

**WEEK 02**

**SENTENCES PROBLEMS**

# SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

## 1. What is a sentence fragment?

Sentence fragments are **incomplete sentences** or parts of sentences.

Remember that a complete sentence must contain at least one main or independent clause. In a fragment, something is missing (usually a subject or a verb); therefore, a fragment usually **fails to convey a clear message.**

## 2. How to correct sentence fragments:

**VD: Fragment:** *Because some students have part-time jobs in addition to going to school. This is a subordinate clause (an adverb clause of reason).*

- To correct:                    ***Attach it to an independent clause.***
- Complete Sentence: *Because some students have part-time jobs in addition to going to school, **they have very little free time.***

**VD: Fragment:** *For example, the increase in the cost of renting an apartment. No main verb*

- To correct:                    ***Rewrite the sentence so that it has a subject and a verb.***
- Complete Sentence: *For example, the cost of renting an apartment **has increased.***

**VD: Fragment:** *Having no money and being lonely in the big city.* This is a participial phrase. It has no subject or verb.

- To correct: (a) **Rewrite the phrase to include a subject and a verb.**  
(b) **Attach the phrase to an independent clause.**
- Complete Sentences: (a) **She had no money and was lonely in the big city.**  
(b) *Having no money and being lonely in the big city,* **the woman committed suicide.**

**VD: Fragment:** *Many people who get married before they mature enough.* This is a noun followed by a dependent (adjective) clause.

- To correct: **Rewrite the clause by eliminating the adjective clause aspect.**
- Complete Sentence: *Many people get married before they mature enough.*

## EXERCISE:

Write F: fragment; S: complete sentence

1. Looking at the yellow leaves on the path. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The desire of all mankind to live in peace and freedom, for example. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Second, the fact that men are physically stronger than women. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The best movie that I saw last year. \_\_\_\_\_
5. For example, many students have part-time jobs. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Although people want to believe that all men are created equal. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Finding a suitable marriage partner is a challenging task. \_\_\_\_\_

8. Many of my friends who didn't have the opportunity to go to college. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Working during the morning and attending classes during the afternoon. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Because I don't feel that grades in college have any value. \_\_\_\_\_
11. The nuclear accident that occurred in Russia in 1968, the worst nuclear accident in history. \_\_\_\_\_
12. The first hint of the tragedy came two days after the accident occurred. \_\_\_\_\_
13. I often wonder about the road not taken. \_\_\_\_\_
14. Eyes beaming and tears of joy streaming down her cheeks. \_\_\_\_\_
15. The aroma of home-made bread always makes me think of my dad. \_\_\_\_\_

## RUN-ON SENTENCES AND COMMA SPLICES

### 1. What is a run-on sentence?

- A **run –on sentence** or a **fused sentence** is a sentence in which two or more independent clauses are written one after another without any punctuation.
- Example: *Getting married is easy staying married is a different matter.*

## 2. What is a comma splice?

- A similar error happens when two independent clauses are incorrectly joined by a comma without a coordinating conjunction. This kind of error is also called a **comma splice**.

Example: *San Francisco is a very cosmopolitan city, there are people many cultures and ethnic groups living there.*

- Note: A comma alone cannot join two independent clauses

### 3. How to correct run-on / comma splice sentences:

- a period:

Example: *Getting married is easy. Staying married is a different matter.*

- a semicolon:

Example: *Getting married is easy; staying married is a different matter.*

- a coordinating conjunction:

Example: *Getting married is easy, but staying married is a different matter.*

- a conjunctive adverb, a linking word or phrase such as *therefore, moreover, consequently, as a result, however,.....*

Example: *Getting married is easy; however, staying married is a different matter.*

*Getting married is easy. However, staying married is a different matter.*

- a subordinating conjunction:

Example: *Although getting married is easy, staying married is a different matter.*

## **EXERCISE: Correct the following run-on/ comma splice sentences.**

- A foreign student faces many problems, for example, he has to cope with a new culture.

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- San Francisco is a very cosmopolitan city, there are people of many cultures and ethnic groups living there.

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- Learning a new language is like learning to swim it takes a lot of time.

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- Ask for assistance at the reference desk in the library, there is always a librarian there.

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- Hang-gliding is a dangerous sport you can easily break your leg.

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- You can't come into this room we are having a lesson.
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- I need a hammer, I am going to repair the shed.
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- My husband is very upright if I hazard receiving the bribe and he knows he will blame me.
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- I do not like the registration process, I know that at this point I have no choice but to go through with it.
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- He even quit his summer job this year he did not want to get up early each morning.
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**EXERCISE: Identify: RO: run-on; CS: comma splice, then rewrite the**

**incorrect sentences correctly:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ An encyclopedia is a valuable source of information, it contains summaries of every area of knowledge.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Because of the rapid expansion of human knowledge, it is difficult to keep encyclopedia current.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Almost as soon as an encyclopedia is published, it becomes obsolete.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Home editions encyclopedias are shorter and more concise than library editions, they don't contain as much detailed information.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Articles in encyclopedias are written by experts in each subjects, who are often university professors.

- \_\_\_\_\_ An editor of an encyclopedia doesn't write articles he only collects and edits articles written by other experts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ To find a boob on a certain subject, you should look in the card catalog but to find a magazine article on a subject, you should look in a periodical index.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A periodical index, which is also called a periodical guide, does not contain any articles, it merely gives a list of articles and tell you where to find them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The reference room of the library has several periodical indexes on is the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you can't find any information on a subject, you can always ask a librarian to help you, they are paid to assist students.

# CHOPPY SENTENCES

## 1. What is a choppy sentence?

Choppy sentences are sentences that are too short. They are the result of using too many simple sentences, like those that follow. Although simple sentences are quite effective sometimes, overuse of them is considered poor style in academic writing.

Examples:

- **Choppy**: I sewed a set of buttons onto my coat. The buttons were shiny. The buttons were black. The coat was old. The coat was green.
- > ***Correct***: *I sewed a set of shiny black buttons onto my old green coat.*

- **Choppy**: Martha moved in the desk chair. Her moving was uneasy. The chair was hard. She worked at her assignment. The assignment was for her English class.
- > **Correct**: Martha moved uneasily in the hard desk chair, working at the assignment for her English class.
- > **Correct**: Moving uneasily in the desk chair, Martha worked at her assignment for her English class.
- > **Correct**: Martha moved uneasily in the hard desk chair as she worked at her assignment for her English class.
- > **Correct**: While she worked at the assignment for her English class, Martha moved uneasily in the hard desk chair.

## 2. How to correct choppy sentences:

- Combine two or three simple sentences to make one compound or complex sentence.
- To make one compound or a complex sentence → should be based on whether the ideas in the simple sentences are equal /or whether one sentence is dependent on the other.

1. If the simple sentences are equal, make a compound sentence, using a coordinating conjunction (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) or a conjunctive adverb (*moreover, however, otherwise, therefore, etc.*)
2. If one sentence depends on the other, make a complex sentence, using a subordinating conjunction (*who, which, when, although, because, since, if, etc.*)

**EXERCISE: Improve the following choppy sentences by combining them to make either compound or complex sentences:**

1. Gasoline is becoming expensive. Automobile manufacturers are producing smaller cars. Smaller cars use less gasoline.

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2. The computer has undoubtedly benefited humanity. The computer has also created problems for humanity.

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3. Government and private agencies have spent billions of dollars advertising the dangers of smoking. The number of smokers is still increasing.

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4. Some students go to a vocational school to learn a trade. Some students go to college to get a degree.

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5. There is no time to make a pot roast. There is no time to cook a chicken. There is no time to prepare a stew.

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6. Yesterday I saw a dog. The dog was chasing a cat. The cat was chasing a mouse. The mouse ran into a hole. The hole was very small.

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7. Alfred did not want to spend any more money this month. He decided against going to a restaurant for dinner. He made himself a sandwich instead of going to the restaurant.

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8. We were enjoying the cool evening breeze. We were enjoying listening to the sounds of nature. We lost track of time.

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9. She put out the cat. She locked the doors. Then Hazel fell into bed for a long night's sleep.

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10. A doctor uses a stethoscope. With it he listens to the heart beat. He also listens to the lungs.

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**EXERCISE: Join each of the five groups of sentences below into one sentence, and make a single paragraph consisting of five sentences altogether**

It was raining.

I didn't have a raincoat.

I had to go out.

although

I ran to the nearest bus stop.

I was running across the road.

A large car splashed me from head to foot.

while

I reached my friend's house.

I was wet through

I couldn't change my clothes.

until

Fortunately my friend was able to lend me some dry clothes.

They fitted me very well.

I should catch a cold.

lest

It was time to leave.

My own clothes were dry.

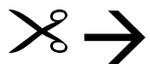
I changed into them.

when

**Exercise: Join the following choppy sentences together into two sentences only.**

**You can add or omit words, and make any other small changes necessary, but you should not alter the sense:**

- Mrs. Black laid the table for breakfast.
- She went into the kitchen.
- She started to fry some eggs.
- The cat tried to jump up on the table.
- The cat slipped.
- It pulled the tablecloth off the table.
- Everything fell on the floor and some cups and plates were broken.



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# STRINGY SENTENCES

## 1. What is a stringy sentence?

- Another type of problem that students sometimes create is the **stringy sentence**.
- This is a sentence with two many clauses usually connected with ***and, but, so,*** and ***because,*** forming one very long sentence. The result is a sentence that seems endless.

## EXAMPLE:

My roommate, Bill, goes to college and from the beginning of this semester until last week, he hadn't studied at all and the reason was because he had no exam during that period. But the day before yesterday, I was astonished because I saw him studying and later on, he had studied all day long and the reason was because he was going to have an exam the next day and he wanted to get a good grade in the exam so he decided to study.

## 2. How to correct stringy sentences:

Example: Many students attend classes all morning and they work all afternoon and then they have to study at night so they are usually exhausted by the weekend.

### 1. Divide:

-> Many students attend classes all morning and they work all afternoon. Then they have to study at night. As a result, they are usually exhausted by the weekend.

### 2. Subordinate:

-> Many students, after they attend classes all morning, also work in the afternoon. Because they also have to study at night, they are usually exhausted by the weekend

### 3. Subordinate and Combine:

-> Many students, who attend classes all morning, work all afternoon and study all night, are exhausted by the weekend.

### 4. Participial Phrases:

-> After attending classes all morning, working all afternoon, and studying all night, many students are exhausted by the weekend.

## **Exercise 7: Improve these stringy sentences. Use any method or combination of methods.**

1. He enrolled in advanced English class, but he found it too difficult, so he dropped it.

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2. The tidal wave ruined the crops, and it destroyed several villages, and it caused many deaths, so it was a real disaster.

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3. The analysts worked many hours on the computer program, but they couldn't find the cause of the problem, so they finally gave up, and they went home.

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4. Junk food is bad for your health, and it also contains no vitamins, and damages your stomach, so people shouldn't eat it.

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5. The lack of rainfall has caused a severe water shortage, so people have to conserve water every day, and they also have to think of new ways to reuse water, but the situation is improving.

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6. Jack wasn't feeling good, but he went to class, for he was worried about the coming exam.

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7. I read the assignment, and then I began making notes on cards, for I want to memorize the main points in the lesson, but the bell rang, and I was not through, and so I had to carry my heavy book home.

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8. An accident occurred at the busy intersection, and several persons were injured, and then the police decided to put up a traffic light.

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9. Gertrude has beautiful red hair, for she brushes it daily, but my hair is stubby and dull-looking, for I often go swimming in the hot sun.

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10. A small child may swallow a dozen aspirins, or he may wander out into the street, for he is not old enough to think for himself, and adults must make decisions for him.

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