

## Freighting and Telescoping

### Freighting



“Bill, the guy who is always getting me into trouble and never listens to the teacher—but she always says ‘He’s trying,’—and John, the guy who fed the rat to Kurt, the python at school, both got sick and started throwing up all over the floor, the desks, and Mr. Skumawitz, the new principal everyone calls Skoomie.”

Freighting involves thinking of the parts of a simple sentence as flat bed cars, each one capable of having more similar material piled vertically on top of it. The material is then snapped onto the top its appropriate freight load with commas.

Ex.

Subject	Verb	Adjective	Direct Object
Bill	chewed	a red	apple.

Now take a careful look at the reality the sentence describes and decide what other details belong in the sentence’s flow. Ask if anyone other than Bill chewed the apple. If so, they are snapped on top of the “Bill” car. Then look carefully at the apple. Perhaps it was not just chewed. Snap the new actions into the verb car

Subject	Verb	Adjective	Direct Object
Bill, my aunt Tina, and all their friends	chewed, chopped, and pulverized	the red	apple.

Never stop observing. Maybe the apple was not just red, and maybe more than apples filled the food trough. You may combine the adjective with the direct object freights and still create a complete sentence.

Subject	Verb	Complete Direct Object(s)
Bill, my aunt Tina, and all their friends	chewed, chopped, and pulverized	the red, hard juicy, candied apple, and the mud brown, crumbling cookies, scatter shot with chocolate chips.

Here’s the sentence after the freighting is complete:

**Bill, who you can count on to sniff out the best groceries, my aunt Tina, who is a freeloader, and all their friends, who show up only when the cupboards are full, chewed, chopped, and pulverized the red, hard juicy, candied apple, and the mud brown, crumbling cookies, scatter shot with chocolate chips.**

Remember, all the items on the subject must stay together and then together share all the words on the verb car. If items from the four different cars are spread all over the freight car, there is a risk of creating run-on sentences or comma splices.

**Ex. Bill chewed the red apple, Aunt Tina pulverized the red apple (comma splice).**

*Bill and aunt Tina must stay together on the freight car while chewed and pulverized stay together on theirs: Bill and aunt Tina chewed and pulverized the red apple.*

Individual Practice: Write 3 freight sentences, each about a different aspect of your life: one about foods you enjoy, one about films or books that mean much to you, one about your family or work. They should be six line long and numbered. Keep trains together to avoid creating a run-on sentence

Here is a freight created by phrases

Ex: I fought the migraine then, ignored the warning it sent, went to school and work in spite of it, sat through lectures in Middle English and presentations to advertisers with involuntary tears running down the right side of my face, threw up in washrooms, stumbled home by instinct, emptied ice trays onto my bed and tried to freeze the pain in my right temple, wished only for a neurosurgeon who would do a lobotomy on house call, and cursed my imagination.

(Joan Didion, *The White Album*)



## Telescoping

Telescoping is a strategy for zooming in closer to a subject you are describing. A telescope begins with a simple sentence. The period at the end of the sentence is replaced by a comma that acts like a zoom lens to start the telescoping; instead of imagining freight cars, your mind's eye acts as if it were a camera with an attached telephoto lens.

We toured the Hollyhock House.

Next, the writer replaces the period after "house" with a comma, the comma representing a telephoto lens zooming up closer to any detail on any of the items in the original sentence, which could be "we," "tour," or the "Hollyhock house." If the writer decides to zoom up to the house, the sentence could now read:

**We toured the Hollyhock house, the walls composed of many prefabricated, cement blocks.**

The period at the end of this sentence may now be replaced by a comma, but now you may only zoom in on one of the last phrases details—“**prefabricated,**” “**cement,**” or “**blocks**”—because these items are now in the camera’s frame.

**We toured the Hollyhock house, the walls composed of many prefabricated, cement blocks, the blocks abstract design cast as the hollyhock flower, hollyhocks being the house’s dominant motif.**

Please note that after the first independent clause (subject + verb + complete thought = independent clause) every sentence thereafter must have an incomplete verb or you are writing a comma splice (a major error.) Review the telescoping sentence and find the incomplete verbs in each of the telescopes.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If you want to pan out from the telescope, all you have to do is use a comma and connecting word (and, but, while, since). The pan will return the reader to the “big picture.”

We toured the Hollyhock house, the walls composed of many prefabricated, cement blocks, the blocks abstract design cast as the hollyhock flower, hollyhocks being the house’s dominant motif, **and the boldness of the blocks helped to emphasize the horizontal weight of the house, a weight reminiscent of Mayan government architecture.**

Examples:

The eagle carried a rattlesnake; **it hung shining from her feet, limp and curving out in the trail of her flight.**

Cathy Smith was waiting at home for her date, reading the new *Seventeen Magazine*, the article about love and romance still simmering in her mind when the doorbell rang.

**Individual Practice: Pick a comfortable environment such as a landscape, restaurant, or social event and observe the details of the people and physical setting. Write three telescoping sentences, zooming at least twice before you pan using a connecting word.**