**Avoiding Fragments and Run-on Sentence**

**What is a Fragment?**

A fragment is a group of words that looks like a sentence but is missing a subject, a verb, or a complete thought; therefore, it is an *incomplete sentence*.

Fragments result if you punctuate certain word groups as if they are complete sentences.

The most common of these word groups are the following:

* Subordinate clauses
* Prepositional phrases
* Participle phrases,
* Infinitive phrases, and
* Appositives
* A word group that starts with an example or explanation of something mentioned in the previous sentence

**Ways to correct Fragments:**

1. Add what is missing (subject, verb, or complete thought)
2. Attach the fragment to the sentence before or after it

**What is a Run-on?**

A run-on is created when two complete sentences (independent clauses) are joined together incorrectly (**without proper punctuation**) and are written as one sentence.

There are two kinds of run-ons:

Fused sentences: A ***fused sentence*** has two main clauses joined with no punctuation at all.

Comma splices: A ***comma splice*** incorrectly joins two main clauses with a comma.

**Ways to Correct a Run-On:**

1. By adding a period to make 2 complete sentences
2. By adding a semicolon
3. By adding a comma & coordinating conjunction
4. By adding a subordinate conjunction

**Practice**

**Select the sentence from each group that is a sentence fragment or a run-on sentence.**

1. A. Probably two to three hours, depending on how hard the task is.

B. The test seemed impossible, but I managed to make an A.

C. We went shopping this past weekend.

D. He wanted the blue one.

2. A. When you use the conjunctions and, for, nor, but, or, for, or, yet, so.

B. They promised to be there in time for the reception, but I expect they will be late.

C. There were four in our group.

D. Let's meet at Lucy's house, and remember to bring the soft drinks and popcorn.

3. A. Mr. Smith, along with all of his students, took his place in the auditorium.

1. The girls arrived late and left early; they only intended to make a brief appearance.
2. It is important to spend time studying, however, rest and recreation are also important.
3. The prosecution presented its case so well that it would be a surprise for the jury to return a verdict of not guilty.

4. A. This position requires speaking, writing, and supervising skills.

1. The conversation took place in her office, which was cluttered with papers and books.
2. The activity is brisk in the living room and in the kitchen while people are searching for a place to sit.
3. This is not what I requested the color is too dark, and it's the wrong size.

5. A. After searching through a loose-leaf binder of old homework assignments, he finally found the notes he was searching for, and he began his intense study marathon.

1. The student entered the professor's office cautiously, and he wondered if the professor--especially someone so distinguished as to be the department head--could have any understanding of the stress students face.
2. Then she would be calm.
3. She looked at the cat again, who had been watching her, and the bird, which was chirping outside the window.

6. A. He took the elevator up to the ninth floor; he was just in time for his appointment.

1. She waited a minute before dialling the phone, still wondering if she was making the right decision.
2. The child's mother looked at him disapprovingly; he was wet, and his new clothes were covered in mud.
3. Because there was a policy that only students of the school could check out books from the library.

**Correct each run-on sentence below in two different ways. For the first five run-ons, follow the instructions in parenthesis. For the last three, decide for yourself how to correct the faulty sentences effectively.**

1. Most smoke detectors have a test button, this button may test only the sounding device and not the working components.  
   (a) *Turn the first* [*main clause*](http://grammar.about.com/od/pq/g/participterm.htm) *into an* [*adverb clause*](http://grammar.about.com/od/ab/g/qdvclterm.htm)
2. Sunlight flooded the room the pianos, all black, gleamed.  
   (a) *Coordinate the two main clauses.*
3. Karen's brother kills flies for turtle food her sister repairs screen doors on submarines.  
   (a) *Coordinate the two main clauses.*
4. We walked back to the big house, it had been built by my great-grandfather almost a century ago.  
   (a) (b) *Turn the second main clause into a* [*past participle*](http://grammar.about.com/od/pq/g/pastpartterm.htm) *phrase*
5. I gave your paycheck to Butch he told me you had sent him.  
   (a) *Turn the second main clause into an adjective clause.*
6. We returned from our vacation the dog was missing.
7. The gardens are dry the road to the shore is dusty.
8. Don't carry your house keys in your wallet a pickpocket then has easy access to your house.

**Identify the comma splices and fused sentences in the following paragraph. Correct each in two of the four possible ways listed in the lesson. If a sentence is correct, leave it alone.**

**Example:** The fans rose in their seats, the game was almost over.

**Revised:** The fans rose in their seats; the game was almost over.

The fans rose in their seats because the game was almost over.

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| Entrepreneurship is the study of small businesses, college students are embracing it enthusiastically. Many schools offer one or more courses in entrepreneurship these courses teach the theory and practice of starting a small business. Students are signing up for courses, moreover, they are starting their own businesses. One student started with a car-waxing business, now he sells condominiums. Other students are setting up catering services they supply everything from waiters to bartenders. One student has a thriving cake-decorating business, in fact, she employs fifteen students to deliver the cakes. All over the country, student businesses are selling everything from tennis balls to bagels, the student owners are making impressive profits. Formal courses at the graduate as well as undergraduate level are attracting more business students than ever, several schools (such as Baylor University, the University of Southern California, and Babson College) even offer degree programs in entrepreneurship. Many business school students are no longer planning to be corporate executives instead, they plan to become entrepreneurs. |

**B. Read the following short essay. Put brackets [ ] around any sentence fragments you find and mark them *Frag.* Then correct the fragments on a separate sheet of paper.**

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| **Women Drivers**  1Sexism extends even into the area of automobile driving, it seems. Believing that they are far better drivers than women. Men consider women drivers incompetent, inattentive, and even dangerous behind the wheel.  2 However, statistics prove that women are, in fact, safer drivers than men. For example, insurance rates. Insurance rates for women are 20 percent lower than they are for men. Another proof is that more accidents are caused by male drivers between the ages of 18 and 25 than by any other group. Also, the greater percentage of accidents involving deaths caused by men. Although women are criticized for being too cautious. They are really just being safe drivers.  3 The reasons for women drivers' safer driving habits can. perhaps be found in the differing attitudes of the sexes toward automobiles. On the one hand, women drivers who regard the automobile as a convenience. Like a washing machine. On the other hand, men regard the automobile as an extension of their egos. Using it as a weapon when they feel particularly aggressive. Or using it as a status symbol.  4 All in all, women are safer drivers. Because of their attitude. Men can learn to become safe drivers. If they adopt the attitude that an automobile is merely a convenience. |