



Principles of Composition: Example 1

- Compare the following two sentences
- Underline the subjects and highlight the **verbs**.
 - a. The Federalists' argument that the destabilization of government was a consequence of popular democracy was based on their belief in the tendency of factions to further their self-interest at the expense of the common good.
 - b. The Federalists argued that popular democracy destabilized government, because they believed that fractions tended to further their self-interest at the expense of the common good.



Another example

- Underline the nominalizations in the following:
- Better evaluation of responses to treatment modalities depends on the standardization of an index allowing accurate descriptions of learning disorder behaviors.



Diagnosis: an example

- Underline the subject and highlight all **nominalizations**:
 - Our analysis of the results of the experiment did not provide an explanation of its failure, because our data collection lacked the precision needed.



Example 4

- Which of the following do you prefer? Why?
 - a. The collapse of a dead star into a point perhaps no larger than a marble creates a black hole.
 - b. A black hole is created by the collapse of a dead star into a point perhaps no larger than a marble.
- Try underlining the subject and highlighting the **verb**



Redundancy

- Try highlighting the words that are redundant in the presence of another word; underlined this other word
 - E.g. anticipate **in advance**
- x Do not try to anticipate in advance those events that will completely revolutionize society because past history shows that it is the eventual outcome of minor events that unexpectedly surprises us more.



Articles (a/an/the): a test

- Can you rewrite this?
 - Please can you lend me pound of butter till end of week?



Rules of Usage: Example 2

- Can you rewrite this?
 - x The best way to see a country, unless you are pressed for time is to travel on foot.



Reference

- The examples in this talk are taken from these four books:
 1. Joseph M. Williams, ***Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace***
 2. William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, ***The Elements of Style***
 3. Michael Swan, ***Practical English Usage***
 4. Lyn Dupre, ***BUGS in Writing: A Guide to Debugging Your Prose***
- (You will also need a good dictionary)
- The slides of this talk can be downloaded from my CUHK home page:
 - <http://www.cse.cuhk.edu.hk/~clement>