

Fragments and Run-ons

Every sentence needs a subject and a verb to be a complete sentence. If a sentence is missing one of those elements, it is a fragment.

Example: He lies!

This is actually a complete sentence.

Example: Because of my bad grade.

This is a fragment. The thought is not complete and it leaves the reader wondering what happened.

Revised: Because of my bad grade, I didn't graduate last May.

Example: Which can develop into a bad habit.

This is a fragment. What can develop into a bad habit? There is no subject.

Revised: Tobacco use can develop into a bad habit.

Example: A lot of votes to that politician.

This is a fragment. What about the votes? There is no verb.

Revised: A lot of votes are going to that politician.

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Run-on sentences are the opposite of fragments. They have too many words and the sentence runs on and on and on. Many times, the original point is lost. Sentences are more powerful if they are clear and direct.

Example: I studied all weekend because I need to get a good grade because I want to get ahead in my career, graduate and make a lot of money.

This is a run-on sentence. There are too many thoughts jumbled together and “because” is in the sentence twice. One way to fix this is to separate the thoughts into two sentences.

Revised: I studied all weekend because I need to get a good grade. I want to get ahead in my career, graduate and make a lot of money.

Example: Charleston, South Carolina is a famous city it has many historic buildings.

Use a semi colon to separate this into two closely related sentences.

Revised: Charleston, South Carolina is a famous city; it has many historic buildings.

Example: Many years ago I took Physics I didn't do very well in it.

Use a comma and a conjunction to join the two sentences.

Revised: Many years ago I took Physics, but I didn't do very well in it.

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