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**DOWNLOADABLE HANDOUT
TOPIC: ERRORS IN SENTENCE STRUCTURE**

Errors in Sentence Structure

The following two most common errors may occur in sentence structure:

- Sentence Fragments
- Run-on Sentences

1. Sentence Fragments:

A sentence fragment is a group of words that is not grammatically complete and does not express a complete thought or idea. It is missing a subject, verb, or both.

Sentence fragments can be caused by various factors, such as starting a sentence with a preposition or a dependent clause or using an incomplete thought as a sentence.

Examples:

Playing in the park on a sunny day.

When life tests you with troubles.

Note:

The first example is a sentence fragment because it is missing a subject and verb. It is not a complete sentence because it does not express a complete thought or idea. It could be made into a complete sentence by adding a subject and verb, such as "We enjoyed playing in the park on a sunny day."

The sentence "When life tests you with troubles" is a sentence fragment because it is a dependent clause that cannot stand alone as a sentence. It could be part of a longer sentence, but on its own, it does not express a complete thought. To make it a complete sentence, it could be revised to something like "When life tests you with troubles, you must stay strong."

Types of Sentence Fragments:

There are several types of sentence fragments:

1. **Dependent Clause Fragments:** These fragments are dependent clauses that are used as standalone sentences. They are missing an independent clause that would make them complete sentences.

Example: Erroneous: Because I like pizza.

Correct: I order pizza every day because I like it.

2. **Phrase Fragments:** These fragments are phrases that are used as standalone sentences. They are missing a subject, verb, or both.

Example: Erroneous: On a sunny day in May.

Correct: We will surely picnic on a sunny day in May.

3. **Appositive Fragments:** These fragments are appositives that are used as standalone sentences. They are missing a verb or verb phrase that would make them a complete sentence.

Example: Erroneous: My best friend, an excellent cook.

Correct: My best friend is an excellent cook.

4. **Infinitive Phrase Fragments:** Infinitive phrases consist of infinitive verbs (to + verb) and any related objects or modifiers, but they cannot stand alone as a sentence. The fragments must be combined with an independent clause to complete sentences. If an infinitive phrase is used as a sentence on its own, it is considered a sentence fragment and is grammatically incorrect.

Example: Erroneous: To go to the store and buy some milk.

Correct: Mother has asked Harris to go to the store and buy some milk.

5. **Intentional Fragments:** These fragments are used for stylistic purposes to create emphasis or to convey a particular tone. They are not considered errors in informal writing, but should be used sparingly in formal writing.

Example: Never again. The pain, the heartache. All of it gone now.

In this example, the writer uses the intentional fragment "Never again" to create a sense of finality and emphasize the importance of the statement. The sentence fragment helps to convey a strong emotion and makes the writing more impactful.

Note:

It is important to note that sentence fragments are considered grammatical errors in formal writing because they do not convey a complete thought and can cause confusion for the reader.

2. Run-on Sentences:

A run-on sentence is a type of sentence error in which two or more independent clauses are joined together without proper punctuation or coordinating conjunctions.

In other words, a run-on sentence occurs when two or more complete thoughts are written together as one sentence without the appropriate separation or linking words.

Types of Run-on Sentences:

There are two main types of run-on sentences:

1. **Fused Sentence:** A fused sentence occurs when two independent clauses are joined together without any punctuation or conjunctions.

Example: I woke up late I missed my bus.

The workshop builds communal ethics people learn different skills to earn a livelihood.

2. **Comma Splice:** A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses are joined together by a comma without a coordinating conjunction.

Example: I love ice cream, I eat it every day.

The chef is an expert in continental cuisine, she has won many hearts with her cooking skills.

Both types of run-on sentences can be confusing and difficult to read and can lead to a lack of clarity and coherence in writing. It is important to correct run-on sentences to improve the overall quality and effectiveness of writing. This can be done by using appropriate punctuation, conjunctions or separating the independent clauses into separate sentences.

Exercise:

Identify the type of errors in the following sentence fragments and run-on sentences:

1. Because I was tired and hungry.

- a. **Dependent Clause Fragment**
- b. Appositive Fragment
- c. Phrase Fragment

2. My favourite singer, with an amazing voice and a great stage presence.

- a. Phrase Fragment
- b. Infinitive Phrase Fragment
- c. **Appositive Fragment**

3. On a beautiful day in May, with the sun shining and birds singing.

- a. Infinitive Phrase Fragment
- b. **Phrase Fragment**
- c. Fused Sentence

4. I woke up early I went for a run.

- a. Phrase Fragment
- b. **Fused Sentence**
- c. Appositive Fragment

5. I love to travel, I have been to many different countries.

- a. **Comma Splice**
- b. Infinitive Phrase fragment

- c. Run-on Sentence
6. To finish my work on time, with no distractions.
- a. Infinitive Phrase Fragment
 - b. Dependent Clause Fragment
 - c. Appositive Fragment
7. She loves to read books she spends most of her free time doing that.
- a. Comma Splice
 - b. Phrase Fragment
 - c. Fused Sentence
8. The weather is nice today, we should go for a hike.
- a. Comma Splice
 - b. Appositive Fragment
 - c. Infinitive Phrase Fragment
9. Although I was feeling under the weather.
- a. Fused Sentence
 - b. Dependent Clause Fragment
 - c. Comma Splice
10. They decided to go to the beach they packed their bags and headed out.
- a. Comma Splice
 - b. Dependent Clause Fragment
 - c. Fused Sentence
11. To travel to many different countries.
- a. Infinitive Phrase Fragment
 - b. Appositive Fragment
 - c. Dependent Clause Fragment
12. Because I was running late for the meeting which was already delayed.
- a. Phrase Fragment
 - b. Run-on Sentence
 - c. Dependent Clause Fragment
13. In the heart of the ocean where the researchers seldom dive.
- a. Infinitive Phrase Fragment
 - b. Phrase Fragment
 - c. Comma Splice
14. While Shan was waiting for the cab ride to arrive on time.
- a. Run-on Sentence
 - b. Phrase Fragment
 - c. Dependent Clause Fragment

15. The weather is nice today, we should go for a hike.

- a. Comma Splice
- b. Fused Sentence
- c. Dependent Clause Fragment