

# Sentence writing (3)

## the Learning Objectives

- (1) Identify the components of a basic sentence.
- (2) Identify the four most serious writing errors.

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# ● Common Sentence Errors



- When you see a preposition, check to see that it is part of a sentence containing a subject and a verb.
- If it is not connected to a complete sentence, it is **a fragment**, and you will need to **fix this type of fragment by combining it with another sentence**.
- You can add **the prepositional phrase** to the end of the sentence.

## **Example A**

**Incorrect:** After walking over two miles. John remembered his wallet.

**Correct:** After walking over two miles, John remembered his wallet.

**Correct:** John remembered his wallet After after walking over two miles.

## **Example B**

**Incorrect:** The dog growled at the vacuum cleaner. When it was switched on.

**Correct:** When the vacuum cleaner was switched on, the dog growled.

**Correct:** The dog growled at the vacuum cleaner When when it was switched on.

# ● Common Sentence Errors



- Clauses that start **with a dependent word**—such as since, because, without, or unless—are similar to **prepositional phrases**.
- To fix the problem, you can add such a fragment to **the beginning or end of a sentence**.
- If the fragment is added at the beginning of a sentence, **add a comma**.

**Incorrect:** Because we lost power. The entire family overslept.

**Correct:** Because we lost power, the entire family overslept.

**Correct:** The entire family overslept Because because we lost power.

**Incorrect:** He has been seeing a physical therapist. Since his accident.

**Correct:** Since his accident, he has been seeing a physical therapist.

**Correct:** He has been seeing a physical therapist Since since his accident.

# ● Common Sentence Errors



- When you encounter a word ending in -ing in a sentence, identify whether or not this word is used as a verb in the sentence.
- If the word is **not used as a verb** or if **no helping verb** is used **with the -ing verb form**, the verb is being used **as a noun**.
- **An -ing verb form** used as **a noun** is called **a gerund**.

**Verb:** I *was* (helping verb) *working* (verb) on homework until midnight.

**Noun:** Working until midnight makes me tired the next morning.

- Once you know whether the -ing word is acting as a noun or a verb, **look at the rest of the sentence**.
- Does the entire sentence make sense on its own?
- If not, **what you are looking at is a fragment**.
- You will need to either add the parts of speech that are missing or combine the fragment with a nearby sentence.

# ● Common Sentence Errors



- Another error in sentence construction is a fragment that begins with an infinitive.
- An infinitive is a verb paired **with the word to;** (to run, to write, or to reach)
- Although infinitives are verbs, they can be **used as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs.**
- You can correct a fragment that begins with an infinitive by either combining it **with another sentence or adding the parts of speech that are missing.**

**Incorrect:** We needed to make three hundred more paper cranes. To reach the one thousand mark.

**Correct:** We needed to make three hundred more paper cranes to reach the one thousand mark.

**Correct:** We needed to make three hundred more paper cranes. We wanted to reach the one thousand mark.

# ● Run-on Sentences



- Sentences with **two or more independent clauses** that have been incorrectly combined are known as **run-on sentences**.
- A run-on sentence may be either **a fused sentence or a comma splice**.

**Fused sentence:** A family of foxes lived under our shed young foxes played all over the yard.

**Comma splice:** We looked outside, the kids were hopping on the trampoline.

- When two complete sentences are combined into **one without any punctuation**, the result is **a fused sentence**.
- When two complete sentences are joined by **a comma**, the result is **a comma splice**.
- Both errors can easily be fixed.

# ● Punctuation



- One way to correct run-on sentences is to correct the punctuation.
- For example, **adding a period** will correct the run-on by creating **two separate sentences**.

**Run-on:** There were no seats left, we had to stand in the back.

**Correct:** There were no seats left. we We had to stand in the back.

- Using a semicolon **between the two complete sentences** will also **correct the error**.
- **A semicolon** allows you to **keep the two closely related ideas together in one sentence**.

# ● Punctuation



- When you punctuate with a semicolon, make sure that **both parts of the sentence are independent clauses.**

**Run-on:** The accident closed both lanes of traffic we waited an hour for the wreckage to be cleared.

**Complete sentence:** The accident closed both lanes of traffic; we waited an hour for the wreckage to be cleared.



# ● Punctuation



- When you use a semicolon to **separate two independent clauses**, you may wish to add a transition word to **show the connection between the two thoughts**.
- After the semicolon, add the transition word and **follow it with a comma**.

**Run-on:** The project was put on hold we didn't have time to slow down, so we kept working.

**Complete sentence:** The project was put on hold; however, we didn't have time to slow down, so we kept working.

# ● Coordinating Conjunctions



- You can also fix run-on sentences by **adding a comma and a coordinating conjunction**.
- A coordinating conjunction acts as **a link** between **two independent clauses**.



## Tip

- These are the seven coordinating conjunctions that you can use:

**for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so. (FANBOYS)**

**Run-on:** The new printer was installed, no one knew how to use it.

**Complete sentence:** The new printer was installed, but no one knew how to use it.

# ● Dependent Words



- Adding dependent words is another way to link independent clauses.
- Like the coordinating conjunctions, dependent words show a relationship between two independent clauses.

**Run-on:** We took the elevator, the others still got there before us.

**Complete sentence:** Although we took the elevator, the others got there before us.

**Run-on:** Cobwebs covered the furniture, the room hadn't been used in years.

**Complete sentence:** Cobwebs covered the furniture because the room hadn't been used in years.

# ● Key Takeaways



- A sentence is complete when it contains both a subject and verb. A complete sentence makes sense on its own.
- Every sentence must have a subject, which usually appears at the beginning of the sentence. A subject may be a noun (a person, place, or thing) or a pronoun.
- A compound subject contains more than one noun.
- A prepositional phrase describes, or modifies, another word in the sentence but cannot be the subject of a sentence.
- A verb is often an action word that indicates what the subject is doing. Verbs may be action verbs, linking verbs, or helping verbs.
- Variety in sentence structure and length improves writing by making it more interesting and more complex.
- Focusing on the six basic sentence patterns will enhance your writing.
- Fragments and run-on sentences are two common errors in sentence construction.
- Fragments can be corrected by adding a missing subject or verb. Fragments that begin with a preposition or a dependent word can be corrected by combining the fragment with another sentence.
- Run-on sentences can be corrected by adding appropriate punctuation or adding a coordinating conjunction.