

SENTENCES, RUN-ONS, AND FRAGMENTS

1. A **sentence** has a subject and a verb and makes a complete thought. Another name for a sentence is an **independent clause**. Here are a few examples of complete sentences.

Tom laughed. Because she exercises regularly, she is in good condition. It has been raining all day. Be quiet. (The subject "You" is understood.) He's quiet, and he's very polite. (compound sentence)

2. A **fragment** is only a piece of a complete thought that has been punctuated like a sentence. Fragments can be **phrases** or **dependent clauses** or **any incomplete word group**. Study the following examples:

Ann walked all alone. **To the store.** (prepositional phrase fragment)

Walking to the store. She saw a car accident. (present participial phrase)

Because she exercises regularly. She is in good condition. (dependent/adverb clause fragment)

There are several ways to correct fragments. These are the three most common ways:

- a) To correct a fragment, connect the fragment to a complete sentence.

"Ann walked all alone. To the store." can be corrected like this: "Ann walked all alone to the store." "Walking to the store. She saw a car accident." can be corrected like this: "Walking to the store, she saw a car accident."

- b) To correct a fragment, remove words to make the fragment a complete sentence.

"Because she exercises regularly. She is in excellent condition." can be corrected like this: "She exercises regularly. She is in excellent condition."

- c) To correct a fragment, add words to make the fragment a complete sentence.

"Because she exercises regularly. She is in excellent condition." can be corrected like this: "She feels great because she exercises regularly. She is in excellent condition."

3. A **run-on** occurs when two sentences are run together without the proper punctuation and/or connecting words. One type of run-on, the **fused sentence**, occurs when two sentences are written together without any punctuation at all. Another type, the **comma splice**, occurs when a comma is used between two sentences without any connecting word (such as "and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet"). Study these examples:

Joe was happy about the raise he felt like celebrating. (fused sentence)

Joe was happy about the raise, he felt like celebrating. (comma splice)

There are several ways to correct the run-ons above. These are the most common ways:

- a) A run-on may be corrected by putting a period between the sentences.

Joe was happy about the raise. He felt like celebrating.

- b) A run-on may be corrected by connecting two related sentences with a comma followed by a coordinating conjunction: and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet.

Joe was happy about the raise, **so** he felt like celebrating.

c) A run-on may be corrected by connecting two related sentences with a semicolon only.

Joe was happy about the raise; he felt like celebrating.

d) A run-on may be corrected by connecting two related sentences with a semicolon and a transition word or phrase, such as following: however, therefore, thus, then, as a result, consequently, nevertheless, also, on the other hand, for instance, in contrast, etc.

Joe was happy about the raise; **consequently**, he felt like celebrating.

e) A run-on may be corrected by adding a dependent clause signal word to create a complex sentence. Common signal words include the following: because, if, although, when, who, which, etc.

Because Joe was happy about the raise, he felt like celebrating.

Joe, who was happy about the raise, felt like celebrating.

Directions: Label each word group as one of the following: Fragment (F), Run-On (R), or Correct (C). Be prepared to explain how to correct each of the fragments and run-ons you have identified.

1. ___ Although Mary has been my best friend.
2. ___ No one I know watches that television show, I can't believe it.
3. ___ Her husband loves to cook, however, he does not like to clean the kitchen afterwards.
4. ___ Tim started his new job last Wednesday, and he really likes the boss.
5. ___ I have a hard time understanding her lectures, when I talk to her one-on-one, I understand her fine.
6. ___ Mary signed up because she thought the training would be interesting and help her on the job.
7. ___ Meet me after class, I want to talk with you about the upcoming test.
8. ___ The one who looks like a military officer but acts like a spoiled brat.
9. ___ Although she has studied very hard, she is still worried about the midterm exam.
10. ___ One of the best ways to improve your writing. Is to read and analyze what you read.
11. ___ It has been a long time since I have been to the beach, I am looking forward to the trip.
12. ___ When you have finished your homework and are ready to take a break.