

UNIT 8

Avoiding Sentence Fragments and Run-ons

WRITING APPLICATION A: Avoiding Sentence Fragments

A car that sputters, backfires, and jerks as it travels down a road provides an uncomfortable ride for its passengers. Similarly, in writing, sentence fragments cause discomfort to readers as they try to make sense of jerky, incomplete sentences. For a group of words to form a complete sentence, that group must (a) have both a subject and a verb and (b) express a complete thought. Always make sure you use complete sentences in all your writing.

SENTENCE FRAGMENTS Ed said the sound. Was coming from the basement.

COMPLETE SENTENCE Ed said the sound was coming from the basement.

Writing Assignment: On a separate sheet of paper, write about a sound or an odor you once noticed but could not identify immediately. Give details that describe your first reactions to the sound or odor. Examples of odors might include the smells of spring or the baking of bread. Examples of sounds might include the blare of a siren or the song of a bird.

Evaluation Checklist: Reread your first draft. Use these guidelines to help you judge the content and organization of your writing.

- ___ Each of my sentences has a subject and a verb.
- ___ Each of my sentences expresses a complete thought.
- ___ My writing follows a logical order.

Revising, Proofreading, and Writing the Final Version: Revise your draft based on your evaluation. Change any fragments into complete sentences. Then proofread your revised draft. Write your draft in final form.

WRITING APPLICATION B: Stopping Run-on Sentences

Writing run-on sentences is like forcing someone to eat a whole pie at one time. Your reader is given more information than he or she can digest because your sentences lack punctuation. As you write, correct run-on sentences by punctuating them in one of four ways: (a) Add a period between sentences. (b) Add a semicolon between sentences. (c) Add a comma and a conjunction between two sentences. (d) Make one part of a sentence dependent on the other, and add a comma.

RUN-ON SENTENCE Wayne likes to waterski, I like to garden.

COMPLETE SENTENCES

1. Wayne likes to waterski. I like to garden.
2. Wayne likes to waterski; I like to garden.
3. Wayne likes to waterski, and I like to garden.
4. While Wayne likes to waterski, I like to garden.

Writing Assignment: On a separate sheet of paper, compare your favorite summer activities with a friend's or a relative's activities. Use complete sentences in your writing.

Evaluation Checklist: Reread your first draft. Use these guidelines to help you judge the content and organization of your writing.

- ___ Each of my sentences is complete and correctly punctuated.
- ___ My writing follows a logical order.
- ___ Each of my paragraphs includes a topic sentence and supporting sentences.

Revising, Proofreading, and Writing the Final Version: Revise your draft based on your evaluation. Change any fragments and run-on sentences in your writing to complete sentences. Then proofread your revised draft carefully. Write your draft in final form.

WRITING APPLICATION C: Using Adverbs as Transitional Words

Dancing well is a little like writing paragraphs that flow smoothly. In dancing, partners glide from one dance step into another to make their dancing look graceful. In writing, good writers use transitional words between sentences to help paragraphs flow smoothly. Adverbs such as *then* and *therefore* are examples of transitional words. Note that a period or semicolon rather than a comma should always be used before these words.

INCORRECT Lucy asked students to volunteer, *then* she began to call names from her list, *therefore* she was able to get a group together within minutes.

CORRECT Lucy asked students to volunteer. *Then* she began to call names from her list. *Therefore* she was able to get a group together within minutes.

Writing Assignment: On a separate sheet of paper, write about the steps you once took to solve a problem. Use the words *then* and *therefore* at least once in your writing.

Evaluation Checklist: Reread your first draft. Use these guidelines to help you judge the content and organization of your writing.

- ___ I have used adverbs such as *then* and *therefore* to begin some of my sentences.
- ___ I have correctly punctuated my sentences.
- ___ My writing follows a logical order.
- ___ Each of my paragraphs includes a topic sentence and supporting sentences.

Revising, Proofreading, and Writing the Final Version: Revise your draft based on your evaluation. Then proofread your revised draft. Write your draft in final form.