

GRAMMAR IN PRACTICE

Sentences and Paragraphs

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*for Kathryn Rogers,
grammar goddess*

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INTRODUCTION

How to Use This Book —and Why

A thorough understanding of grammar and the mechanics of writing is one of the pillars of a solid education. It prepares you for success in college, careers, and daily life. For this reason, now more than ever, students are being asked to demonstrate proficiency in grammar, usage, and composition. State tests, the SAT, and the ACT will measure your ability to recognize and correct errors in grammar and mechanics. These tests, along with classroom assignments, require that you write clear, correct sentences and paragraphs, both in isolation and in essay format.

This book is the last in a three-book series that offers instruction, review, and practice in the basics of grammar, mechanics, and composition. The concepts build on one another, from the parts of speech through paragraph composition, so that by the end of the series, you will have the tools necessary to assemble polished compositions. The first book, *Grammar in Practice: A Foundation*, covered the parts of speech, grammar rules, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. The next book, *Grammar in Practice: Usage*, offered expanded instruction on grammar, common usage errors, and using different kinds of sentences. In this book we will show you how to pull together your grammar and usage skills to write strong, engaging sentences and paragraphs.

In this book you will find a variety of lessons, features, and activities that will challenge you to think and to write:

- **Instructional sections:** Short, easy to read sections introduce and explain key concepts, complete with definitions, explanations, and examples. Your teacher may skip sections you already know well and return for review to sections that were especially helpful or important.
- **Activities:** Workbook-style exercises let you practice applying lesson concepts. Some exercises require you to read and respond to a given passage or analyze specific points of mechanics or style in an excerpt.
- **Composition Hints:** These features offer tips and techniques for applying rules and for developing your personal style in writing.
- **Writing Applications:** To help you integrate the writing concepts you learn, you'll often be asked to write and revise sentences and paragraphs, occasionally working with a classmate. Writing prompts throughout the book offer many opportunities for practice.
- **Research Applications:** These assignments at the end of each lesson group ask you to research one of several topics and write about it. Practicing the skills of sentence and paragraph writing while you explore a topic that interests you will let you showcase your strengths while incorporating your individual style and creativity. Many of the topics focus on technology.
- **Test Practice:** Each lesson group concludes with a practice test covering only the material in those lessons. Additionally, the book concludes with a comprehensive test covering the major concepts. The tests are usually multiple choice and are modeled after state-proficiency and standardized tests you will take in order to graduate or apply to colleges.

With so much variety, this book is an invaluable classroom tool. Your teacher can pick and choose lessons, work in order from beginning to end, or have you use the book as a resource when you write essays. However you and your teacher decide to use it, you will learn to craft sentences and paragraphs that are more varied, precise, clear, and sophisticated. Use the entire series and you will be able to write interesting and effective compositions with confidence and flair.

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Sentence Revision

In Part One, we examined qualities of strong sentences. Focusing on the types of sentences and their structures, those lessons outlined how to manipulate sentence elements for maximum strength. Now we turn to another aspect of building strong sentences: getting the grammar and mechanics right.

Specifically, the following lessons show you how to ensure a sentence is complete; how to check for common grammar errors; and how to check for errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling (otherwise known as “mechanics”). The lessons culminate in a master checklist for sentence revision, which you can use any time you write sentences.

Sentence Errors

Three common errors in sentences are the *sentence fragment*, the *run-on*, and the *comma splice* (a type of run-on). All of these errors are serious; however, all have clear solutions for revision.

Sentence Fragments

Each of the following examples begins with a capital letter and has end punctuation, yet none is a complete sentence. They are fragments.

- FRAGMENTS: A new telephone with numerous special features. (no verb)
 Of course, rings with a special musical tone. (no subject)
 There on the desk, beside the computer. (no subject or verb)



A *sentence fragment* is a word group punctuated as a sentence yet lacking a subject, a verb, or both.

Study these additional examples of fragments, along with examples of how each can be revised to be a complete sentence.

- NO VERB: Computers in every office nowadays.
 COMPLETE SENTENCE: Computers *are present* in every office nowadays.
- NO VERB: Without a doubt, technology making our lives easier.
 (The word *making* by itself is not a verb. It needs a helping verb such as *is*.)
 COMPLETE SENTENCE: Without a doubt, technology *is* making our lives easier.
- NO SUBJECT: Confused me with all those buttons.
 COMPLETE SENTENCE: *The fax machine* confused me with all those buttons.
- NO SUBJECT, NO VERB: In the tray underneath the printer.
 (This fragment consists of two prepositional phrases.)
 COMPLETE SENTENCE: *Please insert paper* in the tray underneath the printer.
 (In this revision, the understood subject is *you*.)

ACTIVITY 1

Revise each fragment to be a complete sentence. Add whatever words are necessary, writing on the lines provided.

Samples:

- a. Sometimes, cell phones worth their weight in gold.

Sometimes, cell phones can be worth their weight in gold.

- b. In a difficult situation and in need of assistance.

*A cell phone can be used to get help for a person in a difficult situation
and in need of assistance.*

1. Driving down the road to school.

2. All of a sudden, a flat tire.

3. Must change it and get to school on time.

4. Unfortunately, rain coming down in torrents.

5. Beside the road on a flat, grassy area.

6. The spare tire in the trunk, under a lot of junk.

7. Filled with despair at ever getting this fixed on time.

8. A solution to this entire problem.

9. To call the auto club on this handy cell phone.

10. Ten minutes later, a professional on the scene.

QUESTION: A subordinate clause has a subject and a verb. Can it stand alone as a sentence?

ANSWER: No, it cannot stand alone. A subordinate clause by itself is a sentence fragment.

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE: When I want to go to a movie.

COMPLETE SENTENCE: When I want to go to a movie, I check the movie listings.

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE: What time a certain film starts.

COMPLETE SENTENCE: The listings tell me what time a certain film starts.

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE: Whenever a new comedy comes out.

COMPLETE SENTENCE: Whenever a new comedy comes out, I am first in line.

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE: Because a movie should entertain, not sadden you.

COMPLETE SENTENCE: I prefer comedies because a movie should entertain, not sadden you.

In your writing, be especially watchful for subordinate clauses that stand alone as sentences (such as those in the examples above). This kind of fragment is common yet easily fixed.

QUESTION: How can I revise a subordinate clause to be a complete sentence?

ANSWER: You can (1) add a main clause or (2) remove the subordinating conjunction or relative pronoun that introduces the subordinate clause. Here are a few examples:

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE: Where a movie is showing.

COMPLETE SENTENCE: The listings tell me where a movie is showing.

(Add a main clause to create a complete sentence.)

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE: Although a film may be showing in several locations.

COMPLETE SENTENCE: A film may be showing in several locations.

(Remove *Although* to create a complete sentence.)

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE: Web sites that provide show times and locations.

(This word group has a subject, *Web sites*, and a subordinate clause. Because there is no verb, the word group is a fragment.)

COMPLETE SENTENCE: Web sites provide show times and locations.

(Remove *that* to create a complete sentence.)

ACTIVITY 2 _____

Revise each fragment to make it a complete sentence. Add or remove words as necessary. Write the revised sentence on the lines provided.

Samples:

- a. Which is also called a URL.

The address of a Web site is also called a URL. _____

- b. Schools that have attractive Web sites.

Schools that have attractive Web sites may attract new students. _____

1. If you need to find out information.

2. When the page of search results comes up.

3. So that you can locate facts quickly and easily.

4. Which is one common use for the Internet.

5. Unless you'd rather buy a newspaper.

6. Because searching the Internet is convenient.

7. Whoever doesn't own a computer.

8. When a school or public library is open.

9. Colleges that interest you.

10. Whether you want to send in an application.

Run-on Sentences

When two sentences are run together with no punctuation or conjunction separating them, the result is a *run-on*. (Run-ons are also known as “fused sentences.”)



A *run-on sentence* consists of two or more sentences run together without punctuation or a conjunction between them.

RUN-ON: Cell phones are not just for emergencies they are essential to everyday communication.

CORRECT: Cell phones are not just for emergencies. They are essential to everyday communication.

RUN-ON: The sales clerk didn't just show me the expensive models she showed me the basic ones too.

CORRECT: The sales clerk didn't just show me the expensive models. She showed me the basic ones too.

QUESTION: How can I revise a run-on to be correct?

ANSWER: You have several options for revision, as explained below.

(1) Separate the sentences with an end mark or, if they are closely related in meaning, with a semicolon. Examples of using a period are shown above, in the sentences about cell phones. Below is an example of using a semicolon.

RUN-ON: Sometimes I need to stay late at school calling Mom on my cell is easy.

CORRECT: Sometimes I need to stay late at school; calling Mom on my cell is easy.

(2) Separate the sentences with a comma and a conjunction.

RUN-ON: I could not live without my cell phone it comes in handy daily.

CORRECT: I could not live without my cell phone, for it comes in handy daily.

RUN-ON: Dad bought me the phone I pay for the service myself.

CORRECT: Dad bought me the phone, but I pay for the service myself.

(3) Revise one sentence to be a subordinate clause properly joined to the other sentence. The result is a complex sentence.

RUN-ON: I could not live without my cell phone it comes in handy daily.

CORRECT: I could not live without my cell phone because it comes in handy daily.

RUN-ON: I go on dates without fail I take my cell phone.

CORRECT: Whenever I go on dates, without fail I take my cell phone.

ACTIVITY 3

On the lines provided, revise each run-on sentence to make it one or more correct sentences.

Samples:

a. This phone is surprisingly small it fits right in my back pocket.

This phone is surprisingly small. It fits right in my back pocket.

b. Using pay phones was an annoyance they weren't always convenient.

Using pay phones was an annoyance because they weren't always convenient.

1. You are at the store you forgot the shopping list.

2. The solution is simple just call home on your cell.

3. I went to the mall on a Friday night no one I know was there.

4. In my pocket was my tiny phone immediately it linked me with a friend.

5. Standing in line at the driver's license office is boring I'd rather be talking to a friend.

6. The boredom is lessened I pull out my trusty phone.

7. One day I was shopping in a home improvement warehouse with Mom we lost each other.

8. She called me on my cell quickly we found each other.

9. Driving at night is never a problem my cell is beside me at all times.

10. Most of all, I enjoy calling my sweetie the number is in my speed dial.

Comma Splices

A specific kind of run-on sentence is the *comma splice*.



A *comma splice* results when two or more sentences are joined with only a comma.

A comma by itself cannot properly join, or splice together, two sentences.

COMMA SPLICE: Save up your money, buy your own DVD player.

CORRECT: Save up your money. Buy your own DVD player.

(A period separates the sentences.)

CORRECT: Save up your money, *and* buy your own DVD player.

(The conjunction *and* works with the comma to join the sentences.)

COMMA SPLICE: Basketball sneakers can cost seventy-five dollars, a DVD player costs less.

CORRECT: Basketball sneakers can cost seventy-five dollars, *but* a DVD player costs less.

(The conjunction *but* works with the comma to join the sentences.)

COMMA SPLICE: One model costs fifty dollars, the other costs forty-five.

CORRECT: One model costs fifty dollars; the other costs forty-five.

(A semicolon joins the sentences.)

QUESTION: How can I revise a comma splice to be a complete, correct sentence?

ANSWER: Your options are similar to those used to correct run-ons.

(1) Separate the sentences with an end mark or a semicolon.

COMMA SPLICE: Francine got a weekend job, she cleans houses.

CORRECT: Francine got a weekend job. She cleans houses.

COMMA SPLICE: She is saving her paychecks carefully, soon she will be able to afford a few nice things.

CORRECT: She is saving her paychecks carefully; soon she will be able to afford a few nice things.

(2) Add a conjunction.

COMMA SPLICE: Modern technology can seem expensive, one or two items can be affordable.

CORRECT: Modern technology can seem expensive, *but* one or two items can be affordable.

COMMA SPLICE: Decide on one nice thing to buy, save your money faithfully.

CORRECT: Decide on one nice thing to buy, *and* save your money faithfully.

(3) Revise one sentence to be a subordinate clause properly joined to the other sentence.

COMMA SPLICE: You are in school, holding a job may seem difficult.

CORRECT: *When* you are in school, holding a job may seem difficult.

COMMA SPLICE: A job doesn't have to overwhelm you, work part time.

CORRECT: A job doesn't have to overwhelm you *if* you work part time.

Note: For help deciding which subordinating conjunction to use in a revision, you can review the Composition Hint and the table of conjunctions that follows it on pages 11–12.

In making any of the revisions described above, be sure you use correct punctuation (commas, semicolons, etc.). On pages 78 and 79, you will find a table listing guidelines for using punctuation.

ACTIVITY 4

On the lines provided, revise each comma splice to be one or more correct sentences.

Samples:

- a. Some people complain about the cost of new things, they should think creatively.

*Some people complain about the cost of new things, but they should
think creatively.*

- b. Anyone can save up money, allowance and paychecks are two sources of funds.

*Anyone can save up money. Allowance and paychecks are two sources
of funds.*

1. What is more important to you, would you rather have fancy shoes or a television?

2. Wear last year's sneakers, spend your money on something more useful.

3. You are a college student, pool some money with your roommate.

4. You are living at home, ask a sibling to share the cost of an expensive item.

5. How much do you spend on fancy coffee drinks, could you save half of that?

6. Magazines and makeup cost a lot, limiting these purchases saves money.

7. You can read magazines in a library, it doesn't cost a thing.

8. It may take a while to save sufficient money, you can do it.

9. A CD player and a television are fun to own, they provide entertainment.

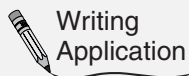
10. Host a movie night, ask a friend to bring his DVD player.

ACTIVITY 5

Find and correct the comma splices in the following passage. Make revisions by crossing out errors and writing corrections above them. The first comma splice is corrected for you as a sample. You should find four additional comma splices.

In my opinion, some forms of modern technology are easier to use than others. ^F ~~for~~ example, take the Internet itself. It's easy to open a Web browser and type in a search term or a URL. Most cell phones are also user-friendly, some certainly have a lot of buttons. DVD players and digital cameras are no problem, they are so easy to figure out.

Other high-tech inventions can be downright confusing, a good example is downloadable music. I know that something called an iPod or MP3 player stores the tunes, but how do you get the tunes into the player? Is it like burning a CD? Once the tunes are in the player, how do you organize them and search for the one you want to play? These are questions I cannot answer, for this reason, I need a tutorial from a friend.



Writing Complete, Correct Sentences

What form of modern technology can you not live without? Maybe you can't live without your cell phone, or maybe you are addicted to surfing the Internet. Perhaps you never leave home without your MP3 player. Whatever your favorite gadget or service, think about why you value it so much. Then write a paragraph of **nine or ten** sentences explaining what form of technology you value most and why. Check each sentence to ensure it is complete and correct, making revisions as necessary.

Sentence Revision

The following research applications encourage you to take your **sentence revision** beyond this workbook and into real life. Each assignment asks you to gather information on one of the themes in the previous lessons and to write and revise clear, forceful sentences about your findings. Enjoy your research and take pride in using your skills of sentence revision!

THEME: Technology

SKILL: Writing Complete, Correct Sentences

What piece of modern technology do you wish you owned? Imagine that you have the money to buy this item, whether it is a big-screen TV, a cell phone, a digital camera, or whatever. Do some research to determine which brand and model has the best customer satisfaction. To find reviews and ratings on the Internet, look on a merchant site or on a site such as ConsumerGuide (these offer free product reviews; ignore sites that ask you to subscribe to access reviews). In the library, look for product reviews in relevant magazines or in periodicals such as *Consumers Digest* and *Consumer Reports*.

After reading reviews and evaluating the pros and cons of various brands and models, select the exact item you would buy. Write **two** short paragraphs of about six sentences each or **one** long paragraph of about twelve sentences. Identify what piece of technology you would like to buy and explain why a particular brand and model is ideal for you. Use the Sentence Revision Checklist on pages 91–92 to check your sentences for completeness and correctness, making revisions as necessary.

THEME: International Travel

SKILL: Editing for Correct Grammar

For various reasons, many people seek work in a foreign country. If you were to do so, what kind of work would you seek? What country would you choose? How long would you stay? What benefits could you find in taking a job there instead of doing similar work in your home country?

To make an informed decision, research job opportunities in foreign countries. On the Internet, you can begin a search with the term “work abroad.” In the library, you can find nonfiction books on individual countries, many with fabulous photographs.

Use your resources to develop answers to the questions above. Then write **two** paragraphs of **six to eight** sentences each. Explain what kind of work appeals to you, in what country, and why. Use the Sentence Revision Checklist on page 92 to check your sentences for errors in grammar, making revisions as necessary.

THEME: Mythology

SKILL: Editing for Correct Punctuation, Capitalization, and Spelling

Who was Pandora, and why was she not supposed to open a certain box? Why was Achilles' one physical weakness in his heel? Why did Daedalus make wax wings for his son? The answers to these questions may be found in classical mythology.

Choose a god or goddess mentioned in Lesson 7 or another mythological character of your choosing. Research the stories that are told about this character and write a summary of your findings. Write **two** paragraphs of around **six to eight** sentences each. Use the Sentence Revision Checklist on page 92 to check your sentences for correct punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Make revisions as needed.

THEME: Art

SKILL: Editing for Correct Style, Grammar, and Mechanics

With your teacher's approval, choose a classmate with whom to work. Together, look at some of Barbara Nessim's computer art at www.nessim.com or www.barbaranessim.com. (Many school and public libraries have computers with Internet access available.) As you look at the art, discuss your opinions with your classmate and take notes on your discussion.

On your own, write a dialogue (written conversation) between two people, basing it on the discussion you had with your classmate regarding Nessim's art. Write approximately one handwritten page. Use the Sentence Revision Checklist on pages 91–92 to edit your sentences for correct use of style, grammar, and mechanics. Make revisions as necessary.