimes sublimate to form a gas.
- A solid melts to form a liquid, so a glacier is really water waiting to happen.



# Noun appositives

- Napoleon, a Corsican soldier, became Emperor of France.
- A Corsican soldier, Napoleon became Emperor of France.
- Napoleon became Emperor of France, one of the most powerful countries in the world.



# Multiple-choice questions

# Multiple-choice questions

**Don't start with the right answer – start with the misconception!!**

1. Identify a misconception
2. Ask a question, and turn the misconception into a distractor
3. Add in some more distractors and add in the right answer!



# What is a misconception?

- A fragment is a full sentence.
- A run-on sentence is correct.
- A comma splice can be used to join two independent clauses.



# Worked example

1. Identify a misconception
2. Ask a question, and turn the misconception into a distractor
3. Add in some more distractors and add in the right answer!

1. Pupils thinking a run-on sentence is a sentence.
2. Which of the following is a correct sentence? I disagree travel is good.
3. I disagree. Travel is good I disagree.



# Which of the following is a correct sentence?

1. I disagree travel is good.
2. I disagree.
3. Travel is good I disagree.

# Another approach to MCQs

1. What's the best conjunction to use to correct this run-on sentence?  
**The wind changed William reached England.**

- a) Because
- b) But
- c) **So**





# Our resources

- **Teaching & CPD resources that focus on sentence structure**
  - We provide these on the **Writing Hub**
- **Multiple choice questions to help *diagnose, improve & consolidate* understanding of sentence structure**
  - We provide these on **Automark**, which will also mark & analyse them
- **Comparative Judgement assessments to check that sentence understanding translates to better writing**
  - We provide these on **No More Marking**



# Talk to us at [nomoremarking.com](https://nomoremarking.com)

A screenshot of the No More Marking website homepage. The header features the 'No More Marking' logo, navigation links for 'Comparative Judgement for Schools', social media icons for Facebook and Twitter, a location dropdown set to 'United Kingdom', and a 'Logout' button. A secondary navigation bar includes links for 'Demo', 'Products', 'Training Events', 'Calendars', 'Blog', 'Subscribe', 'Trust', 'Archive', 'School Reports', 'My Tasks', 'Pricing', 'Contact Us', and 'Account'. The main banner shows two cartoon snails on skateboards racing towards the right against a blue sky with a sun. Text on the banner reads 'Join the Progress trail' and 'DON'T BE IN THE DARK! Sign up now start measuring your pupils' progress'. Below the banner are three content cards: 'The Issue' with an image of papers, 'What is Comparative Judgement?' with an image of hands holding apples, and 'The Solution is Simple' with an image of a smiling woman. A chat window is open on the right side of the page, displaying a greeting and a text input field.



# Summary

## 1. What is good writing?

- See examples!

## 2. What are the features of good writing?

- Sentence structure & vocabulary are more important than understanding genres.

## 3. Why do students make errors in their writing?

- They don't understand what makes a sentence.

## 4. How can we teach good writing?

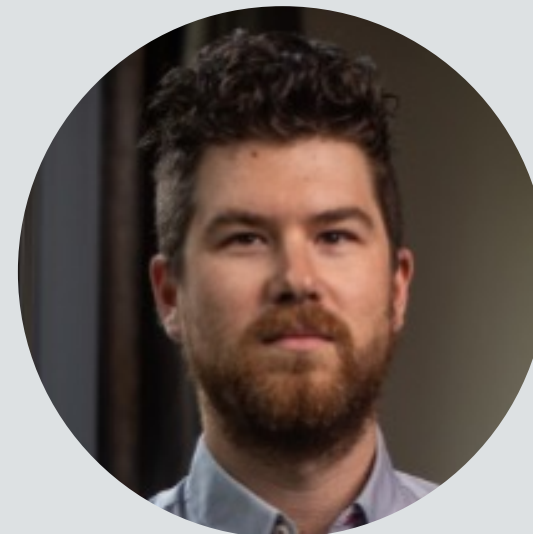
- Focus on sentence-level activities.



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