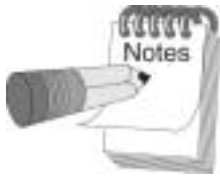




The Sentence Fragment and the Run-on Sentence



The Sentence Fragment

A sentence needs a subject and a verb. It must include at least one clause capable of standing alone (independent clause). An **independent clause** contains a subject and a verb and makes a complete statement.

A **dependent clause** may not stand alone as a sentence. Although it contains both a subject and a verb, a dependent clause does not express a complete statement. The following words (subordinating conjunctions), and other similar words, will make a clause incapable of standing alone. The more important information should always be in the independent clause; the less important, in the dependent clause.

after	if	when
although	since	whenever
as	that	which
as though	though	whichever
before	unless	who
because	until	why
how	what	

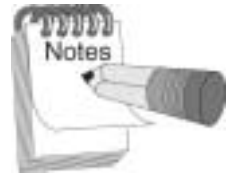
A **sentence fragment** is a word group that cannot stand alone as a sentence but is punctuated as if it were a sentence. A fragment is difficult to understand because it is an incomplete statement. Go through the Confidence Check that appears on the next page to see if you can spot sentence fragments.

Here are some examples of sentence fragments:

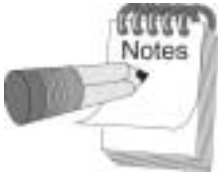
- ☞ Running for the bus that was turning the corner.
- ☞ The man with the large, black briefcase.
- ☞ While we waited during the rainstorm.
- ☞ In the afternoon before the meeting.
- ☞ That we had a good idea for the convention that was to be held in Houston, Texas, next month.

Confidence Check

Identify each word group as either a sentence (S) or a fragment (F).



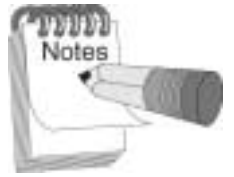
1. He went to the conference.
2. When he went to the conference.
3. When he went to the conference, he met with training officers from many Government agencies.
4. As mentioned in the preceding letter.
5. As mentioned in the preceding letter, we will send you a draft of this year's report.
6. We will send you a draft of this year's report.
7. Regarding your letter of April 15 about the recent revisions to the Federal Tax Code and their implications for the U.S. economy.
8. Thank you for your letter of April 15 about the recent revisions to the Federal Tax Code and their implications for the U.S. economy.
9. We read with interest your letter of April 15 about the recent revisions to the Federal Tax Code and their implications for the U.S. economy.
10. With respect to your letter of April 15 about the recent revisions to the Federal Tax Code and their implications for the U.S. economy.



Answers

1. **S**-The sentence has one independent clause.
2. **F**-The word *when* makes this word group a dependent clause.
3. **S**-The sentence has one independent clause (*he met with training officers from many Government agencies*) and one dependent clause (*When he went to the conference*).
4. **F**-This word group is a phrase, as it has neither a subject nor a verb.
5. **S**-The sentence has one independent clause (*we will send you a draft of this year's report*) with an introductory phrase (*As mentioned in the preceding letter*).
6. **S**-The sentence has one independent clause.
7. **F**-This word group is a phrase, as it has neither a subject nor a verb.
8. **S**-The sentence has one independent clause.
9. **S**-The sentence has one independent clause.
10. **F**-This word group is a phrase, as it has neither a subject nor a verb.

Correcting Sentence Fragments



You can take two basic approaches to correcting sentence fragments:

Combine the fragment with a related independent clause.

- ☞ Example: *We agree with your goals. Although we do not agree with your methods.*
- ☞ Revision: *Although we do not agree with your methods, we agree with your goals.*

Rewrite the fragment so that it contains an independent clause.

- ☞ Revision: *We agree with your goals. We do not, however, agree with your methods.*

Confidence Check

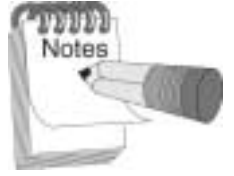
Correct the following fragments.

1. We would be glad to help you solve the problem.
If you would send us a letter describing your current accounting procedures.



2. In response to your letter of May 6 concerning our hiring policies.

Possible Answers



1. The first word group in this example is a complete sentence; however, the second is a dependent clause because of the introductory word *if*. A dependent clause cannot stand alone. One solution could be to combine the two sentences. *We would be glad to help you solve the problem if you would send us a letter describing your current accounting procedures.*
2. This word group is a phrase because it lacks a subject, a complete verb, and a sense of completion. A revision could be the following: *Thank you for your letter of May 6 concerning our hiring policies.*
3. This example has a subject, *the report*. The rest of the word group is a dependent clause. The word group lacks a complete verb and a sense of completion. Revisions could be the following: *The report was completed by the April 15 deadline only through the hard work and long hours of the entire staff.*

Or

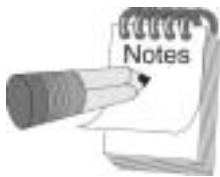
I was proud of the report, which was completed by the April 15 deadline only through the hard work and long hours of the entire staff.

4. The first word group is a fragment; it has a subject, *The approach*, and a dependent clause, but lacks a complete verb and a sense of completion. The second word group is a complete sentence. By deleting the word *that* in the first word group, you can make the sentence complete as follows: *The approach was recommended by the consultants whom we had contracted to solve the problem. In this approach, we increase the formal training of our analysts and hire an additional analyst.*

Or you can combine the two word groups as follows:

In the approach that was recommended by the consultants whom we had contracted to solve the problem, we increase the formal training of our analysts and hire an additional analyst.

5. The first word group is a fragment; it is a dependent clause. The second word group is a complete sentence. By deleting the word *after* at the beginning of the clause, you can make the dependent clause into an independent clause. *We studied the technical aspects of the proposal and our contracts office reviewed its financial aspects. The proposal, although innovative, does not meet our immediate needs.*



Confidence Check

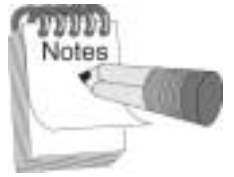
Circle the letter of the word group that is a complete sentence.

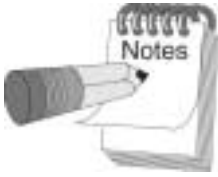


1. a. If the results are not available by the close of business today.
b. The results may not be available by the close of business today.
2. a. To travel by plane from Washington to Chicago and by train from Chicago to Cairo, which is at the southern tip of Illinois.
b. It will be expensive to travel by plane from Washington to Chicago and by train from Chicago to Cairo.
3. a. Hearing the crackle and boom of lightning and thunder in the distance, I ran at once for the farmhouse.
b. Hearing the crackle and boom of lightning and thunder in the distance.
4. a. Lucille Ball charmed American audiences for many years as a dizzy red-head with show biz aspirations.
b. Lucille Ball, who was beloved by American audiences for many years.

Answers

1. b—Choice a is a dependent clause because it is introduced with the word *if*. Choice b is an independent clause.
2. b—Choice a begins with a phrase and ends with a dependent clause. Choice b is one independent clause.
3. a—Choice a begins with a phrase that is followed by an independent clause. Choice b is a phrase because it has no subject and an incomplete verb.
4. a—Choice a is an independent clause. Choice b begins with a subject for an independent clause, but is then followed by a dependent clause.





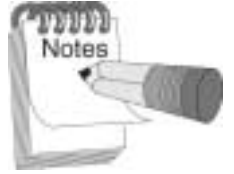
Confidence Check

Identify each of the following word groups as either a sentence fragment (F) or a complete sentence (C). If the word group is a fragment, make it a complete sentence.



1. While some people carefully consider the attributes of the candidates running for the presidency and often find the candidates lacking .
2. To view the red and gold rays of the sun setting behind the tree-trimmed mountain.
3. Considering that all of the books were ordered 2 months before the course's scheduled starting date.
4. A talented, well-educated spokesperson, who had a reputation of being fair and honest.
5. We were pleased by the enthusiastic response to our course announcement.

Possible answers



1. F—This word group is a dependent clause. By dropping the word *while*, you can make the word group into an independent clause. *Some people carefully consider the attributes of the candidates running for the presidency and often find the candidates lacking.*

Or you can add an independent clause after the dependent clause.

While some people carefully consider the attributes of the candidates running for the presidency and often find the candidates lacking, others vote a straight ticket without considering the candidates individually.

2. F—This word group is a phrase as it lacks a subject, a complete verb, and a sense of completion. A possible revision would be to change the phrase to an independent clause by adding a subject and dropping the word *to*. *I love to view the red and gold rays of the sun setting behind the tree-trimmed mountain.*

Or you could add an independent clause after the introductory phrase.

To view the red and gold rays of the sun setting behind the tree-trimmed mountain, stand over by that grove of trees.

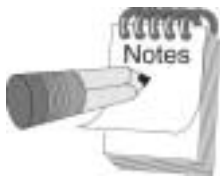
3. F—This word group is a phrase as it lacks a subject, a complete verb, and a sense of completion. By dropping *considering that*, you can make the phrase into an independent clause. *All of the books were ordered two months before the course's scheduled starting date.*

Or you can add an independent clause after the introductory phrase.

Considering that all of the books were ordered two months before the course's scheduled starting date, they should have arrived by now.

4. F—This word group is a phrase as it lacks a subject, a complete verb, and a sense of completion. By adding a subject and a verb, you can make the sentence have a sense of completion. *He is a talented, well-educated spokesperson, who had a reputation of being fair and honest.*

5. C—This word group is an independent clause and is, therefore, correct.



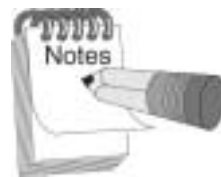
Run-on Sentences

A **run-on sentence** consists of two or more sentences (independent clauses) run together without a period or a semicolon or another terminal mark of punctuation to separate them.

Terminal marks of punctuation—!, ?, ., or ;—may be used to separate two independent clauses.

Here are some examples of run-on sentences:

- ☞ The ship was enormous, its mast was almost 40 feet high.
- ☞ The moon moved in front of the sun the eclipse began.
- ☞ Cara was shy she usually refused all party invitations.
- ☞ Penguins are amusing and interesting birds, their natural habitat is the Antarctic.
- ☞ Reggie is a licensed attorney he has chosen to devote his life to his first love—teaching.
- ☞ We asked Professor Williams to look at the problem he is an expert in the field.



Correcting the Run-On sentence

To correct a run-on sentence, do one of the following:

1. Make the two independent clauses into separate sentences.

☞ The ship was enormous. Its mast was almost 40 feet high.

2. Insert a comma and a coordinating conjunction after the first independent clause (IC). Be sure both word groups are complete sentences before putting a comma before the conjunction.

IC, for IC. IC, but IC.

IC, and IC. IC, or IC.

IC, nor IC. IC, yet IC.

☞ The moon moved in front of the sun, and the eclipse began.

3. Insert a semicolon between the two independent clauses.

☞ Penguins are amusing and interesting birds; their natural habitat is the Antarctic.

4. Change one independent clause to a dependent clause.

☞ Because Cara was shy, she usually refused all party invitations.

5. Insert a semicolon after the first independent clause, a conjunctive adverb between the two independent clauses, and a comma after the conjunctive adverb.

IC; however, IC. IC; thus, IC.

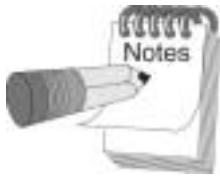
IC; moreover, IC. IC; nevertheless, IC.

IC; therefore, IC. IC; consequently, IC.

☞ Reggie is a licensed attorney; however, he has chosen to devote his life to his first love—teaching.

6. Change one of the two independent clauses to a phrase.

☞ We asked Professor Williams, an expert in the field, to look at the problem.



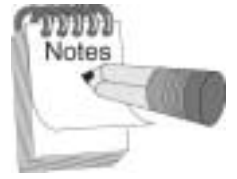
Confidence Check

Circle the letter of the item that contains a run-on sentence.

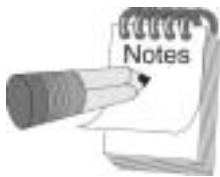


1. a. We enjoyed traveling Route 1 along the Pacific Ocean, the view of the mountains on the east and the water on the west was breathtaking.
b. We enjoyed traveling Route 1 along the Pacific Ocean where the mountains stretched along the east and the water stretched along the west.
c. We enjoyed traveling Route 1 along the Pacific Ocean; the majestic mountains stretched along the east and the water stretched along the west.
2. a. Time is all relative. Places that seem old to Americans often seem new to visitors from Europe.
b. Time is all relative, places that seem old to Americans often seem new to Europeans.
c. Because time is all relative, places that seem old to Americans often seem new to Europeans.
3. a. We were eager to get away from our everyday surroundings; our eyes hungered for new sights.
b. We were eager to get away from our everyday surroundings and see new sights.
c. We were eager to get away from our everyday surroundings we longed to see new sights and meet new people.
4. a. Children can fill your life with joy and frustrations each one is a unique experience.
b. Filling your life with joy and frustrations, each child is a unique experience.
c. Each child is a unique experience, which can add both joy and frustrations to your life.

Answers



1. a—Choice a is a run-on sentence because a comma is not strong enough to separate two independent clauses. Choice b is correct because it is made up of one independent clause (*We enjoyed traveling Route 1 along the Pacific Ocean*) and one dependent clause (*where the mountains stretched along the east and the water stretched along the west*). Choice c is correct because the two independent clauses are separated by a semicolon.
2. b—Choice b is a run-on sentence because a comma is not strong enough to separate two independent clauses. Choice a is correct because the two independent clauses are separated by a period. Choice c is correct because it is made up of one dependent clause (*Because time is all relative*) and one independent clause (*places that seem old to Americans often seem new to Europeans*).
3. c—Choice c is a run-on sentence because there is no punctuation between the two independent clauses (*We were eager to get away from our everyday surroundings and we longed to see new sights and meet new people*). Choice a is correct because the two independent clauses are separated by a semicolon. Choice b is correct because it is one independent clause with a compound verb. The word group after the word *and* is not a complete sentence, so a comma should not precede the *and*.
4. a—Choice a is run-on sentence because there is no punctuation between the two independent clauses (*Children can fill your life with joy and frustrations and each one is a unique experience*). Choice b is correct because the word group is one independent clause (*each child is a unique experience*) preceded by an introductory phrase (*Filling your life with joy and frustrations*). Choice c is correct because the sentence is made up of one independent clause (*Each child is a unique experience*) and one dependent clause (*which can add both joy and frustrations to your life*).



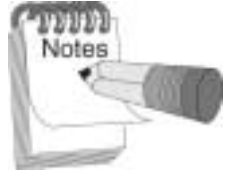
Confidence Check

Decide if each item is a sentence fragment (F), a run-on sentence (R), or a complete sentence as written (C).

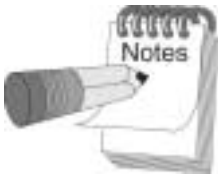


1. When we were young, naive, and full of untempered idealism about people and life.
2. As I raced toward the finish line, I turned to check the runner behind me and saw him pass me.
3. To realize our dreams and fulfill our potential at work and at home.
4. To own your own business, you must be motivated and organized.
5. Money does not guarantee happiness, happiness comes from the heart.
6. Books are our friends; they take us to foreign places, introduce us to interesting people, and provide many hours of fun and relaxation.
7. Having both parents of young children working outside the home presents a daily challenge because the children must be dressed, fed, and transported before the official work day begins.
8. Like many Americans, we own two foreign cars we have had too many problems with American-made cars.
9. The house contained four bedrooms, three bathrooms, a sun room, a library, a formal living room and dining room, and an eat-in kitchen.
10. We purchased a sofa that had a high back and very contemporary lines.

Answers



1. F—This word group is a dependent clause because it begins with the word *When*.
2. C—This word group is made up of one dependent clause (*As I raced toward the finish line*) and one independent clause (*I turned to check the runner behind me and saw him pass me*).
3. F—This word group is a phrase as it contains neither a subject nor a verb.
4. C—This word group is made up of an introductory phrase (*To own your own business*) and an independent clause (*you must be motivated and organized*).
5. R—This word group is made up of two independent clauses (*Money does not guarantee happiness* and *happiness comes from the heart*). A comma is not strong enough between two complete thoughts (independent clauses).
6. C—This word group is made up of two independent clauses (*Books are our friends and they take us to foreign places, introduce us to interesting people, and provide many hours of fun and relaxation*). A semicolon can separate two independent clauses.
7. C—This word group is made up of one independent clause (*Having both parents of young children working outside the home presents a daily challenge*) and two dependent clauses (*because the children must be dressed, fed, and transported* and *before the official work day begins*).
8. R—This word group is a run-on sentence because there is no punctuation separating the two independent clauses (*Like many Americans, we own two foreign cars and we have had too many problems with American-made cars*).
9. C—This word group is one independent clause.
10. C—This word group is one independent clause (*We purchased a sofa*) and one dependent clause (*that had a high back and very contemporary lines*).



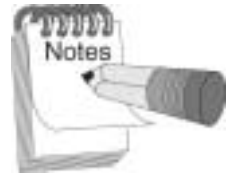
Confidence Check

Some of the following items contain sentence fragments. Edit each fragment by expanding it to a complete sentence or by connecting it to a complete sentence. If the passage contains only complete sentences, write *Correct*.



1. Music videos began to make their appearance in the late 1980s. Some of them concert performances and some technological innovations .
2. Videocassette recorders are sold in a variety of stores. Video specialty shops, supermarkets, hardware stores, and other mass-market outlets.
3. The return on the investment was 20 percent. Which was higher than he expected .
4. He had one purpose in life. Spending money.
5. The flash flood warning that came on the television screen during the Washington-Dallas football game. It caused quite a stir in the f a m i l y .

The Sentence Fragment and the Run-on Sentence



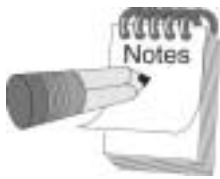
6. The contrast between the two women is great. One of them, Roberta, being arrogant and Patrice being shy.

7. The name of the game is knowing the right people. Because they will help you invest your money in the right bank.

8. Perry can be loudmouthed and overbearing. For example, his remarks that he should be working with “better quality people.”

9. Mike seems to be a good father. For example, he takes his children to ball games or on trips, or just stays around the house teaching his children new games .

10. They moved into a condominium in a quiet neighborhood. All they wanted was a safe, peaceful environment.

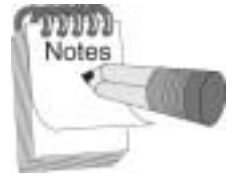


Possible Answers

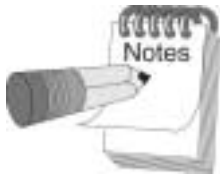
1. The first word group is a complete sentence; the second is a fragment as it has no verb. One way to correct this sentence would be to add verbs and make the word group into two independent clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction. *Music videos began to make their appearance in the late 1980s. Some of them contain concert performances, and some feature technological innovations.*
2. The first word group is a complete sentence; the second is a fragment because it is just a list of nouns. This list could follow a colon at the end of the independent clause. *Videocassette recorders are sold in a variety of stores: video specialty shops, supermarkets, hardware stores, and other mass-market outlets.*
3. The first word group is a complete sentence; the second is a fragment because it is a dependent clause. The error can be corrected by combining the two word groups. *The return on the investment was 20 percent, which was higher than he expected.*
4. The first word group is a complete sentence; the second is a fragment because it is a phrase. The phrase can be added to the independent clause. *He had one purpose in life: spending money.*
5. The first word group is a fragment because it has a main subject but no verb and a dependent clause; the second word group is a complete sentence. The two word groups can be combined as follows: *The flash flood warning that came on the television screen during the Washington-Dallas football game caused quite a stir in the family.*
6. The first word group is a complete sentence; the second is a fragment as it has an incomplete verb. The sentence can be corrected by changing the verbs in the fragment. *The contrast between the two women is great. One of them, Roberta, is arrogant, and Patrice is shy.*
7. The first word group is a complete sentence; the second is a fragment because it is a dependent clause. The error can be corrected by combining the two word groups. *The name of the game is knowing the right people because they will help you invest your money in the right bank.*
8. The first word group is a complete sentence; the second is a fragment because it has a subject but no verb and a dependent clause. The error can be corrected by changing the subject and adding a verb. *Perry can be loudmouthed and overbearing. For example, he remarks that he should be working with "better quality people."*
9. This passage is correct because it has two independent clauses.
10. This passage is correct because it has two independent clauses.

Confidence Check

Some of the following items contain run-on sentences. Correct the run-on sentences by rewriting the passage or by using the appropriate punctuation between complete sentences. If the sentence is correct, write *Correct*.



1. Evidence continues to mount it shows that passive smoke causes diseases.
2. Dr. Ling is the director of the hospital he also maintains a private practice .
3. Keisha is not a nurse, she is a doctor.
4. She is very committed to her work, she rarely leaves work at the scheduled ending time.
5. Stevie Wonder has been a professional entertainer since the age of 12, he was the first black Motown artist to perform overseas .
6. The airline gave a discount on the Atlanta flight, but the number of passengers continued to decline.
7. The mattress caught fire, and the flames spread quickly .



Possible Answers

1. This word group is a run-on sentence because there is no punctuation separating the two independent clauses. One way to correct the error would be to make one of the independent clauses into a phrase. *Evidence continues to mount showing that passive smoke causes diseases.*

Or you could use a semicolon (or a period) to separate the two independent clauses.

Evidence continues to mount; it shows that passive smoke causes diseases.

2. This word group is a run-on sentence because there is no punctuation separating the two independent clauses. You could use a semicolon (or a period) to separate the two independent clauses. *Dr. Ling is the director of the hospital; he also maintains a private practice.*

Or you could make one of the independent clauses into a dependent clause.

Although Dr. Ling is the director of the hospital, he also maintains a private practice.

3. This word group is a run-on sentence because there is no punctuation separating the two independent clauses. You could use a semicolon (or a period) to separate the two independent clauses. *Keisha is not a nurse; she is a doctor.*

4. This word group is a run-on sentence because a comma is not strong enough to separate two independent clauses. You could use a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb to join the two independent clauses. *She is very committed to her work; therefore, she rarely leaves work at the scheduled ending time.*

Or you could change the first independent clause into a dependent clause.

Because she is very committed to her work, she rarely leaves work at the scheduled ending time.

5. This word group is a run-on sentence because a comma is not strong enough to separate two independent clauses. You could make the information in the first independent clause into a modifying phrase. *Stevie Wonder, a professional entertainer since the age of 12, was the first black Motown artist to perform overseas.*

6. This sentence is correct because two independent clauses are joined by a comma and the coordinate conjunction *but*.

7. This sentence is correct because two independent clauses are joined by a comma and the coordinate conjunction *and*.