

Name _____

Date _____

Correct

Composing Sentences

A common challenge for writers of all ages is being clear and concise. Sentences sometimes have a way of getting out of control. At times, they run on and on and on; other times, they are incomplete and unclear. Your goal as a writer is to compose sentences which express a complete thought and fit in clearly with the rest of the writing. The following guidelines should help.



Write Complete Sentences

Use only complete sentences in your writing. A complete sentence contains a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought. Sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and comma splices are errors which should be avoided. Also, avoid using rambling sentences.

Sentence Fragments 1

A sentence is more than a random collection of words and phrases, just as an airplane is more than a pile of parts and pieces. (Neither will “fly” with parts missing.) A sentence must contain a subject and a predicate (verb), which are arranged with other words to form a complete thought. A sentence that does not express a complete thought is called a **sentence fragment**.

EXAMPLES

Sentence Fragment:

Are slender and furry.

(A subject is missing.)

Complete Sentence:

Otters are slender and furry.

(A subject has been added.)

Sentence Fragment:

The furry otter.

(A verb is missing.)

Complete Sentence:

The furry otter is related to the weasel.

(A verb has been added.)

Sentence fragment: Thinks he's really funny.

(The subject is missing.)

Complete sentence: *My little brother* thinks he's really funny.

(A subject has been added.)

Sentence fragment: Not my definition of funny.

(The subject and verb are missing.)

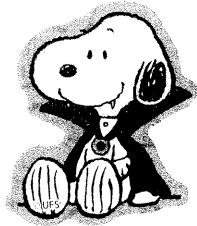
Complete sentence: *But it is* not my definition of funny.

(A subject and a verb have been added.)

Directions

Identify the following groups of words with an *S* for each sentence or an *F* for each fragment. The first one has been done for you.

- F 1. The otter's oily fur, which forms a waterproof coat.
2. River otters, once common in North America, are rarely seen.
3. Are afraid of humans.
4. Chattering noisily, they take turns sliding down snowy or muddy banks and belly flopping into the water.

**Part II FRAGMENTS**

Directions: Revise each item below to make each correct. If it is correct, leave it alone!

1. Because I was too tired.
2. When the music starts to play.
3. After we got home from the trip.
4. As he walked down the street.
5. Although I started as a business major.
6. After we had shopped for three hours.
7. Since I am a full-time student.
8. Even though he swims better than me.
9. Because I did so well on the test.
10. While I am talking on the telephone.

Comma Splices and Run-Ons 1

A **comma splice** occurs when you incorrectly connect two simple sentences with a comma instead of a period, semicolon, or connecting word.

This is what most 7th graders still do! 😞



A **run-on sentence** occurs when you incorrectly join two simple sentences without using any punctuation. (A period, a semicolon, or a comma and a coordinating conjunction are ways of correcting run-ons.) Both comma splices and run-on sentences can be avoided if you carefully review each of your sentences before sharing your writing with your readers.

EXAMPLES

Comma Splice:

Bamboo is a giant form of grass, its shoots are a tasty vegetable.

Run-On:

Bamboo is a giant form of grass its shoots are a tasty vegetable.

Corrected Sentences:

Bamboo is a giant form of grass. Its shoots are a tasty vegetable. Or . . .

Bamboo is a giant form of grass, and its shoots are a tasty vegetable.

Run-on sentence: I thought the ride would never end my eyes were crossed and my fingers were going numb.

(Punctuation needed.)

Corrected: I thought the ride would never end. My eyes were crossed and my fingers were going numb.

(Punctuation has been added.)

Comma splice: I never really enjoyed science, math is my favorite class.

(A comma is used incorrectly to connect or *splice* two sentences.)

Corrected sentences: I never really enjoyed science. Math is my favorite class.

(A period is used in place of the comma.)

Directions

Place a *CS* in front of each comma splice, an *RO* in front of each run-on sentence, and a *C* in front of each correct sentence. Correct each faulty sentence. The first sentence has been done for you.

- CS 1. Bamboo is definitely one of the most interesting plants, ^{and} it is valued for its beauty and usefulness.
- _____ 2. Bamboo may be one of the world's most useful plants.
- _____ 3. Bamboo grows in huge groves it serves as a natural buffer against floods, erosion, and earthquake shocks.
- _____ 4. In addition, bamboo enriches the soil.

**Part II RUN-ONS**

Directions: Revise each item below to make each correct. If it is correct, leave it alone!

1. the books are on the table near the window I don't know where the papers are
2. the cat drank her milk noisily, the dog just gulped down his raw meat
3. she made that dress from a pattern she can't sew a button at all.
5. the table will have to go near the piano we have to rearrange the whole room.
6. he always makes the baseball team this year his bad leg kept him on the bench
7. this was the best movie I have ever seen, I am glad that I saw it
8. she was the best student in her class, naturally she got the highest grade
9. he's going to medical school his lifelong ambition to be a doctor
10. the piano is terribly out of tune and I can't stand to listen to it any longer