Sentence Combining

The original line from *The Importance of Being Earnest:*

Lady Bracknell: Untruthful! My nephew Algernon? Impossible! He is an Oxonian.

The sentences to combine:

Lady Bracknell says that Algernon cannot be untruthful.
He is her nephew.
She says it is because he is an Oxonian.
Her statement is nonsense.

Absolute Phrases

a group of words that modifies an independent clause as a whole; it has no finite verb	*Her statement nonsensical*, Lady Bracknell declares that her nephew Algernon cannot be untruthful because he is an Oxonian.

Adjective Clause

any clause which modifies a noun or pronoun	Lady Bracknell says nonsensically that her nephew Algernon, *who is an Oxonian*, cannot be untruthful.

Adverb Clause

any clause which modifies a verb, an adjective, or an adverb	Lady Bracknell again talks nonsense *when she says that her nephew Algernon cannot be untruthful because he is an Oxonian.*

Appositives

a noun, noun phrase, or series of nouns used to rename or identify another noun, noun phrase, or pronoun	*An Oxonian,* Algernon is incapable of being untruthful, his aunt Lady Bracknell says nonsensically.

Participial Phrases

one built on a past or present participle; it always modifies the subject of the main clause, whether the writer intends it to or not	Lady Bracknell, *lapsing again into nonsense,* says that her nephew Algernon is incapable of being untruthful because he is an Oxonian.

Prepositional phrases

one beginning with a preposition, ending with the preposition's object, and working as an adjective or as an adverb	Lady Bracknell says, *in another example of nonsense,* that her nephew Algernon cannot be untruthful because he is an Oxonian.

Two Resources

Kilgallon, Don. *Sentence Composing for High School*. Boynton/Cook Heinemann, 1998. Print.

Strong, Williiam. *Sentence Combining: A Composing Book*. McGraw-Hill, 1994. Print.

©Skip Nicholson, 2008

SENTENCE COMBINING #2

Blocking Characters in The Importance of Being Earnest

Combine the following elements into a coherent paragraph that explains the function of *blocking* characters in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

1 The climax of many comedies is the marriage of young lovers.
2 A good plot requires this.
3 The marriage is delayed.

4 This delay or suspense is usually achieved by characters.
5 They are called blocking characters.

6 They consciously oppose the marriage.
7 Their folly somehow stands in the marriage's way.

8 Parents are most frequently blocking characters.
9 Parents represent practical, puritanical, and antiromantic forces in society.

10 The marriage is often blocked.
11 It is blocked by some folly or fault.
12 The fault or folly is in one or both of the lovers.

13 This happens in
14 This is the plays' primary plot.
15 Jack's plan to marry Gwendolen is initially blocked by the girl's mother.
16 The mother is Lady Bracknell.

17 Lady Bracknell is concerned with Jack's family background.
18 She is more concerned with this than with her daughter's desires.

19 Gwendolen herself also threatens to be a block.
20 Gwendolen is in love with Jack and willing to marry him.
21 She can only love someone named Earnest.
22 This is what she says.
23 Jack uses the name Earnest when he is with her in London.

24 The audience believes this.
25 The hero's name is Jack.
26 Gwendolen's infatuation with the name of Ernest seems likely to become an obstacle.

27 This happens at the end of Act 1.
28 The audience is led to expect this.
29 Jack will discover a respectable set of parents.
30 Jack will get a new name.
31 This will satisfy the aristocratic conditions of Lady Bracknell.
32 This will satisfy the romantic expectations of Gwendolen.