4. "John Darnielle, leader of a veteran band called the Mountain Goats, writes songs that unspool like short stories, and his new album, "Heretic Pride," is full of desperate characters and evocative settings." (John Jurgensen, *The Washington Post*)
5. "As it is undeniable that portions of the human family have existed in a state of savagery, other portions in a state of barbarism, and still other portions in a state of civilization, it seems equally so that these three distinct conditions are connected with each other in a natural as well as necessary sequence of progress." (R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms, *Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*)

Alternatively, you might do these operations on sentences of your own choice. Also please note that there will be an opportunity to repeat and expand this Try This in the end-of-chapter assignments. We recommend, in any case, that you might start your own list of sentences you like. It's one of the very best ways to learn about style.

USING COORDINATION AND SUBORDINATION TO EMPHASIZE MEANINGS

As we trust you are beginning to see, sentence structure operates as a form of implicit logic. The syntax defines relationships among the clauses—subject + verb combinations—in a sentence according to the choices you make about coordination and subordination. A third factor in according emphasis is the order of clauses, as we shall discuss in what follows. All three—coordination, subordination, and the order of clauses—are tools of logic and emphasis that help to rank your meanings and convey this ranking to the reader.

Using Coordination to Balance This with That

Coordination uses grammatically equivalent constructions to link ideas. These ideas should carry roughly equal weight as well. Sentences that use coordination connect clauses with coordinating conjunctions (such as *and*, *but*, and *or*). Here are two examples.

> Historians organize the past, *and* they can never do so with absolute neutrality.
>
> Homegrown corn is incredibly sweet, *and* it is very difficult to grow.

If you ponder these sentences, you may begin to detect the danger of the word *and*. It does not specify a precise logical relationship between the things it connects but instead simply adds them. Notice that the sentences get more precise if we substitute *but* for *and*.

> Historians organize the past, *but* they can never do so with absolute neutrality.
>
> Homegrown corn is incredibly sweet, *but* it is very difficult to grow.

These sentences are still coordinate in structure; they are still the sentence type known as compound. But they achieve more emphasis than the *and* versions. In both cases, the *but* clause carries more weight, because *but* always introduces information that qualifies or contradicts what precedes it.

Emphasis Rests at the End of Coordinate Clauses

In both the *and* and *but* examples of coordinate clauses, the second clause tends to be stressed. The reason is simple: *the end is usually a position of emphasis.* You can see the effect of clause order more starkly if we reverse the clauses in our examples.

> Historians are never absolutely neutral, but they organize the past.
>
> Homegrown corn is very difficult to grow, but it is incredibly sweet.

Note how the meanings have changed in these versions because emphasis tends to fall on whatever comes last in a sentence. Rather than simply having their objectivity undermined ("Historians are never absolutely neutral"), historians are now credited with at least providing organization ("they organize the past"). Similarly, whereas the previous version of the sentence about corn was likely to dissuade gardeners from trying to grow it ("it is very difficult to grow"), the new sentence is more likely to lure them to nurture corn ("it is incredibly sweet").

Nonetheless, all of these sentences are examples of coordination because the clauses are grammatically equal. As you revise, notice when you use coordinate syntax, and think about whether you really intend to give the ideas equal weight. Consider as well whether reversing the order of clauses will more accurately convey your desired emphasis to your readers.

Try This 18.3: Rearrange Coordinate Clauses for Emphasis

Rearrange the parts of the following coordinate sentence, which is composed of four sections, separated by commas. Construct at least three versions, and jot down how the meaning changes in each version.

> I asked her to marry me, two years ago, in a shop on Tremont Street, late in the fall.

Then subject two sentences of your own, perhaps taken from your papers, to the same treatment. Make sure to describe how the meaning changes in each case, because it will get you accustomed to seeing the effects of the rearrangements.

Using Subordination to Adjust Emphasis

In sentences that contain *subordination*, there are two "levels" of grammar—the main clause and the subordinate clause—that create two levels of meaning. When

you put something in a main clause, you emphasize its significance. When you put something in a subordinate clause, you make it less important than what is in the main clause.

As noted in the discussion of complex sentences, a subordinate clause is linked to a main clause by words known as *subordinating conjunctions.* Here is a list of the most common ones: *after, although, as, as if, as long as, because, before, if, rather than, since, than, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whether,* and *while.* All of these words define something *in relation to* something else:

> *If* you study hard, you will continue to do well.
>
> You will continue to do well, *if* you study hard.

In both of these examples, *if* subordinates "you study hard" to "you will continue to do well," regardless of whether the *if* clause comes first or last in the sentence.

How the End Affects Emphasis When Using Subordinate Clauses

Unlike the situation with coordinate clauses, the emphasis in sentences that use subordination virtually always rests on the main clause, regardless of the clause order. Nevertheless, the principle of end-position emphasis still applies, though to a lesser extent than among coordinate clauses. Let's compare two versions of the same sentence.

> Although the art of the people was crude, it was original.
>
> The art of the people was original, although it was crude.

Both sentences emphasize the idea in the main clause ("original"). Because the second version locates the "although" clause at the end, however, the subordinated idea ("crude") has more emphasis than it does in the first version.

You can experiment with the meaning and style of virtually any sentence you write by reversing the clauses. Here, taken almost at random, is an earlier sentence from this chapter, followed by two such transformations.

> When you put something in a subordinate clause, you make it less important than what is in the main clause.
>
> Put information in a subordinate clause if you want to make it less important than what is in the main clause.
>
> If you want to make information less important than what is in the main clause, put it in a subordinate clause.

As we hope you can see, the ordering of clauses is one way of according emphasis, the decision to subordinate or coordinate is another, and the two modes of emphasizing can work in tandem. Thus, a sentence that ends with a subordinate clause gives that clause more force than a sentence that contains a subordinate clause but does not end with it.

Try This 18.4: Experiment with Coordination, Subordination, and the Order of Clauses

Do two rewritings of the following sentence, changing the order of clauses and subordinating or coordinating as you wish. We recommend that you make one of them end with the word *friendly.*

> Faculty members came to speak at the forum, and they were friendly, but they were met with hostility, and this hostility was almost paranoid.

How does each of your revisions change the meaning and emphasis?

Parallel Structure: Put Parallel Information into Parallel Form

One of the most important and useful devices for shaping sentences is *parallel structure* or, as it is also known, *parallelism.* Parallelism is a form of symmetry: it involves placing sentence elements that correspond in some way into the same (that is, parallel) grammatical form. Consider the following examples, in which the parallel items are underlined or italicized:

> The three kinds of partners in a law firm who receive money from a case are popularly known as finders, binders, and grinders.
>
> The Beatles acknowledged their musical debts to American rhythm and blues, to English music hall ballads and ditties, and later to classical Indian ragas.
>
> There was no way that the President could gain the support of party regulars *without alienating* the Congress, and no way that he could appeal to the electorate at large *without alienating* both of these groups.
>
> In the entertainment industry, the money that goes out to hire *film stars* or *sports stars* comes back in increased ticket sales and video or television rights.

As all of these examples illustrate, at the core of parallelism lies repetition—of a word, a phrase, or a grammatical structure. Parallelism uses repetition to organize and emphasize certain elements in a sentence, so that readers can perceive more clearly the shape of your thought. In the Beatles example, each of the prepositional phrases beginning with *to* contains a musical debt. In the President example, the repetition of the phrase *no way that* emphasizes his entrapment.

Parallelism has the added advantage of economy: each of the musical debts or presidential problems might have had its own sentence, but in that case the prose would have been wordier and the relationships among the parallel items more obscure. Along with this economy come balance and emphasis. The trio of rhyming words