

DIRECTIONS: Read the instructions at the beginning of each of the sections below on common sentence errors, then complete the practice exercises which follow.

PART A Sentence Fragments:

A simple sentence contains a *subject* and a *predicate*. The subject is the thing the sentence is about, while the predicate tells what is said about the subject. So in the sentence *The mechanic fixed the squeaky brakes* the subject is *The mechanic*, while the predicate is *fixed the squeaky brakes*. Predicates always contain a verb, in this case the verb *fixed*. A *sentence fragment* pretends to be a complete sentence, and is punctuated like a complete sentence, but is missing either the subject, or the predicate. So in the sentence fragment *Went in to town* there isn't any subject. This sentence fragment can be fixed by adding a subject like **Bob** *went in to town*. In the sentence fragment *Sarah singing out loud* the subject is present, but the predicate doesn't contain a verb. This sentence fragment can be fixed by adding a verb. *Sarah is singing out loud*.

For each of the sentence fragments which follow, determine what is missing, the subject or the verb. Write S for subject or V for verb in the space at the beginning of each sentence, and correct the sentence in the space provided.

_____ 1. In the morning I.

_____ 2. Listen to music.

_____ 3. At the skateboard park they.

_____ 4. Bob shopping for a new car.

_____ 5. Wishes to go to Paris so badly.

_____ 6. Annoys me to no end.

PART B Run-on Sentences:

A *run-on sentence* is a sentence which has too many complete thoughts joined together and punctuated as a single sentence. *I went to the mall after school I saw Yoshiko and Terry we went for fries and Cokes at the food court* is a run on sentence because it contains three complete thoughts or sentences. The first is *I went to the mall after school*, the second is *I saw Yoshiko and Terry*, while the third is *We went for fries and Cokes at the food court*. Run on sentences are fixed by breaking them into shorter sentences, each containing a complete thought.

Correct each of the run-on sentences below by breaking each into two or more complete sentences.

1. Janice wanted me to call her she hoped to go to the beach once I got home.

2. After school I have dancing lessons I really enjoy them.

3. My cousin moved far away I miss her very much.

4. I hate the rain I'm a sunshine-loving summer person I like suntanning.

5. I drove to Vancouver for the weekend it was really exciting to visit I'd love to go again.

6. My dog is a German Shepherd he is registered.

7. Lisa and Dara are going to perform in the school play they are good at acting.

8. How many of you like ice cream it is my favourite dessert.

9. The Terry Fox run is a great success this year my whole class participated.

PART C Comma Splice Errors:

A *comma splice error* occurs when two complete thoughts are separated by a comma without also using a connecting word. So in the sentence *The baby cried, my Grandma rocked her gently* two complete thoughts, *The baby cried* and *My Grandma rocked her gently* are joined only with a comma, which is an error. The problem can be fixed in three ways. The first is to break the offending sentence into two shorter, complete sentences. *The baby cried. My Grandma rocked her gently.* Although this works fine, it can tend to make your writing choppy. The second method, used when the two clauses are of equal importance, is to follow the comma with a co-ordinating conjunction. The seven coordinating conjunctions are *and, but, or, nor, for, so, and yet.* *The baby cried, **but** my Grandma rocked her gently.* You can also use a semicolon in the place of the comma and co-ordinating conjunction. *The baby cried; my Grandma rocked her gently.* The third method, used when one clause is less important than the other, is to follow the comma with a subordinating conjunction. Subordinating conjunctions are words like *after, although, as, if, before, because, since, where, that, unless, until, whether, whose, who, whom, which, when, and while.* You have to determine which clause in the sentence is the more important one and which is the less important one, depending on what you are trying to emphasize. ***Although*** *the baby cried, my Grandma rocked her gently* increases the emphasis on Grandma and her reaction and lessens the emphasis on the baby crying. Notice how the subordinating conjunction can be moved to the beginning of the sentence for variety. *The baby cried, **so** my Grandma rocked her gently* emphasizes the baby's cries.

For each of the comma splice errors which follow, correct it by using each of the three methods.

1. Jane was late, Ralph was fuming.

2. My pager beeped, someone was trying to reach me.

3. I like my cousin a lot, I never get to see him enough.

4. My sister borrows my jacket without asking, she really drives me crazy.

5. The students vary in height, the shortest is five foot one and the tallest is six foot two.

6. Last week I was sick, my Mom looked after me.

7. Paul didn't hear the bell, he was laughing too loudly.

8. Flying is one of my favourite things to do, I fly as often as I can.

9. I can't go downtown, you go with me.

10. I don't feel great, I have to go to work anyway.

11. Brandon wrote his Math test, he studied hard for it.

12. Dani works well with Amanda, they are the best of friends.

PART D Combining Sentences – Simple Sentences:

A *simple sentence* has a subject and predicate contained in a single main clause like in *My dog loves to chase the ball*. To avoid choppy writing, related simple sentences can be combined into a longer, simple sentence. So *My aunt arrived for a visit* and *My cousins arrived for a visit* can be combined into *My aunt and cousins arrived for a visit*.

Combine each of the following groups of simple sentences into one longer simple sentence.

1. Jim cut the grass. Jim weeded the garden. Jim watered the plants.

2. July is hot. July is sunny.

3. The top prize in the lottery recently was \$30 million. The lottery is the Super 7 lottery.

4. The Porsche Boxster is my favourite car. It is fast and expensive.

5. My brother drives a pickup truck. It is red and a four wheel drive.

6. I failed my driver's test. I ran a stop sign.

7. Nancy loves skiing. She goes every weekend.

8. Aly went on a trip to Mexico. She got a tan.

9. Making pizza is fun. Eating pizza is fun.

PART E Combining Sentences – Compound Sentences:

A *compound sentence* is one in which two or more principal clauses are joined with a comma, followed by a coordinating conjunction. Remember from Part C that coordinating conjunctions are words such as *and, but, or, nor, for, so, and yet*. So the sentence *My best friend loves shopping, yet she always spends her money wisely* uses the coordinating conjunction, *yet*, to join two equal clauses, each of which could stand on its own as a simple sentence.

For each of the groups of simple sentences below, join them into a compound sentence using a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

1. Traffic is dangerous. Look both ways before crossing the street.

2. Accidents can happen at any time. Don't let that stop you from driving.

3. My best friend is Alicia. We always have fun together.

4. The bus is not the only way to get there. There are many other ways, too.

5. I never seem to give her enough notice. My mom drives me anyway.

6. Bungee jumping is scary. It is also really exhilarating.

7. I won an award at school. The best pen and ink drawing in grade 9.

8. I could go to school sick. I could stay at home in bed.

9. I don't smoke. Unfortunately, some of my friends do.

PART F Combining Sentences – Complex Sentences:

A *complex sentence* is one in which a principal clause is joined with one or more subordinate clauses. A *subordinate clause* is less important than a principal clause, and cannot stand on its own as a complete sentence. It starts with a subordinating conjunction. Remember from Part C that a subordinating conjunctions are words like *after, although, as, if, before, because, since, where, that, unless, until, whether, whose, who, whom, which, when, and while*. To combine the two simple sentences *Jason always looks tanned* and *He spends a lot of time at the beach* into a complex sentence, one of the clauses must be emphasized less than the other or made to depend on the principal clause for its meaning. *Jason always looks tanned **because** he spends a lot of time at the beach* is a properly constructed complex sentence with a subordinating conjunction. This sentence, like any other, can also be written in inverted order. Inverted order places the predicate before the subject (*Because he spends a lot of time at the beach, Jason always looks tanned.*) which adds variety to your writing.

Combine each of the following simple sentences into a longer, properly constructed complex sentence, using a subordinating conjunction.

1. My dog barked. Someone was ringing the door bell.

2. Grandpa lost his sight. His sense of humour remained sharp.

3. It rained. The picnic was ruined.

4. The band played. The Titanic sank.

5. Do you want to ride with me? I have to go down town anyway.

6. We were sleeping soundly. Suddenly, the phone rang.

7. You will never get there on time. Leave now.

8. I want to live in the country. The crime rate is lower.

9. I didn't answer the phone. I could have.

10. I am going to the Armstrong Fair. It is raining or sunny.
