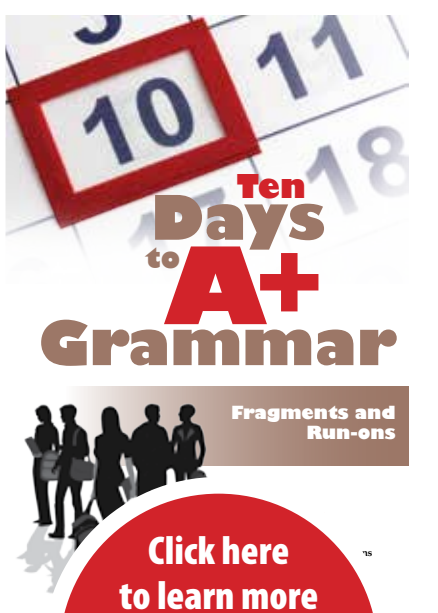




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Ten Days to A+ Grammar

Fragments and Run-ons



by Cheryl Miller Thurston



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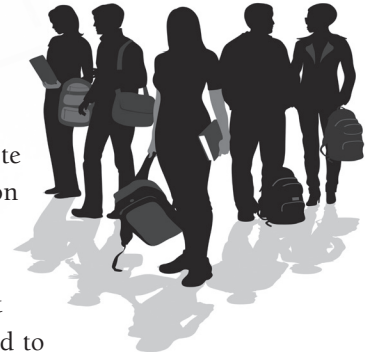
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Introduction



TEN DAYS TO A+ GRAMMAR: FRAGMENTS AND RUN-ONS is designed to help students differentiate between run-on sentences and fragments. These two errors are among the most common problems in writing, and they are found in writers of all ages.

The daily lessons and exercises in *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Fragments and Run-ons* are carefully designed to build upon each other. Rather than overwhelming students with a list of rules, the lessons introduce rules and concepts a few at a time, and in an order designed to build understanding. Individual and group activities help reinforce the concepts.

Many students are often baffled and turned off when lessons begin with a great deal of grammatical terminology. Therefore, terminology is used sparingly and woven in over the course of the lessons. Some familiarity with subjects, predicates, punctuation, parts of speech, etc., is assumed. The purpose of the packet is to help students write complete, correctly punctuated sentences—not to memorize terms.

Many students don't really see the difference between a fragment, a sentence, and a run-on. *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Fragments and Run-ons* covers the most-common errors that students will make, and it introduces some of the more uncommon ones. It does not, however, try to cover every obscure possibility that might come up in writing. Supplying rules for every eventuality is likely to only confuse students and is beyond the scope of this ten-day Unit.

The quizzes are designed to be used within each lesson, but can easily be converted into homework assignments if time proves too short to include it in the day's work. In addition, some daily units include more exercises that most classes will be able to cover. The exercises can, therefore, be assigned as homework, extra credit, assignments for specific students who need extra help, etc.

Quizzes, reviews, exercises, and answer keys are all on separate pages, which allows you to copy and distribute the work. If you find yourself with some time remaining at the end of either portion of the guide, use one of the extra tests we have supplied.

Finally, *Ten Days to A+ Grammar: Fragments and Run-ons* keeps writing in mind. The exercises involve students in writing and manipulating sentences, helping them to build their skills, confidently recognize and correct fragments and run-ons, and write complete, correctly punctuated sentences of their own. The varied exercises help students see the power and flexibility of the English language.

The packet contents, at a glance:

1. Pretest and “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?”
2. Helping students hear the difference between a fragment and a sentence
3. Helping students recognize three common kinds of fragments and understand how to fix them
4. Helping students understand that dependent clauses are fragments if not accompanied by an independent clause
5. Helping students understand how “ing” words often play a role in sentence fragments
6. Review game
7. Introducing myths about run-on sentences and helping students learn that a comma alone cannot separate two independent clauses
8. Helping students understand how to use a semicolon to correct a run-on and helping them understand when very long sentences are not run-ons
9. Reviewing fragments and run-ons
10. Final Test

DAY #1: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To assess student ability to recognize complete sentences, fragments, and run-ons.
- To give students a quick overview of what they will be studying for the next ten days.
- To help students understand the importance of writing well.

Activities:

1. **Pretest.** Give the pretest: “Fragments, Sentences, and Run-ons.”
2. **Overview.** After students finish the pretest, explain that even fairly experienced writers sometimes accidentally write fragments or run-ons—two of the most common problems in writing.

Give a brief overview of what will happen over the next ten days. Students will be learning how to recognize and correct sentence fragments and run-on sentences. In the process, they will be polishing their ability to write complete sentences. On the tenth day, they will take a follow-up test to see how much they have improved.

3. **Lesson.** Present “Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?” You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.
4. **Test review.** If time allows, you may want to quickly go over the correct answers to the pretest, projecting the test for all to see. The test should take approximately 25 minutes, allowing you time to go over it by having student score another student’s test. Remind classes that they will want to keep these tests to see their improvement in two weeks on the post-test.
5. **Assessment.** Grade the pretests. Did students score higher than you thought they would? If so, you might want to complete this unit in fewer than ten days. Did they do poorly on the test, as a group? If so, you will likely want to complete all ten days of lessons. One of the benefits of Fragments and Run-ons is that students aren’t just learning about fragments and run-ons. They are improving their ability to write varied, complete sentences in many patterns. By encouraging creativity and a bit of fun with some of the sentence-writing activities, more advanced students can stretch themselves while slower students get the practice they need.

DAY # 1: Pretest

Fragments, Sentences, and Run-ons

Directions: The items below include complete sentences, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences. If any part of an item is a sentence fragment, it is incorrect. Place an “F” beside it. If an item includes a run-on sentence, it is also incorrect. Place an “R” beside it. If an item contains only complete sentences (no fragments or run-ons), it is correct. Place an “S” beside it.

1. ____ Damion really thought his father was going to buy him a Lexus for graduation, his father was thinking more along the lines of a new suitcase.
2. ____ The next time Isabel babysits for the people in the next apartment.
3. ____ Unfortunately, Mr. Geppinger didn't listen to advice not to feed the bears in Yellowstone National Park.
4. ____ Although Nadia knew it was a good idea to be polite whenever her grandmother came to visit.
5. ____ Dion was not exactly looking forward to the weekend. Because he knew it was going to involve cleaning the garage.
6. ____ Do bee stings hurt?
7. ____ After Olivia heard the strange noise in the middle of the night, she looked out the window and saw something large and hairy lumbering toward the back door. It did not look friendly.
8. ____ When Ayana decided to make homemade sausage and mushroom pizza and serve it to the friends she had invited over on Friday night.
9. ____ Kimani really loves to read. Which is why she has checked out 23 books.
10. ____ Sherilyn and her sister both entered the bike race; they both hoped to win.
11. ____ Sophia refused to go barefoot in the house the carpet was absolutely filthy.
12. ____ Roofs blown off houses, cars lifted up and tossed miles away, total destruction of the town.
13. ____ By studying the other actors in the play carefully to see how they managed to learn so much dialogue in such a short time.
14. ____ Faisal went to the concert alone, his girlfriend was grounded.
15. ____ The temperature in the city remained at well over 100 degrees for five days, and some people without air-conditioning coped by placing blocks of ice in front of portable fans.
16. ____ The dog wearing the cute little pink booties.

17. ____ Some people love chocolate. Some people don't.
18. ____ The woman standing on the bed of the flatbed truck in the middle of the parade.
19. ____ The man yawning and sighing repeatedly during the speech by the candidate for mayor, who was clearly becoming annoyed.
20. ____ Butch chose "C" for all of the items on the multiple-choice test. Hoping that some of the items would be correct.

Directions: Correct the following sentences and run-ons in the space provided, adding your own words as necessary, or removing words. If you can fix an item by crossing something out or simply adding a punctuation mark, you do not need to write the sentence over.

21. When Jeremy saw what was behind the door.

22. The kids were noisy, the parents were exhausted.

23. Amanda was really sick of reading books about vampires she wondered why all her friends still seemed to love them.

24. A number of ten-dollar bills wrapped in an old plaid handkerchief and stuffed into a crack in the wall of the attic bedroom.

25. Slipping away from the parade because he just didn't like marching bands and floats.

DAY # 1: Lesson

“Why Do We Have to Learn This Stuff?”

There are many, many answers to the question, “How come we have to learn this stuff?” Here’s just one answer, for today: It will help you become a competent writer.

Why do you need to become a competent writer? There is a great likelihood that writing well is a skill you will need as an adult.

Many of you may be thinking to yourself, “But I know I’m not going to need to write well, not with what I want to do.”

How do you know? Do you know everything about your future? When you were younger, did you know how you would be right now? Have you known everything about your future up to this time? The truth is that a huge number of the jobs available today involve writing. In fact, one study reported that two-thirds of salaried workers in large U.S. companies have jobs that require writing.* Two-thirds!

According to the same study, U.S. employers complain that a third of workers don’t meet the writing requirements needed for their positions. If you are not competent as a writer, that lack of ability can definitely hold you back.

Yes, it is true that many people do just fine in life without being able to write well. Many more, however, find themselves handicapped. You can’t foresee the future. The more skills you have under your belt, the brighter your future is likely to be. Being able to write clearly and accurately is a fundamental tool that will give you more choices in life and might also earn you more money, no matter what job you have.

* the College Board’s National Commission on Writing

DAY #2: Teacher Instructions

Objectives:

- To introduce students to the idea that they can probably learn to recognize sentence fragments by hearing them.
- To help students see that they likely know a lot already about how to correct sentence fragments, even if they don't understand the process in grammatical terms.

Activities:

1. **Lesson.** Present the lesson: “The Truth About Sentence Fragments.” You might present the material in the lesson in your own words, project the page for the class to see (overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, etc.), or photocopy the material and have students read along as you go over it.
2. **Practice.** Work with the class as a whole to correct the three sentence fragments in “Exercise A” orally. Call on various students, and encourage the class to think creatively to come up with different ways to correct the fragments. They should correct each fragment in at least three different ways.

Have students complete “Exercise B” individually. Collect their work, and then have students share possible answers.

DAY #2: Lesson

The Truth About Sentence Fragments

If you are like most students, you have probably heard English teachers complaining about sentence fragments. Teachers hate sentence fragments, at least when they show up on papers.

It's not because sentence fragments are always wrong. The truth is that sentence fragments appear in some of the greatest novels ever written. Sometimes, in fact, a sentence fragment can actually be very effective.

The trick is in knowing what you're doing. You can be sure that great writers know the difference between a sentence fragment and a complete sentence. They are choosing to use a fragment for effect. That's a lot different than using a sentence fragment because you don't recognize one when you see one. It's different from using one because you don't have control over your own writing. Many students have a hard time recognizing sentence fragments and, therefore, they use them accidentally.

So what is a sentence fragment? You probably know that a sentence fragment is a piece of a sentence, an incomplete sentence. But that doesn't mean it's necessarily short. In fact, a sentence fragment can actually be quite long.

Examples:

After the mathematician posted a difficult logic puzzle on his blog and challenged readers all over the world to try to solve it within thirty days.

Many times during the night, throughout the next day, and lasting until supper.

When you get over being angry at the grade you received in the math quiz because you didn't have enough time to study when you got out of the hospital.

You probably know that a sentence fragment is missing something important—a subject or a verb. But that doesn't mean everything with a subject and a verb is a sentence. You may see both in a dependent clause, for example, but a dependent clause is not a sentence.

Examples:

Because she actually bought the Bike herself.

When Dallas saw what had happened to his motorcycle.

You have probably heard that a sentence fragment doesn't express a complete thought. While that is true in one sense, "complete" is pretty hard to define. Many perfectly good sentences express a thought that most of us would not regard as complete at all.

Example:

The face outside the dark window suddenly grew closer, and then we heard a terrible scream.

What happened next? Whose face was it? Who screamed? The example is a complete sentence, even though it is not complete in every sense of the word. "Complete" doesn't mean that the sentence tells you everything there is to know.

Knowing and understanding terms like subjects, verbs, and dependent clauses is helpful. However, you can probably hear the difference between a sentence and a fragment. Listen while students or your teacher reads aloud the following fragments. Then listen to the sentences that relate to each fragment. *NOTE: The following set of examples work best if completed sentences are read after the fragments in order to show the contrast.*

Sentence Fragments

1. Breaking glass.
2. Never seen a vampire.
3. Cats—the most wonderful animals on earth.
4. Although football is your favorite sport.
5. Your friend Google.
6. After my sister got her drivers' license on Monday, backed into the neighbor's trashcans on Tuesday, and drove into the back of the garage on Wednesday, wrecking my dad's tool bench.
7. A many-splendored thing.
8. Our neighbors driving us crazy?
9. The square root of 64.
10. When the big hand is on the 10.
11. Because DelRoy found it very difficult to believe that Ms. Kroonenberg had a heart.
12. Knowing that she was destined to become famous and someday discover a new planet or solar system.

Completed Sentences

1. Glass breaks.
2. I have never seen a vampire.
3. Cats are the most wonderful animals on earth, and everyone should have one.
4. Why is football your favorite sport?
5. Google is your friend.
6. My sister got her drivers' license on Monday, backed into the neighbor's trashcans on Tuesday, and drove into the back of the garage on Wednesday, wrecking my dad's tool bench.
7. Love is a many-splendored thing.
8. Why are our neighbors driving us crazy?
9. Do you know if the square root of 64 is 8?
10. When the big hand is on the 10, Bobbie, you can have your cookie.
11. DelRoy found it very difficult to believe that Ms. Kroonenberg had a heart.
12. Kameko knew that she was destined to become famous, and she was pretty sure it would be for discovering a new planet or solar system some day.

Sentence Fragments and Completed Sentences Questions

1. Compare each item from the fragment column with the item in the sentence column. What changed?

2. In some cases, the subject was left out. Find three examples.

- ---

- ---

- ---

3. In some cases, the verb (predicate) was left out. Find three examples.

- ---

- ---

- ---

4. In some cases, a word was added, turning the sentence into a “dependent clause.” A dependent clause has a subject and a verb, but because of that extra word, more is needed to finish the clause and make it a complete sentence. Joe hiccupped is a sentence. When Joe hiccupped is not. It is dependent on something else to finish it. For example, it could be completed like this: When Joe hiccupped, he woke up his father. Find three sentences that are fragments because of an added word.

- ---

- ---

- ---

Sentence Fragments and Completed Sentences Questions • Answer Key

1. Answers may vary.
2. #2, #7, #12
3. #3, #5, #9
4. #4, #6, #11

DAY #2: Exercise A

Directions: Read these three sentence fragments aloud. They sound unfinished. Think of several ways to turn each into a complete sentence.

1. The singer with the tattoo on his right elbow.

2. Sipping some lemonade.

3. After the house burned down.

DAY #2: Exercise A • Answer Key

1. The singer with the tattoo on his right elbow asked for another on his left elbow.
The singer with the tattoo on his right elbow was astoundingly handsome.
The singer with the tattoo on his right elbow was calmly sipping some lemonade after the house burned down.
2. Sipping some lemonade, Sophia finally started to cool off.
While sipping some lemonade on the front porch, Sophia watched her children play.
3. After the house burned down, the family lost everything.
The fire department checked for arson because they suspected something when the house burned down.

DAY #2: Exercise B

Directions: Correct each sentence fragment below in two different ways.

1. While Rosario pouted.

2. Clapping her hands and screaming with joy.

3. The fluffy white kitten sitting on Anna's doorstep.

4. When they heard the sound of screeching tires.

5. The food in the container at the back of the refrigerator.
