

INSTRUCTOR: Mixed and Incomplete Constructions. Writing needs to follow a logical order so readers can make sense of it. When the construction of a sentence is mixed or incomplete, readers can become lost or confused.

In a mixed construction, parts of a sentence are combined illogically and the meaning of the resulting sentence is derailed. Let's look at an example. Because a mixed construction leads to confusion that leaves reader's unsure of what you meant to say. This sentence is tangled and it makes no sense. It needs to be revised. To straighten out mixed constructions, make sure the sentence has a complete independent clause with a subject and verb that make sense. This example has no clear subject. It opens with a dependent clause which cannot contain the main subject of the sentence. The main subject and verb cannot be found in the rest of the sentence either. One way to revise the sentence is to delete the dependent word because. Another way is to adjust the remainder of the sentence to make it an independent clause with a clear subject and verb.

Other mixed constructions are not so difficult for readers to understand, but they should still be avoided in formal writing such as school papers and business documents. To keep your writing sounding formal, don't use is when or is where. Also, avoid using the expression the reason is because. Improve your writing by revising these constructions.

In an incomplete construction needed words are missing. The resulting sentence does not make sense. Incomplete constructions most commonly occur in two instances with comparisons and with verbs and adjectives that include prepositions. In comparisons, be sure the two things being compared make logical sense. The length of a year on Mars is about twice as long as Earth. It doesn't make sense to compare year with Earth, so the comparison should be revised. Fix the comparison by adding needed words. Now, year is logically compared to year.

Some verbs, such as work out, and some adjectives, such as the familiar with,

include prepositions. When using these types of verbs or adjectives in a sentence watch out for any missing prepositions. Improve your writing by adding needed prepositions.

Remember, mixed or incomplete constructions occur when a sentence doesn't follow grammatical rules. Be sure to combine sentence parts correctly and include all needed words to keep your writing clear and logical.