

Preparation for English Placement Test  
[Short Version]

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Peirce College

Preparation for English Placement Test – Peirce College

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Unit 1:

- Read, view, and study material on Writing Process and 5-Paragraph Essay Format.

Video links: **Pause and take notes on videos as you watch:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRKp4E7szSQ> (writing process)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uSJEiNZ1rE> (5-paragraph essay)

- Study Sample Essay on p. 11: “Strengthening Society’s Values.”

Unit 2:

- Read, view, and study material on run-ons, comma splices, and sentence fragments.

Video links: **Pause and take notes on videos as you watch:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rINmxljAmZ8> – fragments and run-ons.

Unit 3:

- Read, view, and study material on subject-verb agreement and pronoun agreement.

Video links: **Pause and take notes on videos as you watch:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37XBATSQm8U> – subject-verb agreement.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmOy4vnZV78> – pronoun agreement



Unit 4:

- Read, view, and study comma and semicolon rules.

Video links: **Pause and take notes on videos as you watch:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tk8XYgyHZgk> – commas.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8uQESW76to> – semicolons.

Unit 5:

- Review handouts on sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics.

Videos:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRKp4E7szSQ> - writing process

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uSJEiNZ1rE> - 5-paragraph essay

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rINmxljAmZ8> – fragments and run-ons.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=37XBATSQm8U> – subject-verb agreement.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmOy4vnZV78> – pronoun agreement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tk8XYgyHZgk> – commas.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8uQESW76to> – semicolons.



## The Writing Process and the Five-Paragraph Essay: Notes

- I. Why essay-writing is important:
  - A. It organizes and clarifies your thinking process.
  - B. It develops logical and critical thinking skills.
  - C. It develops research skills.
  - D. It prepares you for advanced academic writing.
  - E. It prepares you for professional communication in the workplace.
- II. Writing expository essays is a *skill that can be learned*. It requires no special talent! If you follow a series of steps, you will be able to produce a well-organized, quality essay.
- III. The Writing Process: **Planning**, Drafting, **Revising**, Publishing.
  - A. Planning can be broken down into these stages: generating ideas/approaches for the assignment; supporting your ideas; and organizing your ideas. Always keep your *purpose* and *audience* in mind during the planning process.
    1. There is no reason to “blank out” when given an assignment. Here are several methods for generating ideas for your thesis; you can perform these activities at the computer or with a pen/pencil and paper:
      - a. Brainstorm: Look at the assignment. Set a timer for one or two minutes. Write down *in a list* anything and everything that comes to mind about the assignment. Do not stop to judge what you write or worry about spelling, grammar or punctuation. After the timer goes off, look over your list and cross out anything that doesn’t makes sense or is unrelated to the assignment. You will have at least one, and probably two or three, ideas with which to work.
      - b. Freewriting: Set a timer for four or five minutes. Either with pen and paper or at a computer, write *in sentences* anything and everything that comes to mind about the assignment. Do not stop to judge what you write or worry about spelling, grammar or punctuation. After the timer goes off, look over your sentences and cross out anything that doesn’t makes sense or is unrelated to the assignment. You will have at least one, and probably two or three, ideas with which to work.
      - c. The 5 W’s: Who? What? When? Where? Why? Write these questions on a piece of paper – and then answer them as they relate to your assignment.



- d. Write what you know: think about how your own knowledge and life/professional experience connect to the assignment. Use these to generate ideas for your essay.
  - e. Form a study group with other students in your English class. Meet with these students at least once a week to discuss ideas for assignments, review topics from class, and look at rough drafts.
  - f. Meet with a Walker Center tutor to discuss your assignment and generate ideas.
  - g. Always keep your *purpose* and *audience* in mind during the planning process.
2. Purpose and audience: All college and professional writing is done for a reason (purpose) and for a reader or readers (audience).
- a. The purpose for writing is always an action or combination of actions: to analyze, to describe, to narrate, to classify, to compare, to contrast, to explain (a process, causes, effects), to persuade, to argue. This is a partial list. Writers usually combine purposes within one essay.
  - b. In college, your audience is usually your instructor and/or your classmates. However, in the professional world, your audience could be a hiring manager, a co-worker, a manager, a subordinate, a client or customer, or a *potential* client or customer. Your writing should be tailored to the needs of the audience.
3. Generating support for your ideas:
- a. Use any or all of the methods above to generate support for your thesis. If you're writing a five-paragraph essay, you will need at least three supporting ideas.
  - b. Be visual: on a large sheet of paper, write your thesis in the center. Draw lines from the thesis and write supporting ideas down. Draw more lines to add details. This is sometimes referred to as *mind-mapping* or *clustering*.
3. Decide in which order you want to present the supporting ideas. Save the most important for last.
4. Prepare an outline:
- a. Does not have to be a formal outline.
  - b. Does not have to be written in the same order as the finished product.
  - c. Write down thesis/topic. Leave space. Note down two, three, or more supporting ideas, leaving lots of space between them.



1) Under thesis, jot down ideas for opening paragraph. It may be easier to do this *after* you have outlined the body paragraphs. [For ENG 010, include *Attention-Grabber* and *Flow-Chart*.]

2) Under first supporting idea, write down details that can be used to explain and illustrate this idea. Make a note if you need to do some research.

3) Do the same for the second and third supporting ideas.

4) Jot down ideas for your concluding paragraph. Make sure they do not repeat your opening paragraph. [For ENG 010, include *Clincher*.]

5) Do any necessary research.

6) Outlining is important! During this step you will organize your ideas and determine whether or not they make sense and are usable.

B. Drafting: Using your outline and research, if applicable, write your first *rough draft*. This draft is called *rough* because it is not ready to hand in for a grade and will be the first of many drafts. Always keep your *purpose* and *audience* in mind during the drafting stage.

C. Revising: this step is almost as involved as the planning step. The secret to successful revising is to focus on *one item at a time!* Produce a new draft after each step in the revision process. Always keep your *purpose* and *audience* in mind during the revising process.

1. First, revise for content:

a. Does your thesis fulfill the assignment? Does it make a *statement* or *take a stand* that can be supported?

b. Do your supporting ideas tell *why* or *how* the thesis is true?

c. Do the details *explain* and *illustrate* each supporting idea?

d. Are the details *specific* and *thorough*? Do you use names, dates, places, and specific incidents?

e. Are your supporting ideas arranged in a logical order?

f. Did you introduce each body paragraph with a transition word or phrase?

g. Did you begin each body paragraph with a topic sentence?

h. Did you include *Attention-Grabber*, *Flow-Chart*, and *Clincher/Wrap-Up*?

2. If your essay includes research, make sure that you have included parenthetical references and a Works Cited page in proper MLA format.

3. Read your paper for sentence structure.



a. Read paper aloud (or have someone read the paper to you), listening for any sentence fragments or run-on sentences. Make corrections.

b. Read the paper sentence by sentence, starting with the last sentence and ending with the first. Look at each sentence in isolation to make sure that it has no mistakes in structure.

c. If your sentence structure is repetitious, vary it.

4. Read your paper for diction and word choice:

a. If you find yourself repeating the same words, use a thesaurus to provide variety.

b. Avoid vague words such as “good,” “bad,” or “interesting.” Make sure your language is specific, vivid, and descriptive.

5. Read your paper for pronoun and verb errors, by reading the paper aloud and/or by reading from the last sentence to the first.

6. Finally, proofread for punctuation and spelling, again following the methods mentioned above.

7. Use your word processor’s spell checker and grammar checker only after you have completed the above steps!

D. Publishing: During this step you will prepare your completed, revised final draft for submission and grading.

1. Your draft should be typed using Microsoft Word or another word processing application.

2. The following formatting is the standard used in college:

a. The font is Times New Roman 12 point.

b. All margins are one inch.

c. The paper is double-spaced throughout, with *no* extra spaces between paragraphs.

d. Each paragraph is indented 5 spaces. Indent by pressing the TAB key once.

3. Include an APA-style cover page and running head OR follow your instructor’s requirements.

IV. A five-paragraph essay can be written following a series of steps. Until you are a more experienced writer, it is better to complete one step before moving on to the next.

A. First, learn the terminology:

1. An **essay** is a group of paragraphs that makes and/or proves a point.





2. A **paragraph** is a group of sentences that discusses one topic. A five-paragraph essay consists of the following paragraphs:
  - a. The **opening** or **Introductory** paragraph is the first paragraph in the essay, which includes the attention grabber, thesis statement, and flow chart.
  - b. **Body Paragraph #1** elaborates on **supporting idea #1** (please see below).
  - c. **Body Paragraph #2** elaborates on **supporting idea #2** (please see below).
  - d. **Body Paragraph #3** elaborates on **supporting idea #3** (please see below).
  - e. The **concluding paragraph** is the last paragraph in the essay. The first sentence in this paragraph consists of a *restatement* of the thesis statement. The next few sentences provide a summary of your points. The final sentence is the **Wrap-up** or **Clincher**: a call to action or further thought.
3. The **attention grabber** is the first sentence or set of sentences in the opening paragraph. It grabs the reader’s attention and creates interest in the essay. The attention grabber can be an anecdote, an interesting fact, a quotation, and/or a statistic. You should always include one or more sentences that *transition* from the attention grabber to the thesis statement.
4. The **thesis statement** is one statement that governs the essay: it includes the topic of the essay and the point the writer is making about the topic. Sometimes the thesis statement is referred to as “the thesis.” The thesis is the second-to-last sentence in the introductory paragraph.
5. The **flow chart** lists the three supporting ideas that will prove how or why the thesis statement is true. We can refer to these as **supporting idea #1**, **supporting idea #2**, and **supporting idea #3**. The flow chart is the last sentence in the introductory paragraph. Sometimes the thesis and flow chart can be combined into one sentence.
6. Each **body paragraph** provides support for the thesis statement by elaborating on the supporting ideas in the flow chart. The body paragraphs should follow the same order as the flow chart.
7. A **transition word** or **phrase** provides a smooth shift between paragraphs. Transitions can be as simple as “first,” “next,” “most of all,” or they can reference the material in the previous paragraph.



8. A **topic sentence** is the first sentence of a *body paragraph*. It begins with a transition word or phrase (e.g., First, Next, Most of all) and tells in one sentence what the paragraph will be about.
  9. A **Wrap-up** or **Clincher** is the last sentence of the concluding paragraph. This sentence leaves the reader with something to think about; it may also be a call to action. You can also reference the attention grabber.
- B. Then, write the essay; remember, do not skip steps:
1. Begin with the planning process. Use brainstorming, freewriting, the 5 W's, mind-mapping, etc, to generate your ideas.
  2. After you have generated your ideas, formulate a **preliminary thesis statement**. *You must do this first, as your thesis will be your guide as you write your essay!*
  3. Turn your thesis statement into a question. The answers to your question will provide the three supporting points for your flow chart.
  4. Create an outline: you do not need to use a formal outline. See p. 3 for the process of creating an outline. Note: you can also use a mind map or cluster for the same purpose.
  5. Draft and revise your paper according to the steps on pp. 3 and 4.
- C. ***Do not write the essay in the same order as the finished product. Too many students start an essay and cannot continue because they cannot think of an attention grabber! This kind of writer's block can be avoided by outlining the essay in the following order:***
1. First, devise the thesis statement.
  2. Second, create your three supporting points.
  3. Third, outline an explanation and specific example for each supporting point.
  4. Fourth, generate ideas for the attention grabber and the sentences that transition between the attention grabber and thesis.
  5. Fifth, outline the concluding paragraph: restatement of thesis, summation of ideas, clincher.



Please see the diagram of the 5-paragraph essay below. Please note that you can write **more** than the minimum number of sentences listed.

**The Five-Paragraph Essay**

	<p><b>Include a creative title that relates directly to the subject matter of your essay.</b></p>
<p><b>Opening or Introductory Paragraph</b></p>	<p><b>Sentence #1 is the <i>attention grabber</i>: An interesting fact, quotation, or story that will grab the reader's attention. [The <i>attention grabber</i> can be more than one sentence; use as many sentences as you need.]</b></p>
	<p><b>Sentence #2 logically connects the attention grabber to the <i>thesis statement</i>.</b></p>
	<p><b>Sentence #3 is the <i>thesis statement</i>: a statement that expresses the main point of the essay.</b></p>
	<p><b>Sentence #4 is the <i>flow chart</i>, a list of the three main points that support, prove, or explain the thesis statement: <b>Point #1</b>, <b>point #2</b>, and <b>point #3</b>.</b></p>
<p><b>Body Paragraph #1</b></p>	<p><b>Sentence #1 is the <i>topic sentence</i>, which expresses Point #1 in a complete sentence. The <i>topic sentence</i> must begin with a <b>TRANSITION WORD</b>, such as First (followed by a comma).</b></p>
	<p><b>Sentences #2, 3, and 4 explain the topic sentence in greater detail.</b></p>
	<p><b>Sentences #5, 6, and 7 (or more) provide a detailed <i>example</i> to illustrate the topic sentence. The example tells a story that demonstrates how or why the topic sentence is true. The story should include details: names, dates, and incidents.</b></p>
<p><b>Body Paragraph #2</b></p>	<p><b>Sentence #1 is the <i>topic sentence</i>, which expresses Point #2 in a complete sentence. The <i>topic sentence</i> must begin with a <b>TRANSITION WORD</b>, such as Next or In addition (followed by a comma).</b></p>
	<p><b>Sentences #2, 3, and 4 explain the topic sentence in greater detail.</b></p>
	<p><b>Sentences #5, 6, and 7 (or more) provide a detailed <i>example</i> to illustrate the topic sentence. The example tells a story that demonstrates how or why the topic sentence is true. The story should include details: names, dates, and incidents.</b></p>
<p><b>Body Paragraph #3</b></p>	<p><b>Sentence #1 is the <i>topic sentence</i>, which expresses Point #3 in a complete sentence. [Point #3 is the most important point.] The <i>topic sentence</i> must be followed by a <b>TRANSITION WORD</b>, such as Most of all or Most important (followed by a comma).</b></p>
	<p><b>Sentences #2, 3, and 4 explain the topic sentence in greater detail.</b></p>
	<p><b>Sentences #5, 6, and 7 (or more) provide a detailed <i>example</i> to illustrate the topic sentence. The example tells a story that demonstrates how or why the topic sentence is true. The story should include details: names, dates, and incidents.</b></p>



<b>Concluding Paragraph</b>	<b>Sentence #1 restates (but does not repeat word-for-word) the <i>thesis statement</i>.</b>
	<b>Sentence #2 summarizes the main points of the essay.</b>
	<b>Sentence #3 is the <i>clincher</i>, which leaves the reader with something to think about concerning the main point of the essay. The clincher may be more than one sentence. Use as many sentences as you need.</b>

***Note: Sentence counts for explanations and examples are minimums. Please write more than the minimum!***



**SAMPLE ESSAY – DO NOT COPY!**

Strengthening Society's Values

Vickie Feldman

Peirce College

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Author Note

This paper was prepared for ENG 010, taught by Ellen Massey.

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Strengthening Society's Values



## **SAMPLE ESSAY – DO NOT COPY!**

Last fall, during the presidential campaign, I decided to attend a political rally where a well-known politician was to speak. Sitting on the bus thinking how great this event would be, I found my happy thoughts shattered by my seat-mate shouting angrily into her cell phone. When I politely asked her if she could lower her voice, she cursed at me and told me that if I didn't like it, I could move. Rather than fight, I did so. Later, at the rally, people pushed and shoved as the politician spoke about how wonderful and wealthy our country was – and it made me think. Though our political figures here in the United States are fond of telling us how strong our nation is, there are things that we witness every day that show a creeping sickness. This is not a sickness of the body, but a weakening of the spirit that has resulted from poor values. Symptoms include the disappearance of common courtesy, the tendency to value knowledge only if it leads to money, and the insistence that work is the most important aspect of life.

First, it is truly a pity that common courtesy has become an endangered species in today's world. When I was a child, my parents taught me about basic manners. It was important to say "please," "thank you," and "excuse me" when appropriate. These behaviors were reinforced by other relatives and by school teachers. When I started traveling outside my neighborhood by public transportation, I learned to give up my seat to people in need – the elderly, the disabled, and expectant mothers, for example. These days, unfortunately, the sight of an elderly, infirm

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woman or man standing on a bus while healthy, young men and women sit nearby fixated on



their cell phones or electronic devices is an all-too-frequent occurrence. About a week ago, for example, I saw a noticeably pregnant woman standing on the bus in front of a seat designated for those in need while a young guy sat there listening to music (spilling out loud and clear) on his trendy headphones. People often seem oblivious to all concerns but their own, and this inconsiderate and sometimes downright selfish behavior can be very disturbing to witness.

Another alarming trend today is the common acceptance of the notion that education only has value if it quickly brings a person to the proverbial “pot of gold.” Though practicality has its place, this cold and calculating viewpoint can be dangerous. Let me give an extreme example just for the sake of argument. If an undergraduate student decided to major in information technology (IT) because she had heard that she could make good money in the corporate world, would it make sense for that student to study *only* IT and nothing else in college? Should she not have to bother, for instance, with history, political science, writing, or intercultural communications? Someone only studying IT might not learn about mistakes made by societies in the past. She might not understand the workings of our government; also, she might not learn about the methods used by politicians in the U.S. and by dictators in other countries to sway people towards their points of view. If this student did not take English classes, her written communication skills would probably end up being poor. If she didn’t study about other cultures, her ability to relate to others could be quite limited. This narrow-minded individual

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might somehow find that pot of gold, but she would surely be a less valuable citizen than the well-rounded student who had received education in areas not directly related to her major.

A third disturbing development in modern society is the idea that work must always come first in life. Years ago, when computers first started becoming practical tools, people were given the idea that these machines would make life easier and easier and that people would be able to work less and enjoy leisure time more. Although computers – through the development of the Internet – have made research a lot simpler than it once was, they have also become a type of “ball and chain” for workers. People now may not be able to get away from work by leaving the office. After all, the office, and all the work and responsibility that comes with a job, may now be accessed via mobile telephones, laptop computers, and home-based personal computers. With the economy in poor shape and good jobs being scarce, employers can now feel free to put more pressure on employees to be available at night and on the weekend – if they want to stay employed. This situation is not a healthy one, either for the body or the mind of an employee. Stress can cause stomach upset and headaches and can interfere with one’s immune system. It can also have a destructive impact on relationships such as marriages and friendships. Stress by itself can cause these problems, or its effects on the body can affect the mind and emotions – with the same result. To remedy this situation, employers need to realize that a happy and healthy employee can also be a more productive one. Allowing people to have a real balance in their lives between work time and leisure time will, in the long run, benefit society as a whole.

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Our nation would be healthier in a spiritual and emotional sense if certain modern values were changed. If people made an effort to start being more courteous to each other, that would help us to have a kinder and friendlier society. If people realized that education is valuable not just because it can lead to wealth, but also because it can create more thoughtful citizens, then that would be a positive trend. Lastly, if Americans realized the importance of striking a balance between their professional lives and their personal lives, we would probably be living in a happier and healthier society.

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## Fragments, Run-Ons, and Comma Splices

This resource was written by **Jaelyn M. Wells**.

Last edited by **Joshua M. Paiz** on March 22, 2013 .

Source: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/2/1/33/> .

### Sentence Structure

This lesson addresses sentence structure. Reviewing these skills will help you prepare for English 101 and will improve your language skills in general.

Topics included in this resource are the following: fragment sentences, run-on sentences, and comma splices.

### Fragment sentences

A complete sentence will have at least one subject and one verb. Sentences are considered **fragments** when they are missing either a subject or a verb. Consider the following two fragment sentences and their corrected versions:

- No Subject: Went to the store to buy brownie mix.  
Added Subject: My dad went to the store to buy brownie mix.
- No Verb: Brownie mix at the store expensive.  
Added Verb: Brownie mix at the store was expensive.

In addition to containing a subject and verb, a complete sentence will express a complete thought. Consider the following two sentences and their revised versions.

- Incomplete: When he went to the checkout counter to pay for the brownie mix.  
Complete: When he went to the checkout counter to pay for the brownie mix, he got distracted by a display of cake mixes.
- Incomplete: The variety of yummy cake mixes.  
Complete: The variety of yummy cake mixes convinced him that he'd rather bake a cake than brownies tonight.



## Run-on sentences (Run-ons)

A **run-on sentence** occurs when two or more independent clauses are combined without correct punctuation. An **independent clause** is a complete, simple sentence, meaning that it contains a subject, a verb, and a complete thought. There are a few ways to correct run-on sentences. Consider the following run-on sentence and the following options for revising it.

Run-On: The grocery store was really packed with people there must have been a big sale today.

- Correction 1: The grocery store was really packed with people. There must have been a big sale today.

Here, the error has been corrected by simply breaking the run-on sentence into two sentences.

- Correction 2: The grocery store was really packed with people, so there must have been a big sale today.

In this case, the sentence has been corrected by adding a coordinating conjunction and a comma.

- Correction 3: The grocery store was really packed with people; there must have been a big sale today.

Here, the error has been corrected by using a semicolon between the two sentences.

This is a compound sentence.

- Correction 4: Because the grocery store was really packed with people, there must have been a big sale.

In this example, the sentence has been corrected by adding a subordinating conjunction and a comma. This is a complex sentence.



## Comma Splices

This resource was written by **Jaelyn M. Wells**.

Last edited by **Allen Brizee** on August 7, 2009 .

Source: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/2/1/34/>

## Comma Splices

Comma splices are similar to run-on sentences because they also incorrectly connect independent clauses. A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses are connected with only a comma.

As with a run-on sentence, there are a few different ways to correct a comma splice. Consider the following sentence and the revised versions that follow it.

Comma Splice: My family bakes together nearly every night, we then get to enjoy everything we make together.

- Correction 1: My family bakes together nearly every night. We then get to enjoy everything we make together.

The comma splice has been corrected by breaking the sentence into two separate sentences.

- Correction 2: My family bakes together nearly every night, and we then get to enjoy everything we make together.

The comma splice has been corrected by adding a coordinating conjunction and a comma.

- Correction 3: My family bakes together nearly every night; we then get to enjoy everything we make together.

The comma splice has been corrected by inserting a semicolon between the two sentences.

- Correction 4: After my family bakes together nearly every night, we get to enjoy everything we make together.

The comma splice has been corrected by adding a subordinating conjunction and a comma.



## Fragment sentence exercises

The sentences below appeared in papers written by students. Act as their editor, marking a C if the sentences in the group are all complete and an F if any of the sentences in the group is a fragment. Could you tell these writers why the fragments are incomplete sentences?

- \_\_\_ 1. Then I attended Morris Junior High. A junior high that was a bad experience.
- \_\_\_ 2. The scene was filled with beauty. Such as the sun sending its brilliant rays to the earth and the leaves of various shades of red, yellow, and brown moving slowly in the wind.
- \_\_\_ 3. He talked for fifty minutes without taking his eyes off his notes. Like other teachers in that department, he did not encourage students' questions.
- \_\_\_ 4. Within each group, a wide range of features to choose from. It was difficult to distinguish between them.
- \_\_\_ 5. A few of the less serious fellows would go into a bar for a steak dinner and a few glasses of beer. After this meal, they were ready for anything.
- \_\_\_ 6. It can be really embarrassing to be so emotional. Especially when you are on your first date, you feel that you should be in control.
- \_\_\_ 7. The magazine has a reputation for a sophisticated, prestigious, and elite group of readers. Although that is a value judgment and in circumstances not a true premise.
- \_\_\_ 8. In the seventh grade every young boy goes out for football. To prove to himself and his parents that he is a man.
- \_\_\_ 9. She opened the door and let us into her home. Not realizing at the time that we would never enter that door in her home again.
- \_\_\_ 10. As Christmas grows near, I find myself looking back into my childhood days at fun-filled times of snowball fights. To think about this makes me happy.
- \_\_\_ 11. Making up his mind quickly. Jim ordered two dozen red roses for his wife. Hoping she would accept his apology.
- \_\_\_ 12. They were all having a good time. Until one of Joe's oldest and best friends had a little too much to drink.
- \_\_\_ 13. Although it only attained a speed of about twelve miles an hour. My old rowboat with its three-horsepower motor seemed like a high-speed job to me.
- \_\_\_ 14. With my brother standing by my side, I reached for the pot handle. Tilting the pot way too much caused the boiling water to spill.
- \_\_\_ 15. The small, one-story houses are all the same size and style. With no difference except the color.
- \_\_\_ 16. Being a friend of mine like he was when we first joined the soccer team. Together we learned a lot.



## Run-on sentence exercises

Some of the sentences below are run-ons. Play editor on the sentences. Could you tell these writers why the run-ons are incorrect? Also, how would you tell the writers to fix them?

1. We were really busy at the restaurant tonight. I waited tables straight through from 3:30 to 11:30 I never sat down for even one break.
2. My dog had to go to the vet today. She cried and cried when they clipped her toenails, but then she was fine when they gave her a shot!
3. The book we had to read for class was really long my teacher doesn't seem to understand that we have other classes to read for too.

## Comma Splice Exercises

The following sentences are comma splices. For each sentence, suggest two possible revisions.

1. I didn't like the movie, it was way too long.
2. She and Jerry are getting married in the fall, they didn't want a summer wedding.
3. My favorite bands are all really loud, playing loud music is good for stress relief.



## Run-On Sentences and Comma Splices Exercises

In the blanks provided, indicate whether the following sentences are correct (C) or contain a comma splice (CS) or a run-on (R-0).

Example: Red is my favorite color I don't like purple. run-on  
Red is my favorite color; I don't like purple.

1. Some people know very early in life what they want to do with their life, others never know. \_\_\_\_\_
2. One Nobel Prize winner knew by age ten that he wanted to be a scientist. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Some people change majors several times before they find a profession they like some know their chosen field right from the start of their college education. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Many people choose not to go to college, they prefer to get a job right out of high school. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Mary, a cousin of mine, is still in college at age fifty she says she doesn't know what she wants to be when she grows up. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Allan, a nephew of mine, wants to be a professional student; he already has two masters degrees and a doctorate and is pursuing still another masters. \_\_\_\_\_
7. In addition, some people spend a lifetime doing something they really aren't happy doing by the time they realize they are in the wrong field, it may be too late to change. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Satisfaction with ones chosen career is very important, choosing the right career is not always easy. \_\_\_\_\_
9. There are computerized career services, as well as other guidance counselors, available for those who need help, it is up to each person to seek help, though. \_\_\_\_\_
10. One can waste a great deal of valuable time choosing a career by the common trial and error method it would be much wiser for each individual to seek professional help in selecting the right career. \_\_\_\_\_
11. On the first day of the tour we visited the Capitol, we spent the second day at the Smithsonian Institute. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Even though I did not feel very well today, I went to my morning classes I cut my afternoon English class. \_\_\_\_\_
13. That the sun always rises is a true statement. \_\_\_\_\_



14. Carole has been in the hospital for more than an week, I hope the doctors will be able to determine what is wrong with her. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Although the weather is unusually stormy this spring, spring usually is our wettest season. \_\_\_\_\_
16. Working for sixty hours a week is not unusual for him in fact, some weeks he works more than seventy hours. \_\_\_\_\_
17. Kimberly explained her project to us we carefully listened. \_\_\_\_\_
18. Connor squealed happily as the other children danced around him. \_\_\_\_\_





## Subject-Verb Agreement

Always find the verb in the sentence first. If you are not sure whether or not a certain word is a verb, check the dictionary. Then ask yourself, “Who or what is doing this action?” The answer is the subject of the sentence.

Also review the material about prepositions and prepositional phrases. Prepositional phrases always begin with a preposition (to, in, of, with, etc.) and end in a noun or pronoun. There may or may not be descriptive words (including a, an, the) in between. Examples of prepositional phrases: to you; in the large room; of the mall; on top of the very large building. The noun or pronoun at the end of a prepositional phrase will *never* be the subject of the sentence.

When verbs are in the present tense, they must *agree* with the subject. When the subject is *one* person, place, or thing, the verb ends in *s*. When the subject is plural, more than one person, place or thing, there is no ending on the verb.

To determine whether the present-tense verb in the sentence should be singular (ending in *s*) or plural (no ending):

1. Cross out any prepositional phrases (see below).
2. Find the present tense verb(s) in the sentence.
3. Ask, “Who or what is doing this action?” to determine the subject.
4. If the subject is singular, the verb should end in *s*; if the subject is plural, the verb will have no ending.
5. A multi-part subject joined by *and* is always plural: **Jack and Jill go up the hill.**
6. A multi-part subject joined by *or* or *nor* agrees with whichever word the verb is closer to: **Jack or Jill goes up the hill. Jack and his friends go up the hill. The neighbor’s children or Jack goes up the hill.**

I. A sentence with a prepositional phrase: The clocks in Jill’s living room (needs, need) new batteries.

(Note that one noun in the sentence – clocks – is plural and another – room – is singular. Which one is the subject of the sentence? Which noun should the verb agree with?)

Step 1: Cross out any prepositional phrases: **The clocks ~~in Jill’s living room~~ (needs, need) new batteries.**

Step 2: Find the verb(s) in the sentence: **The clocks ~~in Jill’s living room~~ (needs, need) new batteries.**



Step 3: Ask, “Who or what is doing this action?” to determine the subject: **The clocks ~~in Jill’s living room~~ (needs, need) new batteries.**

Step 4: Since **clocks** is plural, the verb should have no ending: **The clocks ~~in Jill’s living room~~ need new batteries.**

II. Another sentence with a prepositional phrase: Neither of the clocks in Jill’s living room (needs, need) new batteries. This sentence includes a prepositional phrase *and* a singular indefinite pronoun.

Step 1: Cross out any prepositional phrases: **~~Neither of the clocks in Jill’s living room~~ (needs, need) new batteries.**

Step 2: Find the verb(s) in the sentence: **~~Neither of the clocks in Jill’s living room~~ (needs, need) new batteries.**

Step 3: Ask, “Who or what is doing this action?” to determine the subject: **Neither of the clocks ~~in Jill’s living room~~ (needs, need) new batteries.**

Step 4: Since “neither” is *always* singular, the verb should end in “s”: **~~Neither of the clocks in Jill’s living room~~ needs new batteries.**



## Subject and Verb Agreement Exercises

From <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/print/5/13/34/>

Choose the correct form of the verb that agrees with the subject.

1. Annie and her brothers (is, are) at school.
2. Either my mother or my father (is, are) coming to the meeting.
3. The dog or the cats (is, are) outside.
4. Either my shoes or your coat (is, are) always on the floor.
5. George and Tamara (doesn't, don't) want to see that movie.
6. Benito (doesn't, don't) know the answer.
7. One of my sisters (is, are) going on a trip to France.
8. The man with all the birds (live, lives) on my street.
9. The movie, including all the previews, (take, takes) about two hours to watch.
10. The players, as well as the captain, (want, wants) to win.
11. Either answer (is, are) acceptable.
12. Every one of those books (is, are) fiction.
13. Nobody (know, knows) the trouble I've seen.
14. (Is, Are) the news on at five or six?
15. Mathematics (is, are) John's favorite subject, while Civics (is, are) Andrea's favorite subject.
16. Eight dollars (is, are) the price of a movie these days.
17. (Is, Are) the tweezers in this drawer?
18. Your pants (is, are) at the cleaner's.
19. There (was, were) fifteen candies in that bag. Now there (is, are) only one left!
20. The committee (debates, debate) these questions carefully.
21. The committee (leads, lead) very different lives in private.
22. The Prime Minister, together with his wife, (greet, greets) the press cordially.
23. All of the CDs, even the scratched one, (is, are) in this case.



## Pronouns

This resource was written by **Jaclyn M. Wells**.

Last edited by **Allen Brizee** on March 22, 2013.

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This section reviews pronouns and discusses some of the common errors writers make when using them.

A pronoun replaces a noun. We call the word being replaced by the pronoun the **antecedent**. In the following sentence, *keys* is the antecedent (the noun that is being replaced), and *them* is the pronoun that replaces keys.

- Jenny lost her *keys*. Seth helped look for them.

In the example above, *them* replaces an object. Therefore, it is an **object pronoun**. Sometimes, a pronoun replaces a subject instead of an object. These pronouns are called **subject pronouns**. In the following example, *Seth* is the antecedent, and *he* is the subject pronoun that replaces it.

- Seth* couldn't find the keys. He looked all over the house.

A third type of pronoun is a possessive pronoun. These pronouns replace possessive nouns. In the following example, *Jenny's* is the antecedent, and *her* is the possessive pronoun that replaces it.

*Jenny's* keys may turn up. Her keys go missing all the time.

In sum, the three types of pronouns are:

1. Subject Pronouns: these pronouns replace subjects:

I	we
you	you
he, she, it	they

2. Object Pronouns: these pronouns replace objects

me	us
you	you
him, her, it	them

3. Possessive Pronouns: these pronouns replace possessive nouns and show ownership

my, mine	our, ours
your, yours,	your, yours
his	their, theirs
her, hers	
its	



**There are a few common errors writers make when using pronouns. Review the following common errors and pronoun guidelines below so you can correct these problems in your own writing.**

A. Be careful with compound subjects. You might have had in the past a teacher who corrected you for saying something like, “My dad and me went to the store” (most of us have). The reason that this is incorrect is that *My dad and me* is the subject of the sentence, not the object; thus, the subject pronoun *I* is required instead of the object pronoun *me*. Look at the examples below to further understand this guideline.

Cross out the part of the compound before the pronoun to determine the correct pronoun.

*Example 1: Compound Subject*

INCORRECT: Lauren and her went to the principal’s office.

~~Lauren and her~~ went to the principal’s office.

Her went to the principal’s office. **This does not make sense. Substitute “she”:**

She went to the principal’s office.

CORRECT: Lauren and she went to the principal’s office.

*Example 2: Compound Object*

INCORRECT: I told Matt and he that they should get along better.

I told ~~Matt and he~~ that they should get along better.

I told he that they should get along better. **This does not make sense. Substitute “him”:**

I told him that they should get along better.

CORRECT: I told Matt and him that they should get along better.

B. Be careful to match antecedents and pronouns according to **number**. This means that if an antecedent is a singular noun, its pronoun will also be singular; if an antecedent is a plural noun, its pronoun will also be plural.

INCORRECT: Any participant running in the marathon should bring their shoes.

CORRECT (Option 1): Any participant running in the marathon should bring his or her shoes.

CORRECT (Option 2): Participants running in the marathon should bring their shoes.

C. Be careful to match antecedents and pronouns according to **person**. This means that if an antecedent is in the first person, the pronoun must also be in the first person. If an antecedent is in the second person, the pronoun must also be in the second person. If an antecedent is in the third person, the pronoun must be in the third person.

INCORRECT: If people eat too much, you get sick.

CORRECT: If people eat too much, they get sick.



D. Writers often forget that **one** is a third-person noun. When they forget this, they use **one** and **you** together, even though **you** is actually a second-person pronoun. There are a few ways to correct this error. See the example below.

INCORRECT: If one eats too much, you get sick.

CORRECT (Option 1): If one eats too much, one gets sick.

CORRECT (Option 2): If one eats too much, he or she gets sick.

CORRECT (Option 3): If you eat too much, you get sick.

E. Make sure that the antecedent of the pronoun is clear. In conversation and informal writing, we often use pronouns casually and assume our listeners/readers will understand us. While people can figure out what our pronouns refer to based on context, it is important to use pronouns carefully. You should construct sentences that contain clear relationships between the antecedent and its pronoun. See the example sentences and their revisions below.

*Example 1*

UNCLEAR: Rachel went running with Melanie, and she beat her time by five minutes.

In this example, it's unclear whose time is best. After you read this sentence, you may be confused about the faster runner. The following revision is one option for clarifying the sentence.

CLEAR: Rachel went running with Melanie and beat Melanie's time by five minutes.

In this revision, we've simply removed the pronouns, leaving *beat* as a verb that goes with *Rachel* and replacing *her* with *Melanie's*.

*Example 2*

UNCLEAR: My mother, sister, and I go to the Mother's Day brunch every year. She really enjoys spending time with us.

Based on assumptions about family and Mother's Day, a reader might assume that *she* in the second sentence refers to *mother* and the *us* refers to *sister and I*. However, the sentence is unclear. From the way the sentence is written, it's possible that *she* refers *sister* and *us* refers to *my mother...and I*.

CLEAR: My mother, sister, and I go to the Mother's Day brunch every year. My mother really enjoys spending time with us.

In this revision, we've replaced one pronoun—*she*—with a noun. We've left *us* the same, since it is now clear that *us* refers to the two sisters.



Some more notes on pronouns:

- 1) Pronouns take the place of nouns. The pronoun should be in the same sentence as the noun it takes the place of or refers to.
- 2) The noun the pronoun stands for is called the *antecedent*.
- 3) If the antecedent is singular (one person, place, or thing), the pronoun referring to it must be singular (he, she, it, him, her, his, her, its).
- 4) If the antecedent is plural (two or more people, places, or things), the pronoun referring to the antecedent must be plural (they, them, their).
- 5) Depending on the sentence, it does not matter whether you change the antecedent or the pronoun, as long as singular refers to singular and plural refers to plural.
- 6) Be sure to change verbs as necessary.
- 7) Words ending in –one, -body, or –thing are *always* singular and need a singular pronoun.
- 8) In your writing, try to avoid pronouns; instead, make your writing clear by using specific nouns.
- 9) In college writing, avoid using “you,” “your,” “yourself.” Instead, depending on what you’re writing about, use a specific noun OR I, me, my, mine, we, us, our, one OR delete, depending on the sentence. Be sure to change verbs if necessary.

### **Pronoun Exercise 1**

In the sentences below, decide whether the pronoun (underlined) is a subject, object, or possessive pronoun. Also, identify the pronoun’s antecedent (the word it replaces).

1. I couldn’t find my coffee mug this morning. I bet Henry took it.
2. Henry needs to get his own coffee mug. He is always taking mine.
3. A lot of people in the office buy coffee at Starbucks, but it was closed today.



## **Pronoun Exercise 2**

The following sentences contain pronoun errors. Identify the errors and correct them.

1. My mother gave ten dollars to my sister and I.
2. Him and Mitch went to the video store to pick a movie.
3. Anyone running in the marathon should remember to bring their shoes.

**Pronoun Exercise 3** (from <http://fcc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Pronoun-Antecedent-Agreement-Worksheet.pdf>). Correct the pronoun errors.

1. Each college student brings experience to their classes.
2. Derek and Daniel think that they saw a ghost, but he is not sure.
3. Posted signs around campus are advising people to wash their hands to avoid the spread of flu germs.
4. Everyone who drew a ticket from the pool will receive his or her reward.
5. The ones who texted during the class will be reprimanded for their actions.
6. Carly decided that Carmen would help. She was pleased with the decision.
7. Once a month the group would deliver goods to their community's food bank.
8. Wal-Mart competes with Amazon, but surveys show that it is winning the competition.
9. Jewels covered the criminal's apartment and proved his guilt.
10. No one could believe their eyes when they saw the pile of money!





# Commas

This resource was written by **Jaclyn M. Wells**.

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You'll notice that many of the rules discussed here relate to the information on sentence structure. It might be useful for you look at both lessons and draw some connections between them.

**1. Use a comma before a conjunction (*and, but, for, nor, or, so, and yet*) to join two independent clauses:**

- I wanted to eat lunch with Melanie, but she had a stomachache.
- Mike is playing drums in the band, and Todd is playing the guitar.
- The potato chips from the picnic were pretty stale, so we just threw them away.

**2. Use a comma after an introductory phrase. Also use a comma after a subordinate clause at the beginning of the sentence (see Lesson 2 for information about subordinate clauses).**

- To get a good grade in this class, you will have to study.
- After the movie, we should go out for coffee.
- Because I was annoyed with my boyfriend, I didn't return his phone call.

**3. Use a comma to separate elements in a list. Sometimes, writers will leave off the comma before the final element in a list. While this is acceptable, it's generally included.**

- My favorite cities to visit are Chicago, Memphis, and Louisville.
- The cookies were decorated with red, yellow, and blue sprinkles.
- In my free time, I like to read books, drink coffee with friends, and watch movies.

**4. Use a comma to set off information that is not essential to the meaning of the sentence.**

- My sister-in-law, who is originally from Illinois, really likes to knit sweaters.
- Ken's apartment, a tiny little place over on Pine Street, is always a mess.

**5. Use a comma between adjectives that are separate (meaning that each adjective independently describes the noun).**

- My uncle has always said he wants to marry a beautiful, smart, and funny woman.
- I have no doubt that Jason's wonderful, dependable car will get us to Daytona Beach just fine.

**6. Use a comma after a transitional word or phrase.**

- First, I'll talk about commas. Next, I'll discuss semi-colons and colons. Finally, I'll review quotation marks and italics.
- For example, pepperoni pizza is much higher in calories than plain cheese pizza.



**7. Use a comma with a date.**

- April 5, 2002
- Wednesday, April 16, 2008

**8. Use a comma to separate a city name from a state name.**

- San Jose, California
- Portland, Oregon
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Comma Exercise 1**

Place commas wherever they are needed in the following sentences.

1. There was no question that John's painting a huge colorful and ugly mural was the worst entry in the art exhibit.
2. Werner von Braun Willy Ley and Edward Teller noted authorities in the field of rocket development have done much to guide the missile program of the United States.
3. Mr. Cready's ability to say the wrong thing at the wrong time is I believe amazing.
4. Running around the house the dog was abruptly stopped by a fence.
5. If the opposition should win our candidate would never have any political future.
6. Gracefully lightly and daintily the ballerina moved across the stage.
7. Glamour the woman's fashion magazine recently incorporated with Charm another fashion journal.
8. Joe was born on May 7 1955 and his best friend was born exactly two months later on July 7 1955.
9. Mr. and Mrs. Kwon my parents' best friends sat in front of us at the football game.
10. November 11 1918 the armistice ending World War I was signed.



## Comma Exercise 2

Place commas wherever they are needed in the following sentences.

1. We went to Bar Harbor but did not take the ferry to Nova Scotia.
2. The ginkgo tree whose leaves turn bright yellow in the fall came to this country from Asia.
3. The address for the governor's mansion is 391 West Ferry Road Atlanta Georgia.
4. The villagers enjoyed fairs festivals and good conversation.
5. When the intermission was over the members of the audience moved back to their seats.
6. Andy took the elevator to the third floor rushed into the office and asked to see his father.
7. When he stumbled over your feet William was clumsy not rude.
8. She listened to her favorite record with close careful attention.
9. Jillian who had worked in the dress shop all summer hoped to work there again during the Christmas holidays.
10. Go the first traffic light turn left and then look for a yellow brick building on the north side of the street.
11. Once she has graduated I do not know where she is going or what she is planning to do.
12. "Oh no," Max exclaimed "I think that Dr. Holmes was referring to Eliot the novelist not Eliot the poet."
13. Below the fields stretched out in a hundred shades of green.
14. To understand the purpose of the course the student needs to read the syllabus.
15. All students are eligible to receive tickets but must go to the athletic office to pick them up.
16. Thomas Paine's pamphlet appeared in Philadelphia Pennsylvania on January 9 1776.
17. You don't want any more hamburgers do you?



## Semicolons, Colons, and Quotation Marks

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### Semicolons and Colons

You can use a semicolon to join two independent clauses. Joining two independent clauses this way implies that the two clauses are related and/or equal, or perhaps that one restates the other.

- *Seinfeld* was definitely my favorite television show during the 1990s; in fact, it is my favorite television show of all time.
- I am going to visit Anna in St. Louis next weekend; we'll get to see the Arch, Busch Stadium, and the Landing.

Use semicolons between items in a list that already involve commas.

- I have lived in Chicago, Illinois; Kansas City, Missouri; and Omaha, Nebraska.
- The sweaters I bought today were purple, blue, and green; yellow, white, and red; and pink, black, and grey.

Use a colon after an independent clause when introducing a list.

- The catering facility offers the following entrees: fried catfish, grilled chicken, pan-seared salmon, and sirloin steak.

Use a colon after an independent clause when introducing a quotation.

- My teacher's remark on my final essay was very complimentary: "This essay coherently analyzes musical trends of the late 20th century."

Use a colon between two independent clauses when you want to emphasize the second clause.

- I don't understand why everyone shops at that store: everything there is so expensive.

### Quotation Marks

Put quotation marks around direct quotes. Make sure to put punctuation (commas, periods, etc.) before the first quotation mark and inside of the closing quotation mark.

- My mom asked, "What would you like for dinner?" and I answered, "soup and salad."
- Jared said: "My favorite part of Thanksgiving Day is football."

Use quotation marks around short poems, song titles, short stories, magazine or newspaper articles, essays, speeches, chapter titles, short films, and episodes of television or radio shows.

- My dad and I danced to "When a Man Loves a Woman" at my wedding.
- For my literature class, we are reading Shirley Jackson's short story "The Lottery."



## Commas versus Semicolon Exercise

**Each of the following sentences needs either a comma or a semicolon. Put in the necessary punctuation.**

1. Many companies make sugar-free soft drinks, which are flavored by synthetic chemicals the drinks usually contain only one or two calories per serving.
2. Mr. Leyland played the viola professionally for many years and he now conducts a community orchestra.
3. The crab grass was flourishing but the rest of the lawn, unfortunately, was dying.
4. The hill was covered with wildflowers it was a beautiful sight.
5. As I turned around, I heard a loud thump for the cat had upset the goldfish bowl.
6. The artist preferred to paint in oils he did not like watercolors.
7. The house was clean, the table set, and the porch light on everything was ready for the guests' arrival.
8. He looked carefully in the underbrush but he failed to notice the pair of green eyes staring at him.
9. The foundations of the house had been poured but, to his disappointment, nothing else had been done because of the carpenters' strike.
10. The computer could perform millions of operations in a split second however, it could not think spontaneously.
11. I thought registration day would be tiring but I didn't know I'd have to stand in so many lines.
12. The dog, growling and snarling, snapped at me I was so frightened that I ran.
13. The snowstorm dumped twelve inches of snow on the interstate subsequently, the state police closed the road.
14. Professors are supposed to be absent-minded and I've seen plenty of evidence to support that claim since I've been in college.
15. The suspect said that he had never met the victim however, the detective knew that he was lying.
16. In the first place, it was snowing too hard to see the road in the second place, we had no chains.
17. I have read *Soul on Ice* but I have not read *The Invisible Man*.
18. San Francisco is my favorite city in fact, I plan to spend two weeks there this summer.
19. The quarterback made a brilliant pass and the end crossed the goal line for the winning touchdown.



20. Large supermarkets fascinate me I can find everything from frozen chow mein to soybean flour in one place.
21. Ron and Mike were both in English class this morning they gave an interesting presentation on their research.
22. The obstacles are not insurmountable but they are real and formidable.
23. Riding a bicycle is excellent exercise I ride mine every day.
24. I am not interested in a trip to Asia this year however, I would like to go to Europe.
25. Not all highly educated people enjoy traveling, but many world travelers are particularly well educated.
26. Jack worked overtime to pay off his education debts at least, that was his explanation for his long hours.
27. Katherine has given up smoking about five times but she cannot seem to break the habit.
28. His work may be almost totally forgotten but he would certainly be surprised to see how much current scholarship simply echoes his ideas.
29. Our dog seems to have a built-in alarm clock he wakes us up at exactly the same time every morning.
30. The passengers on the plane were initially alarmed by the loss of altitude but the pilot and the crew kept them calm.
31. I realized at once that something was wrong I was not, however, the only person who was concerned.
32. I had to complete the assignment by Friday otherwise, I would have failed the course.
33. Ralph decided to be a chemist but he changed his mind after taking Chem. 121.
34. I finished reading *The Nation* and then I went to bed.
35. We always go to the mountains in the fall they are at their prettiest at that time of year.
36. Tim went to the candy store quite often the clerk even knew his name.
37. Criticism of capitalist expansionism does not surface in most discussions of the worldwide ecological crisis indeed, proposed solutions rarely deviate from a basic message of further technological "progress."
38. The president has pledged to cut taxes repeatedly and the public has responded enthusiastically.
39. The office was closed consequently, I could not pay my bill.
40. The air was beautifully clear it was a lovely day.



## Quotation Marks Exercise

In the following sentences put in quotation marks wherever they are needed.

1. Mary is trying hard in school this semester, her father said.
2. No, the taxi driver said curtly, I cannot get you to the airport in fifteen minutes.
3. I believe, Jack remarked, that the best time of year to visit Europe is in the spring.
4. My French professor told me that my accent is abominable.
5. She asked, Is *Time* a magazine you read regularly?
7. When did Roosevelt say, We have nothing to fear but fear itself?
9. Yesterday, John said, This afternoon I'll bring back your book *Conflict in the Middle East*; however, he did not return it.
10. Can you believe, Dot asked me, that it has been almost five years since we've seen each other?
11. Certainly, Mr. Martin said, I shall explain the whole situation to him. I know that he will understand.



## Answers to Exercises

### Answers: Sentence Fragments Exercise

Incorrect parts are in italics with justifications in bold. Possible revisions are in blue.

F\_1. Then I attended Morris Junior High. *A junior high that was a bad experience. (**dependent clause**).* Then I attended Morris Junior High, a junior high that was a bad experience.

F\_2. The scene was filled with beauty. *Such as the sun sending its brilliant rays to the earth and the leaves of various shades of red, yellow, and brown moving slowly in the wind. (**dependent clause**).* The scene was filled with beauty, such as the sun sending its brilliant rays to the earth and the leaves of various shades of red, yellow, and brown moving slowly in the wind.

C\_3. He talked for fifty minutes without taking his eyes off his notes. Like other teachers in that department, he did not encourage students' questions.

F\_4. *Within each group, a wide range of features to choose from.* It was difficult to distinguish between them. (**no main verb**). Each group has a wide range of features to choose from. It was difficult to distinguish between them.

C\_5. A few of the less serious fellows would go into a bar for a steak dinner and a few glasses of beer. After this meal, they were ready for anything.

C\_6. It can be really embarrassing to be so emotional. Especially when you are on your first date, you feel like you should be in control.

F\_7. The magazine has a reputation for a sophisticated, prestigious, and elite group of readers. *Although that is a value judgment and in circumstances not a true premise. (**dependent clause**).* The magazine has a reputation for a sophisticated, prestigious, and elite group of readers although that is a value judgment and in circumstances not a true premise.

F\_8. In the seventh grade every young boy goes out for football. *To prove to himself and his parents that he is a man. (**infinitive**).* In the seventh grade every young boy goes out for football to prove to himself and his parents that he is a man.

F\_9. She opened the door and let us into her home. *Not realizing at the time that we would never enter that door in her home again. (**dependent clause**).* She opened the door and let us into her home, not realizing at the time that we would never enter that door in her home again.

C\_10. As Christmas grows near, I find myself looking back into my childhood days at fun-filled times of snowball fights. To think about this makes me happy.





F\_11. *Making up his mind quickly*. Jim ordered two dozen red roses for his wife. *Hoping she would accept his apology*. (**dependent clause**). *Making up his mind quickly*, Jim ordered two dozen red roses for his wife, *hoping she would accept his apology*.

F\_12. They were all having a good time. *Until one of Joe's oldest and best friends had a little too much to drink*. (**dependent clause**). *They were all having a good time until one of Joe's oldest and best friends had a little too much to drink*.

F\_13. *Although it only attained a speed of about twelve miles an hour*. My old rowboat with its three-horsepower motor seemed like a high-speed job to me. (**dependent clause**). *Although it only attained a speed of about twelve miles an hour*, my old rowboat with its three-horsepower motor seemed like a high-speed job to me.

C\_14. With my brother standing by my side, I reached for the pot handle. Tilting the pot way too much caused the boiling water to spill.

F\_15. The small, one-story houses are all the same size and style. *With no difference except the color*. (**prepositional phrases**). The small, one-story houses are all the same size and style *with no difference except the color*.

F\_16. *Being a friend of mine like he was when we first joined the soccer team*. Together we learned a lot. (**dependent clause**). *He was my friend when we first joined the soccer team*, and together we learned a lot.

Source: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/5/18/38/answer>



## Answers to Run-On Sentence Exercise

Run-on sentences are in italics. Possible revisions to sentences are in parentheses.

1. We were really busy at the restaurant tonight. *I waited tables straight through from 3:30 to 11:30 I never sat down for even one break.* (I waited tables straight through from 3:30 to 11:30, and I never sat down for even one break.)
2. My dog had to go to the vet today. She cried and cried when they clipped her toenails, but then she was fine when they gave her a shot!
3. *The book we had to read for class was really long my teacher doesn't seem to understand that we have other classes to read for too.* (The book we had to read for class was really long. My teacher doesn't seem to understand that we have other classes to read for too.)

Source:

[https://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/index.php?category\\_id=2&sub\\_category\\_id=3&article\\_id=70](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/index.php?category_id=2&sub_category_id=3&article_id=70)

## Answers to Comma Splice Exercise

Original sentences are in italics. Possible revisions follow.

1. *I didn't like the movie, it was way too long.* Possible revision 1: I didn't like the movie. It was way too long. Possible revision 2: I didn't like the movie because it was way too long.
2. *She and Jerry are getting married in the fall, they didn't want a summer wedding.* Possible revision 1: Because they didn't want a summer wedding, she and Jerry are getting married in the fall. Possible revision 2: She and Jerry didn't want a summer wedding, so they are getting married in the fall.
3. *My favorite bands are all really loud, playing loud music is good for stress relief.* Possible revision 1: My favorite bands are all really loud; playing loud music is good for stress relief. Possible revision 2: My favorite bands are all really loud because playing loud music is good for stress relief.

Source:

[https://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/index.php?category\\_id=2&sub\\_category\\_id=3&article\\_id=70](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/index.php?category_id=2&sub_category_id=3&article_id=70)



## Answers to Run-On Sentences and Comma Splices Exercise

In the blanks provided, indicate whether the following sentences are correct (C) or contain a comma splice (CS) or a run-on (R-0).

Example: Red is my favorite color I don't like purple. run-on  
Red is my favorite color; I don't like purple.

1. Some people know very early in life what they want to do with their life, others never know. CS One possible revision: Some people know very early in life what they want to do with their life, **but** others never know.
2. One Nobel Prize winner knew by age ten that he wanted to be a scientist. C
3. Some people change majors several times before they find a profession they like some know their chosen field right from the start of their college education. RO One possible revision: Some people change majors several times before they find a profession they like; **however**, some know their chosen field right from the start of their college education.
4. Many people choose not to go to college, they prefer to get a job right out of high school. CS One possible revision: Many people choose not to go to college; they prefer to get a job right out of high school.
5. Mary, a cousin of mine, is still in college at age fifty she says she doesn't know what she wants to be when she grows up. RO One possible revision: Mary, a cousin of mine, is still in college. **At** age fifty she says she doesn't know what she wants to be when she grows up.
6. Allan, a nephew of mine, wants to be a professional student; he already has two master's degrees and a doctorate and is pursuing still another master's. C
7. In addition, some people spend a lifetime doing something they really aren't happy doing by the time they realize they are in the wrong field, it may be too late to change. RO One possible revision: In addition, some people spend a lifetime doing something they really aren't happy doing; by the time they realize they are in the wrong field, it may be too late to change.
8. Satisfaction with one's chosen career is very important, choosing the right career is not always easy. CS One possible revision: Satisfaction with one's chosen career is very important, **but** choosing the right career is not always easy.
9. There are computerized career services, as well as other guidance counselors, available for those who need help, it is up to each person to seek help, though. CS One possible revision: There are computerized career services, as well as other guidance counselors, available for those who need help **although** it is up to each person to seek help.



10. One can waste a great deal of valuable time choosing a career by the common trial and error method it would be much wiser for each individual to seek professional help in selecting the right career. RO One possible revision: One can waste a great deal of valuable time choosing a career by the common trial and error method; it would be much wiser for each individual to seek professional help in selecting the right career.

11. On the first day of the tour we visited the Capitol, we spent the second day at the Smithsonian Institute. CS One possible revision: On the first day of the tour we visited the Capitol. **We** spent the second day at the Smithsonian Institute.

12. Even though I did not feel very well today, I went to my morning classes I cut my afternoon English class. RO One possible revision: Even though I did not feel very well today, I went to my morning classes, **but** I cut my afternoon English class.

13. That the sun always rises is a true statement. C

14. Carole has been in the hospital for more than a week, I hope the doctors will be able to determine what is wrong with her. CS One possible revision: Carole has been in the hospital for more than a week, **so** I hope the doctors will be able to determine what is wrong with her.

15. Although the weather is unusually stormy this spring, spring usually is our wettest season. C

16. Working for sixty hours a week is not unusual for him in fact, some weeks he works more than seventy hours. RO One possible revision: Working for sixty hours a week is not unusual for him; in fact, some weeks he works more than seventy hours.

17. Kimberly explained her project to us we carefully listened. RO One possible revision: Kimberly explained her project to us **while** we carefully listened.

18. Connor squealed happily as the other children danced around him. C



## Answers: Subject and Verb Agreement Exercise

Source: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/print/5/13/34/>

1. Annie and her brothers **are** at school.
2. Either my mother or my father **is** coming to the meeting.
3. The dog or the cats **are** outside.
4. Either my shoes or your coat **is** always on the floor.
5. George and Tamara **don't** want to see that movie.
6. Benito **doesn't** know the answer.
7. One of my sisters **is** going on a trip to France.
8. The man with all the birds **lives** on my street.
9. The movie, including all the previews, **takes** about two hours to watch.
10. The players, as well as the captain, **want** to win.
11. Either answer **is** acceptable.
12. Every one of those books **is** fiction.
13. Nobody **knows** the trouble I've seen.
14. **Is** the news on at five or six?
15. Mathematics **is** John's favorite subject, while Civics **is** Andrea's favorite subject.
16. Eight dollars **is** the price of a movie these days.
17. **Are** the tweezers in this drawer?
18. Your pants **are** at the cleaner's.
19. There **were** fifteen candies in that bag. Now there **is** only one left!
20. The committee **debates** these questions carefully.
21. The committee **lead** very different lives in private.
22. The Prime Minister, together with his wife, **greet**s the press cordially.
23. All of the CDs, even the scratched one, **are** in this case.



**Pronoun Exercise 1-Answers** (From <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/2/1/41/>)

1. It is an object pronoun that replaces coffee mug.
2. His is a possessive pronoun that replaces Henry. He is a subject pronoun that replaces Henry. Mine is a possessive pronoun that replaces my coffee mug (the “my” is implied).
3. It is a subject pronoun that replaces Starbucks.

**Pronoun Exercise 2-Answers** (From <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/2/1/41/>)

The original sentence is in italics. An explanation of the error and revision follow.

*My mother gave ten dollars to my sister and I.* Problem: “My sister and I” is an object, not a subject. So, the appropriate pronoun is me (object pronoun), not I (subject pronoun). Revision: My mother gave ten dollars to my sister and me.

*Him and Mitch went to the video store to pick a movie.* Problem: “Him and Mitch” is the subject. So, the appropriate pronoun is he (subject pronoun), not him (possessive pronoun). Revision: He and Mitch went to the video store to pick a movie.

*Anyone running in the marathon should remember to bring their shoes.* Problem: “Anyone” is a singular noun, but “their” is a plural pronoun. So, they don’t match in number. Revision: Anyone running in the marathon should remember to bring his or her shoes. –or—Runners in the marathon should remember to bring their shoes.



**Answers to Pronoun Exercise 3** (from <http://lfcc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Pronoun-Antecedent-Agreement-Worksheet.pdf>).

1. Each college student brings experience to his or her classes. OR All college students bring experience to their classes.
2. Derek and Daniel think that they saw a ghost, but they are not sure.
3. Posted signs around campus are advising people to wash their hands to avoid the spread of flu germs. CORRECT.
4. Everyone who drew a ticket from the pool will receive his or her reward. CORRECT.
5. The ones who texted during the class will be reprimanded for their actions. CORRECT.
6. Carly decided that Carmen would help. Carly was pleased with the decision. OR Carmen was pleased with the decision.
7. Once a month the group would deliver goods to the community's food bank.
8. Wal-Mart competes with Amazon, but surveys show that Wal-Mart is winning the competition. OR Wal-Mart competes with Amazon, but surveys show that Amazon is winning the competition.
9. Jewels covered the criminal's apartment and proved his guilt. CORRECT.
10. None of the people could believe their eyes when they saw the pile of money! OR We could not believe our eyes when we saw the pile of money!



## Answers: Comma Exercise 1

Source: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/3/5/16/answer>)

Correct answers are in **bold**.

1. There was no question that John's painting, a huge, colorful, and ugly mural, was the worst entry in the art exhibit.
2. Werner von Braun, Willy Ley, and Edward Teller, noted authorities in the field of rocket development, have done much to guide the missile program of the United States.
3. Mr. Cready's ability to say the wrong thing at the wrong time is, I believe, amazing.
4. Running around the house, the dog was abruptly stopped by a fence.
5. If the opposition should win, our candidate would never have any political future.
6. Gracefully, lightly, and daintily, the ballerina moved across the stage.
7. *Glamour*, the woman's fashion magazine, recently incorporated with *Charm*, another fashion journal.
8. Joe was born on May 7, 1955, and his best friend was born exactly two months later on July 7, 1955.
9. Mr. and Mrs. Kwon, my parents' best friends, sat in front of us at the football game.
10. November 11, 1918, the armistice ending World War I was signed.





## Answers: Comma Exercise 2

Source: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/3/5/19/answer>

Correct answers are in bold.

1. We went to Bar Harbor but did not take the ferry to Nova Scotia.
2. The ginkgo tree, whose leaves turn bright yellow in the fall, came to this country from Asia.
3. The address for the governor's mansion is 391 West Ferry Road, Atlanta, Georgia.
4. The villagers enjoyed fairs, festivals, and good conversation.
5. When the intermission was over, the members of the audience moved back to their seats.
6. Andy took the elevator to the third floor, rushed into the office, and asked to see his father.
7. When he stumbled over your feet, William was clumsy, not rude.
8. She listened to her favorite record with close, careful attention.
9. Jillian, who had worked in the dress shop all summer, hoped to work there again during the Christmas holidays.
10. Go to the first traffic light, turn left, and then look for a yellow brick building on the north side of the street.
11. After eating the dog's dinner, Frisbee ate his own.
12. "Oh no," Max exclaimed, "I think that Dr. Holmes was referring to Eliot the novelist, not Eliot the poet."
13. Below, the fields stretched out in a hundred shades of green.
14. To understand the purpose of the course, the student needs to read the syllabus.
15. All students are eligible to receive tickets but must go to the athletic office to pick them up.
16. Thomas Paine's pamphlet appeared in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on January 9, 1776.
17. You don't want any more hamburgers, do you?



## **Answers: Commas versus Semicolon Exercise**

Source:

[https://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/index.php?category\\_id=2&sub\\_category\\_id=3&article\\_id=72](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/engagement/index.php?category_id=2&sub_category_id=3&article_id=72))

1. Many companies make sugar-free soft drinks, which are flavored by synthetic chemicals; the drinks usually contain only one or two calories per serving.
2. Mr. Leyland played the viola professionally for many years, and he now conducts a community orchestra.
3. The crab grass was flourishing, but the rest of the lawn, unfortunately, was dying.
4. The hill was covered with wildflowers; it was a beautiful sight.
5. As I turned around, I heard a loud thump, for the cat had upset the goldfish bowl.
6. The artist preferred to paint in oils; he did not like watercolors.
7. The house was clean, the table set, and the porch light on; everything was ready for the guests' arrival.
8. He looked carefully in the underbrush, but he failed to notice the pair of green eyes staring at him.
9. The foundations of the house had been poured, but, to his disappointment, nothing else had been done because of the carpenters' strike.
10. The computer could perform millions of operations in a split second; however, it could not think spontaneously.
11. I thought registration day would be tiring, but I didn't know I'd have to stand in so many lines.
12. The dog, growling and snarling, snapped at me; I was so frightened that I ran.
13. The snowstorm dumped twelve inches of snow on the interstate; subsequently, the state police closed the road.
14. Professors are supposed to be absent-minded, and I've seen plenty of evidence to support that claim since I've been in college.
15. The suspect said that he had never met the victim; however, the detective knew that he was lying.



16. In the first place, it was snowing too hard to see the road; in the second place, we had no chains.
17. I have read *Soul on Ice*, but I have not read *The Invisible Man*.
18. San Francisco is my favorite city; in fact, I plan to spend two weeks there this summer.
19. The quarterback made a brilliant pass, and the end crossed the goal line for the winning touchdown.
20. Large supermarkets fascinate me; I can find everything from frozen chow mein to soybean flour in one place.
21. Ron and Mike were both in English class this morning; they gave an interesting presentation on their research.
22. The obstacles are not insurmountable, but they are real and formidable.
23. Riding a bicycle is excellent exercise; I ride mine every day.
24. I am not interested in a trip to Asia this year; however, I would like to go to Europe.
25. Not all highly educated people enjoy traveling, but many world travelers are particularly well educated.
26. Jack worked overtime to pay off his education debts; at least, that was his explanation for his long hours.
27. Katherine has given up smoking about five times, but she cannot seem to break the habit.
28. His work may be almost totally forgotten, but he would certainly be surprised to see how much current scholarship simply echoes his ideas.
29. Our dog seems to have a built-in alarm clock; he wakes us up at exactly the same time every morning.
30. The passengers on the plane were initially alarmed by the loss of altitude, but the pilot and the crew kept them calm.
31. I realized at once that something was wrong; I was not, however, the only person who was concerned.
32. I had to complete the assignment by Friday; otherwise, I would have failed the course.
33. Ralph decided to be a chemist, but he changed his mind after taking Chem. 121.
34. I finished reading *The Nation*, and then I went to bed.
35. We always go to the mountains in the fall; they are at their prettiest at that time of year.
36. Tim went to the candy store quite often; the clerk even knew his name.



37. Criticism of capitalist expansionism does not surface in most discussions of the worldwide ecological crisis; indeed, proposed solutions rarely deviate from a basic message of further technological "progress."
38. The president has pledged to cut taxes repeatedly, and the public has responded enthusiastically.
39. The office was closed; consequently, I could not pay my bill.
40. The air was beautifully clear; it was a lovely day.

### **Answers: Quotation Marks Exercise**

The sentences below contain correct quotation marks and italics/underlining.

1. "Mary is trying hard in school this semester," her father said.
2. "No," the taxi driver said curtly, "I cannot get you to the airport in fifteen minutes."
3. "I believe," Jack remarked, "that the best time of year to visit Europe is in the spring. At least that's what I read in a book entitled *Guide to Europe*."
4. My French professor told me that my accent is abominable.
5. She asked, "Is *Time* a magazine you read regularly?"
6. Flannery O'Connor probably got the title of one of her stories from the words of the old popular song, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find."
7. When did Roosevelt say, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself"?
8. Yesterday, John said, "This afternoon I'll bring back your book *Conflict in the Middle East*"; however, he did not return it.
9. "Can you believe," Dot asked me, "that it has been almost five years since we've seen each other?"
10. "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" is, I believe, J. D. Salinger's best short story.
11. "Certainly," Mr. Martin said, "I shall explain the whole situation to him. I know that he will understand."