

## MIXED CONSTRUCTIONS

Writers sometimes start a sentence with one grammatical structure but switch abruptly into another, causing confusion. Here are examples of mixed constructions as well as some solutions:

### Inconsistent Structure

**Example:** For most college students voting in a presidential election for the first time were undeterred by the long lines at their polling place.

**Problem:** The core of this sentence—“For most college students...were undeterred”—does not make sense. To correct it, words should be removed, inserted, or moved around.

**Solution 1:** *For most college students* voting in a presidential election for the first time, *the long lines* at their polling place were not a deterrent.

**Solution 2:** *Most college students* voting in a presidential election for the first time *were undeterred* by the long lines at their polling place.

### Inconsistent Logic

**Example:** Reluctantly we decided that Erica’s welfare would not be safe living with her mother.

**Problem:** Erica, not her welfare, would not be safe.

**Solution:** Reluctantly we decided that *Erica* would not be safe living with her mother.

### Constructions to Avoid:

#### *Is when*

**Example:** Ethnocentrism *is when* you judge other cultures by the standards of your own.

**Solution:** Ethnocentrism is the practice of judging other cultures by the standards of one’s own.

#### *Is where*

**Example:** Anorexia nervosa *is where* people, believing they are too fat, diet to the point of starvation.

**Solution:** Anorexia nervosa is a disorder suffered by people who, believing they are too fat, diet to the point of starvation.

#### *Reason...is because*

**Example:** The *reason* I was late *is because* my car broke down.

**Solution:** The reason I was late is that my car broke down.