

SENTENCES DON'T SPLIT VERB FORMS UNNECESSARILY

See 6.6 of the Checklist

Avoid splitting elements of the verb. Keeping elements of the verb together in a sentence aids readability and comprehension, reducing the need to reread.

EXAMPLE 1

✘ Tara **has** only **been married** for 2 days.

✔ Tara **has been married** for only 2 days.

In example 2, the conditional 'if' clause is not useful information at the point that it appears in the sentence because the reader does not yet know what the Minister 'may' do. The reader has to hold all the conditional information in their mind until reading the verb 'issue'.

EXAMPLE 2 – VERBS SEPARATED BY CONDITIONAL CLAUSE

✘ The Minister **may**, *if satisfied that the applicant has sufficient funds*, **issue** a licence to the applicant.

If the sentence is rephrased to put the condition after the main clause (example 3), the elements of the verb are kept together and the relationship between the subject of the sentence and the verb is established early on. The reader can then 'chunk' this meaningful information in their mind and move on to the next section of text. The more efficient the 'chunks', the easier the sentence is to process.

EXAMPLE 3 – CONDITIONAL CLAUSE MOVED TO END OF SENTENCE

✔ The Minister **may issue** a licence to the applicant *if the Minister is satisfied that the applicant has sufficient funds*.