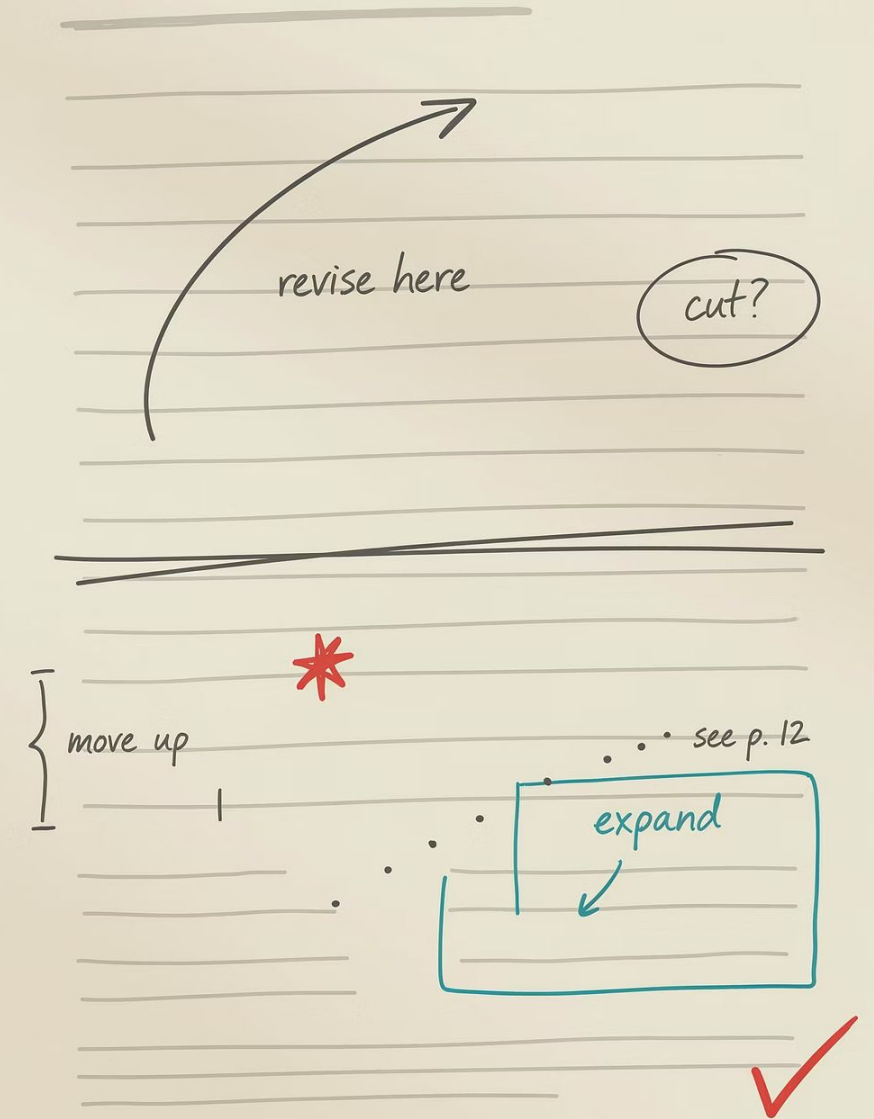


Grammar for Writers

LESSON 3

Fixing Broken Sentences

Essential Question: How do skilled writers recognize and repair broken sentences before readers ever see them?



Bellringer

Which sentence has a problem?

1

Option A

Although the storm finally ended.

2

Option B

The storm finally ended, and the students left the building.

3

Option C

The storm finally ended the students left the building.

4

Option D

The storm finally ended, the students left the building.



Vote first. Explain later. Think carefully — there may be more than one problem.

Writers Become Editors

Professional writers rarely publish a perfect first draft. Writing is a process — and editing is where the real craft happens.

1

Write

Get your ideas down on paper

2

Reread

Read every sentence out loud

3

Revise

Strengthen your ideas and structure

4

Edit

Fix the errors before your reader sees them

Today's lesson is about catching mistakes before your reader does.



Three Sentence Errors

Almost every weak first draft contains at least one of these three common mistakes. The good news? All three are easy to fix once you know what to look for.



Sentence Fragments

An incomplete sentence — missing a subject, verb, or complete thought



Run-on Sentences

Two complete sentences crammed together with nothing separating them



Comma Splices

Two complete sentences joined by a comma alone — which isn't enough



Fortunately, all three are fixable — and you'll know exactly how by the end of this lesson.

ERROR #1

Sentence Fragments

What Is a Fragment?

A fragment is an incomplete sentence. Every complete sentence needs three things: a subject, a verb, and a complete thought. A fragment is missing at least one of them.

Fragment Examples

Because the movie was over. → missing a main clause

Running toward the finish line. → missing a subject

The old bridge across the river. → missing a verb

Why Fragments Happen

Students often stop writing too soon. A phrase sounds finished in their head — but the reader is still waiting for the rest of the idea.

The Writer Thinks:

"Although the rain stopped." → That sounds complete to me!

The Reader Asks:

"Although the rain stopped... then what? Stopped what? What happened next?"

A subordinating word like although, because, since, or when always signals that more information is coming. If the sentence ends there, it's a fragment.



FIX IT

Fixing Fragments

There are two reliable ways to repair a fragment. Both result in one complete, correct sentence.

Fragment

Although the rain stopped.

Solution 1 — Add a Main Clause

Although the rain stopped, the game continued.

Solution 2 — Remove the Subordinator

The rain stopped. → A clean, complete sentence.

Both solutions work. Choose the one that best fits the meaning you want to express.

ERROR #2

Run-on Sentences

What Is a Run-on?

A run-on sentence joins two or more complete sentences with nothing separating them — no punctuation, no conjunction. Both ideas crash into each other, leaving the reader confused about where one thought ends and another begins.

Spot the Run-on

✗ *The bell rang the students rushed out of the classroom.*

Both "The bell rang" and "the students rushed out" are complete sentences. They need a clear connection — but there isn't one.

Three Ways to Fix a Run-on

When two complete sentences collide, you have three solid options for separating them correctly.



Option 1 — Use a Period

The bell rang. The students rushed out.

→ Simple and clear.



Option 2 — Comma + FANBOYS

The bell rang, so the students rushed out. → Shows the relationship between ideas.



Option 3 — Use a Semicolon

The bell rang; the students rushed out.

→ Connects closely related ideas elegantly.

ERROR #3

Comma Splices

A comma splice happens when a writer uses only a comma to join two complete sentences. A comma is not strong enough to do that job on its own — it needs help from a coordinating conjunction.

✗ Comma Splice

The bell rang, the students rushed outside.

Both parts are complete sentences. A comma alone cannot connect them.

The Rule to Remember

A comma always needs a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS) or must be replaced by stronger punctuation when joining two independent clauses.



Three Ways to Repair a Comma Splice

The same three fixes that work for run-ons also work for comma splices. Pick the option that best fits your writing.

Use a Period

The bell rang. The students rushed outside.

Comma + Conjunction

The bell rang, so the students rushed outside.

Use a Semicolon

The bell rang; the students rushed outside.

Three correct answers — all equally valid. Your choice depends on the tone, rhythm, and meaning you want to create as a writer.

Editor Challenge

Name the error before you fix it.

1

Sentence 1

Because everyone was laughing.

2

Sentence 2

*The lights went out everyone
screamed.*

3

Sentence 3

*The lights went out, everyone
screamed.*

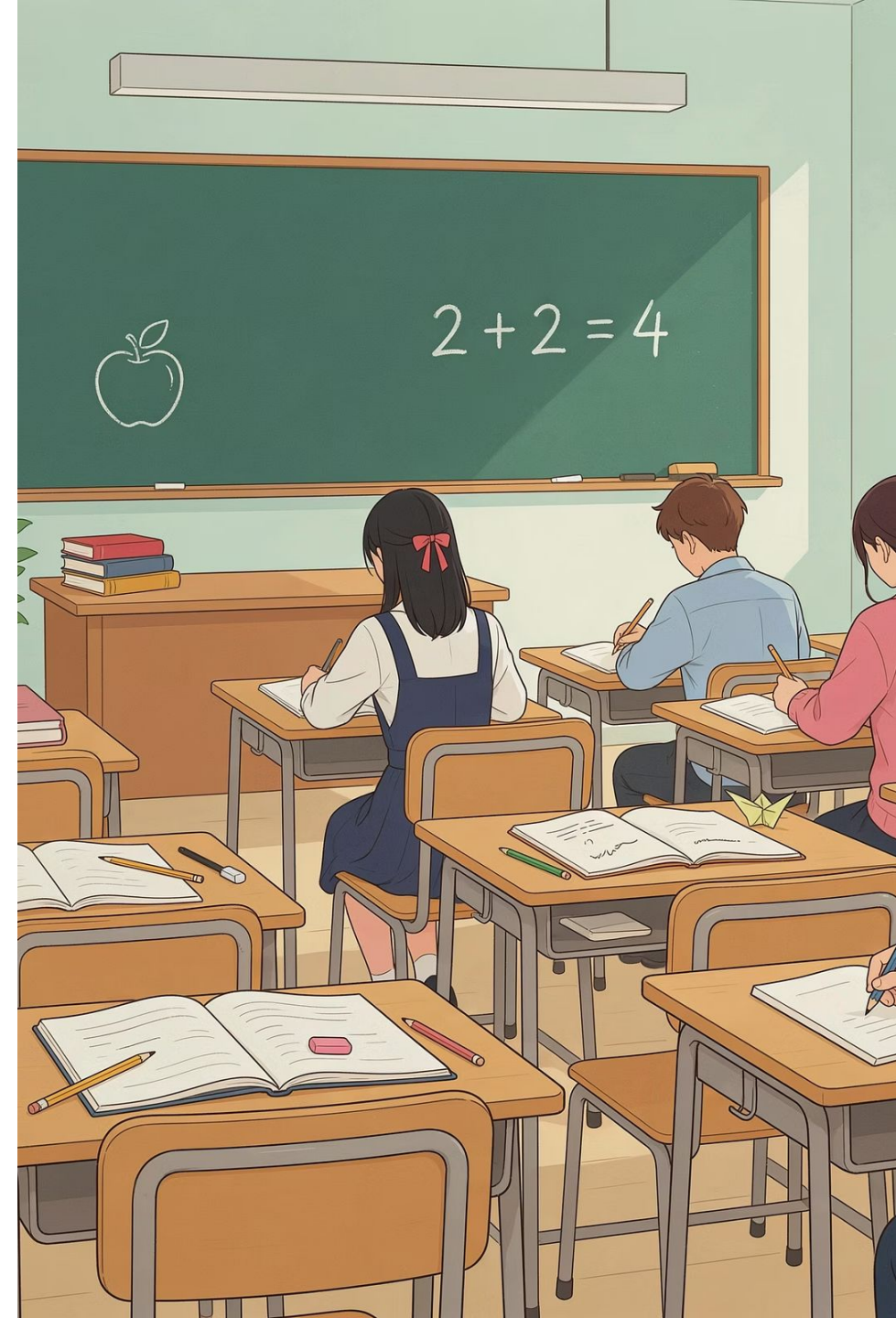


Step 1: Identify the error type. Step 2: Write your correction. Step 3: Explain why your fix works.

Guided Practice

Repair each sentence below. Then explain in writing why your correction works — identifying the error type is just as important as fixing it.

- 1** Although the teacher explained the lesson.
What type of error is this? What must you add to complete the thought?
- 2** The movie ended everyone applauded.
What type of error is this? What is missing between the two complete ideas?
- 3** The rain stopped, the match continued.
What type of error is this? What does the comma need in order to work correctly?



The Writer's Effect

Intentional Fragments

Sometimes skilled authors deliberately write fragments to create dramatic effect. Short, sharp fragments slow the reader down and demand attention.

Silence.

Darkness.

Nothing.

Technically fragments — but powerfully intentional.

The Rule First, Then the Break

Professional authors earn the right to bend grammar rules by first mastering them. A deliberate fragment shows control. An accidental fragment shows carelessness.

As a writer, ask yourself: "Am I breaking this rule on purpose — or by mistake?"



Know the rule before you break it.



Grammar Lab

Read the paragraph your teacher provides. Working with your partner, find and label each of the following errors. Then compare your answers with another pair and defend your choices.



Two Fragments

Find the two sentences that are missing a subject, verb, or complete thought.



One Run-on

Find the two complete ideas that crash into each other with no separation.



One Comma Splice

Find the two complete ideas joined by a lone comma that needs backup.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Notebook Challenge

In your writer's notebook, complete all three repairs below. For each one, write your corrected sentence **AND** a brief explanation of how you recognized the error.

1

Fragment Repair

Write one fragment and fix it. Explain what was missing and what you added.

2

Run-on Repair

Write one run-on and fix it. Explain which method you used and why you chose it.

3

Comma Splice Repair

Write one comma splice and fix it. Explain what the comma needed in order to work.

Key question to answer for each: How did you know which type of error it was?

Peer Review

Exchange notebooks with a partner. Read their three repairs carefully. Use the checklist below to evaluate their work — just like a real editor would.

- **Did they correctly identify the error type?**
Fragment, run-on, and comma splice each have distinct characteristics.
Did they name it accurately?
- **Did they choose a correct repair strategy?**
There may be more than one right answer — but the fix must actually solve the problem.
- **Did they explain their reasoning clearly?**
Editors always justify their corrections. A fix without an explanation isn't complete.



EXIT TICKET

Exit Ticket

For each sentence below: (1) Identify the error. (2) Write a corrected version. (3) Explain in one sentence why your correction works.

Sentence 1

Although the team practiced every day.

Sentence 2

The referee blew the whistle the game began.

Sentence 3

The referee blew the whistle, the game began.



Hand in your exit ticket before you leave. This is your proof of mastery today.



Looking Ahead

Tomorrow we build stronger sentences.

Now that you can identify and fix broken sentences, it's time to level up. Tomorrow's lesson focuses on building sentence variety — one of the fastest and most powerful ways to improve your writing.

1

Simple Sentences

One subject, one verb, one complete thought

2

Compound Sentences

Two independent clauses joined by a conjunction

3

Complex Sentences

One independent clause + one dependent clause

4

Compound-Complex

The most sophisticated sentence structure of all