

Sentence Competency Packet



NORTH SHORE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Knowledge of English sentence structure in the written form will enhance your ability to write compositions, essays, and research papers. This Sentence Competency Packet is designed to provide you with opportunities to refresh your memory on sentence structure. The packet includes explanations, instructions, and exercises for skill practice. The answer keys are at the end of the booklet, so you can check your work.

After reading, practicing, and doing the activities in Lesson I: Sentences and Fragments, you will be able to:

- ❖ Distinguish between sentences and fragments.
- ❖ Change fragments to sentences.
- ❖ Write correct sentences.

Reading, practicing, and doing the activities in Lesson II: Compound and Run-On Sentences, will enable you to:

- ❖ Identify and correct Run-on sentences.
- ❖ Join two simple sentences into a compound sentence using a coordinate junction with a comma before the conjunction.
- ❖ Use a semi-colon between the two sentences.
- ❖ Write compound sentences correctly.

Finally, also included in this packet is the Appendix: Common Errors in Grammar. This section reviews some errors frequently made in writing. It is by no means comprehensive. Native English language speakers, as well as multilingual students who speak English as a second language, will benefit by reviewing these sections. Remember, you can ask a Writing Tutor for additional help.

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LESSON I

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SENTENCES AND FRAGMENTS

A sentence must have a subject and a verb.

A sentence must have an action (verb) and a person, place or thing (subject) performing that action. For example, in the following sentence:

Unemployment is rising.

Subject: Unemployment

Verb: is rising

A sentence must also make sense on its own.

Any group of words that does not make sense on its own is called a fragment. Here are two examples of fragments:

As people ask (What happens when people ask?)
If it's sunny (What happens if it's sunny?)

A fragment is an incomplete sentence.

Fragments are often used in speaking. "Coming?" you say. "Not yet," your friend replies. "Why not?" you ask. "Because I have to finish my assignment first," your friend answers. Each of the word groups you and your friend say in this example is a fragment. These word groups make sense in conversation. You and your friend know what you are talking about. You can raise your eyebrows, sound surprised, or use any of the many other ways we all have of making our meaning clear with gestures or tone of voice.

But in writing, fragments do not make sense on their own. A reader cannot see gestures or hear your tone of voice. Each group of words you write must be a sentence so that you can be understood. You need to check what you write to be sure that you have written sentences, not fragments.

HOW TO IDENTIFY FRAGMENTS

A sentence has at least one subject/verb set.

Study the following example:

All students need to complete this module.

There is a subject “students” and a verb “need” with some other words that together make sense and convey a complete thought.

When the subject or the verb or both are missing, it is easier to identify a fragment.

Look at these examples of fragments:

1. Stopped to let off passengers.
2. Wayne Gretzky, the famous hockey player.
3. To the game on Thursday night.

➤ If you wondered what stopped to let off passengers, then you noticed that number 1 was missing a subject.

Consider these possible corrections:

1. THE BUS stopped to let off passengers.
The subject, bus, was added.
2. Wayne Gretzky, the famous hockey player, BECAME the captain of Team Canada.
The verb, became, was added with other words.
3. The entire FAMILY WENT to the game on Thursday night.
The subject, family, and verb, went, were added.

➤ There could be many other choices of subjects and/or verbs that will help to make a fragment a sentence.

It is not always easy to recognize fragments when they look as though they have a subject/verb set, but have an incomplete verb.

VERBS WITHOUT HELPERS

Many verbs are not complete without helpers.

Fragment: New books ordered by the teacher.

Sentence: New books were ordered by the teacher.

‘ING’ VERBS

Verbs ending in “ING” are not complete without a helper.

Fragment: The mechanic fixing the car.

Sentence: The mechanic is fixing the car.

TO + VERB

Verbs with “to” before them need another verb to help. The form of the verb expressed by to + verb is called the infinitive form.

Fragment: To visit her mother during the holidays.

Sentence: She is going to visit her mother during the holidays.

Some sentences have an understood subject, as in these examples:

1. Wash your hands.
 2. Go to sleep.
 3. Don't forget.
- The word group “Wash your hands.” contains the verb “wash.” The subject of the verb is “you” (understood).
 - The above word groups express a complete thought and are, therefore, sentences with the understood subject of “you.”

A sentence is a group of words that makes sense on its own.

Some word groups seem to have a complete subject/verb set, but are fragments because they do not make sense by themselves.

Consider this example:

After the children visited the zoo in the morning.

There is nothing wrong with the verb, “visited,” and the word “children” is a noun. However, the word at the beginning of the sentence, “after,” signals to the reader that there should be more to come. The fragment leaves the reader wondering what happened after the children visited the zoo. Words that leave us “up in the air” give us only a part of the idea. The main part of the idea is missing.

One possible complete sentence could be:

After the children visited the zoo in the morning, their mothers took them home.

- Here is a list of the most common words that indicate a possible fragment:

| | | |
|--------|---------|------------|
| So | While | If |
| Until | Then | Next |
| Before | Since | Instead of |
| After | Unless | Although |
| When | Because | Though |

Read a sentence carefully when it starts with one of these words. Does the sentence make sense on its own? If it makes sense on its own, it is probably a sentence. If it does not, it is probably a fragment.

Look at these examples:

1. Before the concert started.
 2. Since they arrived in Massachusetts.
 3. Although it rained.
- If you wondered what happened before the concert started, you noticed that this word group is a fragment.

Consider these possible corrections:

1. Before the concert started, the stage lights went on.
2. Since they arrived in Massachusetts, they have lived in Lynn.
3. Although it rained, they went to the beach.

REMEMBER:

- ★ A SENTENCE MUST HAVE AT LEAST ONE SUBJECT/VERB SET.
- ★ A SENTENCE MUST MAKE SENSE ON ITS OWN.

Before you can correct fragments in your own writing, you have to be able to identify them. The following exercises will assist you with this.

Exercise 1-1 Read the following word groups. Decide which are sentences and which are fragments. Write “S” for sentence and “F” for fragment. Check your answers (page 22).

1. While I was cooking, the doorbell rang.
2. We all have breakfast together.
3. After the rain had been beating down on the island for hours.
4. In my free time, I watch sports on T.V.
5. The woman standing at the bus stop with the small baby.
6. Although we could have gone shopping at the mall last night.
7. If you aren't busy, could you help me?
8. When I got ready for work.
9. He is always on a diet.
10. When I'm feeling tired, and want a break.

Exercise 1-2 Read the following word groups. Decide which are sentences and which are fragments. Write “S” for sentence and “F” for fragment. Check your answers (page 22).

1. Instead of going to class, getting help, and doing her work.
2. Because of his illness, he was away from work for two weeks.
3. She has been studying English for three years.
4. George and Harry work at Macy's.
5. The woman in the grey suit, sitting at the desk.
6. The graduation ceremony will be held outdoors.
7. Since Christmas, we have been working on the same book.
8. The car with the broken windshield and the dented door.
9. Tickets for the show went on sale this morning.
10. Painted green, with a shiny brass handle in the middle.

HOW TO CORRECT FRAGMENTS

If the subject, the verb, or both are incomplete or missing, you need to make the idea complete. There are three ways to do this. In all methods, you may need to add other words to make the meaning clear of the reader.

1. Join the fragment to the sentence **BEFORE** IT.

Incorrect:

The tourists will still be able to watch the whales. (Sentence)

Because the ship's captain will conduct special trips. (Fragment)

Correct:

Tourists will still be able to watch the whales because the ship's captain will conduct special trips.

2. Join the fragment to the sentence **AFTER** it.

Incorrect:

If the weather is warm enough. (Fragment)

We can go to the beach. (Sentence)

Correct:

If the weather is warm enough, we can go to the beach.

➤ Use a COMMA when you connect a fragment like this to the sentence.

3. Complete the thought.

Incorrect:

Because the roads are covered with snow. (Fragment)

Correct:

Because the roads are covered with snow, motorists are warned to drive carefully.

➤ Your corrections may be different. The examples are one possible way to correct the fragments.

The following two exercises will give you practice in correcting fragments.

Exercise 1-3: Read each of the following word groups carefully. **First**, if the word groups are sentences, write “S”; if one or both of the word groups is a fragment, write “F”. **Then**, change the fragments into sentences, using one of the above methods.

1. The man leaning against the stop sign at the street corner. Looked at me.
2. I volunteered to work at the arena. I can't afford to get tickets to the game.
3. He put in the last suitcase. Then watched his friend trying to close the trunk.
4. Under the pile of old clothes was a suitcase full of money.
5. The house bought in September 1988. Sold in 2000.
6. Coming to school this morning. I drove behind a school bus.
7. Because she wasn't feeling well, she went home.
8. Since she saw him last week.
9. In the wastepaper basket, next to the desk.
10. Walking through the park, we discussed the problem.

Check your answers (page 22). Your changes may be different. If you are not sure that your changes are sentences, check with a writing tutor.

Exercise 1-4: Follow the same directions that you used in Exercise 1-3 and do the following examples.

1. A man's wool suit was displayed in the department store window. It was gray.
2. Whenever there is a long line-up in the cafeteria. I never wait.
3. My nose was red. The last time that I had a cold.
4. Because he wanted to improve his English skills. He went to the Writing Center.
5. Meryl Streep has acted in many fine movies.
6. Including “A Cry in the Dark” and “The French Lieutenant's Woman”.
7. She nodded. When I asked the child if she was lost.
8. I like meeting people who have come from different countries.
9. Because she presented herself well at the job interview.
10. He felt confident that he had done well on the test.

Check your answers (page 220). Your changes may be different. If you are not sure that your changes are sentences, check with a writing tutor.

Now that you know how to recognize a fragment and how to turn it into a complete sentence, you can check your own writing more effectively!

LESSON II

SIMPLE SENTENCES

Any group of words having a subject and a verb is called a clause. The clause may be independent (a sentence: able to stand alone); or dependent (a fragment: unable to stand alone).

A group of words containing ONE independent clause is a Simple Sentence.

Example: Her husband spread the fertilizer on the lawn.

Subject: husband Verb: spread

- There is one subject and one verb; therefore, the above is a simple sentence.

Example: During the early hours of the morning, her husband spread the fertilizer on the lawn.

Subject: husband Verb: spread

- This sentence is still a SIMPLE SENTENCE because it contains only ONE INDEPENDENT CLAUSE. The introductory word group, “during the early hours of the morning,” does not contain a subject or a verb.

Is this a simple sentence?

Because of the bad weather, the game was cancelled.

- In this sentence, there is only one independent clause (subject: game, verb: was cancelled).

Sometimes simple sentences may have more than one subject or verb, in the same sentence. **More than one subject** is called a compound subject; **more than one verb** is called a compound verb.

Examples: The workers and their boss are meeting today.

Compound subject: workers, boss (Can you identify the verb?)

The painters scraped and painted the old house.

Compound verb: scraped, painted (Can you identify the subject?)

The union members or the workers meet and discuss problems.

Compound subject: members, workers

Compound verb: meet, discuss

- No additional punctuation is necessary as these sentences are simple sentences.

COMPOUND SENTENCES

A Compound Sentence contains two simple sentences (two independent clauses), joined by a conjunction.

Read the following three pairs of independent clauses.

1. Jim won the race. He broke his previous record.
2. The children are playing outside. The teachers are meeting indoors.
3. Will you go to the movies? Will you stay at home?

Each of the independent clauses states a complete thought by itself. Therefore, each clause is a simple sentence. Each pair of simple sentences can be combined into a single sentence using a **conjunction and a comma**. The common conjunctions are “and”, “but”, and “or”.

You might combine the sentences like this to form compound sentences:

1. Jim won the race, **and** he broke his previous record.
2. The children are playing outside, **but** the teachers are meeting indoors
3. Will you go to the movies, **or** will you stay at home?

- Note the comma before the conjunction.
- A comma is used before “and”, “but”, “or” **only** when they **join two** (or more) **simple sentences** to make a compound sentence.

Another way to combine two simple sentences into one compound sentence is to use a **semi-colon (;)**.

1. Jim won the race; he broke his previous record.
2. The children are playing outside; the teachers are meeting indoors
3. Will you go to the movies; will you stay at home?

Now see if you can identify simple and compound sentences.

Exercise 2-1

State whether the following sentences are simple or compound. Write an “S” if the sentence is simple and a “C” if it is compound. Check your answers (page 22).

1. The leader asked for volunteers, but she did not receive a reply from anyone in the room.
2. You may go by taxi or wait for the bus.
3. He applied for the job but did not get it.
4. Some of the furniture is broken, and the place is a wreck.
5. John disliked the wine; he drank it anyway.
6. The food banks in Ottawa have been collecting and distributing food to needy families in the area.
7. Pedestrians and cyclists walk or cycle on the same path.
8. The cyclists should have a different path, and they should not be allowed to ride on the same path as pedestrians.
9. The house was broken into, but nothing was stolen.
10. Are the children in bed, or are they still playing outside?

Exercise 2-2

State whether the following sentences are simple or compound. Write an “S” if the sentence is simple and “C” if it is compound. Check your answers (page 22).

1. Many applications were received, but only a few were acceptable.
2. The parcel can be sent by mail or delivered by hand.
3. They replied to the invitation but did not come.
4. The workers threw down their tools, and then they walked off the job.
5. At the present time, inflation is a worldwide problem, and the World Bank is trying to deal with it.
6. The hurricane hit the island yesterday; many homes and trees were flattened.
7. The art class went to the new art gallery and viewed the works on display.
8. Someone finally wrote the definition on the chalkboard, and all the students copied it.
9. Tennis and golf are popular sports and are enjoyed by many.
10. Columbus sailed to the New World; he discovered America.

If you are still uncertain about Compound and Simple sentences meet with a tutor in the Writing Center.

Exercise 2-3

Use the simple sentences to write compound sentences using one of the conjunctions correctly: and, or, but. Check your answers (page 22).

1. Miguel attends college during the day. He is a night security guard at the mall.
2. She couldn't find her pen. She had a pencil handy.
3. Cynthia will meet us at the movie. She will drive home.
4. They didn't know where they were. They didn't think they were lost.
5. My mother bought the old school desk. My initials were carved in it.
6. The rain started early in the day. The game was played.
7. Brigitte is taking 5 courses this semester. She plans to take 2 more this summer.
8. Band begins at 7:30 p.m. Some students come late.
9. Can I ride with you? Should I take the bus?
10. Mrs. Hall was elected committee chair. She is not going to accept.

Exercise 2-4

Use the simple sentences in Exercise 2-3 to write compound sentences using a semi-colon.

Check your answers on page 22. If you are still uncertain about the punctuation or how to combine simple sentences to compound ones, ask one of the tutors in the Writing Centers.

RUN-ON SENTENCES

Two or more sentences that have been written together with no punctuation, or with merely a comma, are called **run-on sentences**.

RUN-ON sentences may be corrected in one of four ways:

1. Using a **conjunction and a comma**.
2. Using a **semi-colon** (;).
3. Separating the independent clauses into two or more sentences.
4. Converting one independent clause into a dependent clause by using introductory words such as because, after, since, when, etc.

Example: The book was very interesting, **therefore** I read it all night

The example is correctly written in any of the following ways:

1. The book was very interesting, **AND** therefore I read it all night.
2. The book was very interesting; therefore, I read it all night.
3. The book was very interesting. **Therefore**, I read it all night.
4. **Since** the book was very interesting, I read it all night.

NOTE: Some words look like conjunctions, but they are not. The words “then”, “therefore”, “also”, “because” and “however” are NOT conjunctions. DO NOT use them to join two sentences together.

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| Examples: | John put on his coat, then he left the house. | INCORRECT |
| | John put on his coat, AND then he left the house. | CORRECT |
| | John put on his coat. Then he left the house. | CORRECT |
| | AFTER John put on his coat, he left the house. | CORRECT |

Exercise 2-5 Identify each of the following word groups by writing “sentence” or “run-on” after it. Correct the run-on sentences using one of the four methods. Check your answers (page 23).

1. Because he was thirsty, Jack ordered another bottle of water.
2. Jack was thirsty, he ordered another bottle of water.
3. The traffic was crawling, however we arrived at the airport on time.
4. Jill was at the party, but her husband stayed home.
5. She washed the dishes, then she dried them.

6. Arthur was driving too fast, therefore he missed the exit.
7. While we were on vacation, our home was vandalized.
8. It rained all day; the streets and basements were flooded.
9. Return the lawnmower to Philip, also ask him where my shovel is.
10. Since the weather is so bad, we'll stay at home and watch television.

Exercise 2-6

Identify each of the following word groups by writing "sentence" or "run-on" after it. Correct the run-on sentences. Check your answers (page 23).

1. After we ate we went for a walk.
2. The children were tired, they fell asleep.
3. Send two passport pictures, also include a copy of your birth certificate.
4. The fire raged all day; the firefighters worked relentlessly.
5. Days are long in summer, but they are short in winter.
6. They competed in the marathon, therefore they were tired.
7. While I was standing in line at the bus stop, I recognized an old friend.
8. The sun comes up; the sleeping city awakes.
9. The teachers were on strike, however the schools were kept open.
10. She was late for work because she missed the bus.

Exercise 2-7

Rewrite the following paragraphs by correcting the run-on sentences. Check your work (page 23).

Learning the stories behind words is a fascinating hobby, it helps one to remember words, too. There are many interesting stories behind common words, our word “alphabet” is an example. “Alpha” is the first letter in the list of Greek letters and “beta” is the second. The Greeks used those first two letters to stand for their entire list of letters thus they called their entire list “alphabetos”. We do the same thing in English, we call our entire list our “ABC’s” but we also have taken over those two Greek words to mean our entire list of letters and thus we speak of our “alphabet”.

“Bonfire” is another interesting word, it goes back to the Middle Ages. In times of plague, human bodies were burned on funeral pyres, therefore the fires were called “bonefires” (fires of bones). Later the word came to mean open-air fires and the spelling then changed to “bonfire”. Today we enjoy bonfires and never think of their gruesome beginning. Learning word origins is fun, their derivations are often surprising.

If you are still uncertain about Run-On Sentences and Fragments, ask a Writing Tutor at one of the Writing Centers.

Appendix

COMMON ERRORS IN GRAMMAR

The following represents a list of the most common major and minor errors. If you are interested in more detailed knowledge, a tutor in the Writing Center can recommend materials for you.

MAJOR ERRORS

1. **Sentence Fragments:** See Lesson 1

2. **Run-on Sentences:** See Lesson 2

3. **Subject/Verb Agreement**

If a sentence has a singular subject, the singular form of the verb must be used:

The vase is on the table.

If the subject is plural, the verb must be as well:

The vases are on the table.

- Most problems occur when there is a long phrase separating the subject and the verb.

Example: Only Frank, of my many friends and acquaintances, visit me when I am sick.

The verb should be “visits” because the subject is “Frank”; but because the noun nearest the verb is plural, the verb “visit” looks right.

- The following indefinite pronouns are singular and take a singular verb:

| | | | |
|---------|-----------|------|----------|
| anyone | everyone | each | someone |
| anybody | everybody | one | somebody |
| nobody | no one | none | much |

Examples: None of the visiting heads of state was impressed.

Everyone in the class chooses an activity.

Not much is known about viruses.

- When using “either...or,” “neither...nor” word pairs, the verb agrees with the subject nearest it. Study the following two examples.

Example: Neither he nor I am at fault.

Either Maya or her aunts are here.

Neither I nor he is at fault.

Either her aunts or Maya is here.

MINOR ERRORS

1. Punctuation

The punctuation marks most often misused are commas, semi-colons, and colons.

➤ Commas (,)

The most common fault is overuse; use commas sparingly. A good guideline is to read a sentence aloud and insert commas only where you pause naturally.

Read the following examples aloud, pausing at the commas, to see how comma placement changes meaning:

John, my brother, hates milk. John, my brother hates milk.
John, my brother and I hate milk. John, my brother, and I hate milk.

Use commas to separate the items in a series. The comma before the last item in the series (before *and*) is optional, but it is usually more clear.

The shuttle connects **Hathorne, Danvers, and Lynn**.
Bring to each class your **pen, notebook, and text**.

➤ Semi-colons (;)

Like a period, a semi-colon will follow a complete sentence. When the meaning of two sentences is closely related, a semi-colon is preferable to a period.

Anne, close the door; it has started to rain.

➤ Colons (:)

A colon is used before a series of words or a list introduced by “the following”, “thus”, “in the following manner”, or “for example”.

Correct: For the trip, campers should provide **the following:** sleeping bags, sturdy shoes, heavy jackets and personal toilet articles.

Correct: Add the ingredients in the following order: butter, sugar, salt, vanilla, nutmeg, cinnamon and nuts.

Incorrect: I enjoy: classical, folk, and rock music.

Correct: I enjoy classical, folk, and rock music.

Do not use a colon after a preposition.

Incorrect: My son is involved in: school, sports, and music.

Correct: My son is involved in school, sports and music.

or

School, sports, music: these keep my son busy.

➤ Apostrophe (')

Apostrophes are used to show **possession or ownership**, and in **contractions**.

If a word, singular or plural, **does not end in “s”**, use **“s”** to form the possessive.

- Correct: We will meet at my lawyer’s office. (One lawyer’s firm)
- We will meet at the lawyers’ office. (Many lawyers’ firm)
- The manager’s decision was final. (One manager)
- The managers’ decision was final. (Many managers)

If the word, singular or plural, **ends in “s”**, add an apostrophe **after the final s**.

- Correct: The movie theatre schedules kids’ shows regularly.
- Sue Evans’ house was just painted.

Do Not use an apostrophe to make a singular word plural.

- Incorrect: The unleashed **dog’s** belong to the McIntyres.
- Correct: The unleashed **dogs** belong to the McIntyres.

The verb “belong” is plural; therefore the subject, “dogs” is plural.

An apostrophe takes the place of missing letters in a contraction.

- If I cannot find a parking space, I will get to work late.
- If I can’t find a parking space, I’ll get to work late.

The following are some common contractions:

| | | | |
|-----------|----------|-----------|---------|
| Would not | Wouldn’t | They will | They’ll |
| Do not | Don’t | I am | I’m |
| Were not | Weren’t | It is | It’s |
| Have not | Haven’t | Is not | Isn’t |

Try to avoid contractions in formal writing.

2. **Misplaced or Dangling Modifiers**

Adjectives or adjective phrases that are incorrectly placed can result in confusion and, sometimes, amusement.

- Incorrect: I bought a piano from an elderly lady with elaborately carved legs.
- Correct: I bought a piano with elaborately carved legs from an elderly lady.
- Incorrect: Tugging at the worms, John watched the birds.
- Correct: John watched the birds tugging at the worms.

3. Numbers

Write out numbers *under* 100, except when the time of day is followed by a.m. or p.m.

There are 365 days in a year, and it rained on eighty.

It was 2:00 a.m. when Alice phoned to say that her flight would arrive at five that afternoon.

4. Verb Tense Shift

It is incorrect to shift back and forth from past to present tense. This happens most often when people try to write in the present tense about personal experiences.

Incorrect: I am poised, tense, on the diving board, ready to spring. Suddenly, there was a flash of light. I can't see a thing.

Correct: I was poised, tense, on the diving board, ready to spring. Suddenly there was a flash of light. I couldn't see a thing.

5. Pronoun Shift

This error involves changing back and forth between one pronoun and another.

Incorrect: Before one changes a fuse, you should turn off the main switch.

Correct: Before you change a fuse, you should turn off the main switch.

Or: Before one changes a fuse, one should turn off the main switch.

To avoid the “one...one” repetition, you may wish to change the sentence:

Before changing a fuse, the main switch should be turned off.

6. Pronoun Reference

A pronoun takes the place of a noun or other pronoun and agrees in number (singular or plural) with the word to which it refers.

Incorrect: Every pet should have their own dish.

Correct: Every pet should have its own dish.

The singular, possessive pronoun “its” refers to the singular noun, “pet”.

Correct: All pets should have their own dishes.

This is correct because the plural possessive pronoun, “their” refers to the plural noun, “pets”.

Incorrect: My father, as well as his brothers, spent their time fishing.

Correct: My father, as well as his brothers, spent his time fishing.

This is because the singular possessive pronoun “his” refers to the singular masculine noun, “father”.

Pronouns can be masculine, feminine or neuter, and this is not a problem until we get to indefinite pronouns (they are listed under “Subject/Agreement”), when they refer to both males and females.

Correct: None of the men forgot his sunglasses.

Correct: Each member of our ladies’ choir has her own music.

There is no difficulty with these because the groups are clearly either male or female.

But when a pronoun refers to a group containing both males and females, one can run into trouble. There are three accepted methods to address this problem.

1. Use the masculine pronoun to refer to male/female groups. This is not incorrect, but it is distasteful to some.

Example: Everyone should bring his own lunch.

2. Use “s/he”, or “his/her.” Some people find this awkward.

Example: Everyone should bring his/her own lunch.

3. Use the plural pronoun. Although, strictly speaking, this is not correct, it is becoming more popular as a solution to sexist language.

Example: Everyone should bring their own lunch.

Answer Key

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Ex 1-1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. S 2. S 3. F 4. S 5. F 6. F 7. S 8. F 9. S 10. S | <p>Ex 1-2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. F 2. S 3. S 4. S 5. F 6. S 7. S 8. F 9. S 10. F | <p>Ex 1-3 (Remember that your corrections may be different)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. F The man leaning against the stop sign at the street corner looked at me. 2. S No correction needed 3. F He put in the last suitcase, then watched his friend trying to close the trunk. 4. S No correction needed 5. F The house bought in September 1988 was sold in 2000. 6. F Coming to school this morning, I drove behind a school bus. 7. S No correction needed 8. F Since she was him last week, he had his hair cut. 9. F There was a fire in the wastepaper basket, next to the desk. 10. S No correction needed |
| <p>Ex 1-4 (Remember that your answers may be different.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. S No correction needed 2. F Whenever there is a long line-up in the cafeteria, I never wait. 3. F My nose was red. The last time that I had a cold. 4. F Because he wanted to improve his English skills, he went to the Writing Center. 5. S No correction needed 6. F Meryl Streep has acting in many fine movies, including "A Cry in the Dark" and "The French Lieutenant's Woman". 7. F She nodded. When I asked the child if she was lost. 8. S No correction needed 9. F Because she presented herself well at the job interview, she got the job. 10. S No correction needed | | <p>Ex 2-1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C 2. S 3. S 4. C 5. C 6. S 7. S 8. C 9. C 10. C |
| <p>Ex 2-2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. C 2. S 3. S 4. C 5. C 6. C 7. S 8. C 9. S 10. C | <p>Ex 2-3 (You may have selected a different conjunction.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Miguel attends college during the day, and he is a night security guard at the mall. 2. She couldn't find her pen, but she had a pencil handy. 3. Cynthia will meet us at the movie, or she will drive home. 4. They didn't know where they were, but they didn't think they were lost. 5. My mother bought the old school desk, and my initials were carved in it. 6. The rain started early in the day, but the game was played. 7. Brigitte is taking 5 courses this semester, and she plans to take 2 more this summer. 8. Band is at 7:30 p.m., but some students come late. 9. Can I ride with you or should I take the bus? 10. Mrs. Hall was elected committee chair, but she is not going to accept. | |
| <p>Ex 2-4</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Miguel attends college during the day; he is a night security guard at the mall. 2. She couldn't find her pen; she had a pencil handy. 3. Cynthia will meet us at the movie; she will drive home. 4. They didn't know where they were; they didn't think they were lost. 5. My mother bought the old school desk; my initials were carved in it. 6. The rain started early in the day; the game was played. 7. Brigitte is taking 5 courses this semester; she plans to take 2 more this summer. 8. Band begins at 7:30 p.m.; some students come late. 9. Can I ride with you; should I take the bus? 10. Mrs. Hall was elected committee chair; she is not going to accept. | | |

Ex 2-5 These are possible corrections. Yours may be different.

1. Sentence
2. Run-on Jack was thirsty; he ordered another bottle of soda.
3. Run-on The traffic was crawling; however we arrived at the airport on time.
4. Sentence
5. Run-on She washed the dishes, and then she dried them.
6. Run-on Arthur was driving too fast; therefore he missed the exit.
7. Sentence
8. Sentence
9. Run-on Return the lawnmower to Philip, and ask him where my shovel is.
10. Sentence

Ex 2-6

1. Run-on After we ate, we went for a walk.
2. Run-on The children were tired; they fell asleep.
3. Run-on Send two passport pictures, and include a copy of your birth certificate.
4. Sentence
5. Sentence
6. Run-on They competed in the marathon; therefore they were tired.
7. Sentence
8. Sentence
9. Run-on The teachers were on strike; however the schools were kept open.
10. Sentence

Ex 2-7

Learning the stories behind words is a fascinating hobby; it helps one to remember words, too. There are many interesting stories behind common words. **O**ur word “alphabet” is an example. “Alpha” is the first letter in the list of Greek letters and “beta” is the second. The Greeks used those first two letters to stand for their entire list of letters; thus they called their entire list “alphabetos”. We do the same thing in English, **but** we call our entire list our “ABC’s.” **W**e also have taken over those two Greek words to mean our entire list of letters, and thus we speak of our “alphabet.”

“Bonfire” is another interesting word; it goes back to the Middle Ages. In times of plague, human bodies were burned on funeral pyres. **T**herefore the fires were called “bonfires” (fires of bones). Later the word came to mean open-air fires, and the spelling then changed to “bonfire”. Today we enjoy bonfires and never think of their gruesome beginning. Learning word origins is fun, **and** their derivations are often surprising.