Common Sentence Problems

A complete sentence

- ends with a period (.), a question mark (?), or an exclamation point (!)
- contains at least one independent clause
  - An independent clause can stand alone, because it has a subject, main verb, and other information that completes the thought.

Fragments are usually the result of a missing subject or verb.

- Incorrect: There are so many trees in the region. Such as oak, pine, maple, and cypress trees.
  Correct: There are many trees in the region, such as oak, pine, maple, and cypress.
- Incorrect: It has not been approved. And that is why it is not allowed.
  Correct: It has not been approved, and that is why it is not allowed.

Run-ons (Fused sentences) are two or more independent clauses (complete sentences) with no punctuation between them.

- Incorrect: This is the problem I am here to find a solution.
  Correct: This is the problem. I am here to find a solution.
- Incorrect: It has not been approved maybe it will never be approved.
  Correct: It has not been approved; maybe it will never be approved.

Comma splices (type of run-on) are two independent clauses (complete sentences) with only a comma between them.

- Incorrect: The teacher is here early, she is not happy.
  Correct: The teacher is here early, but she is not happy.
- Incorrect: The presentation was interesting, it was about archeology.
  Correct: The presentation was interesting, and it was about archeology.

Common Sentence Problems Solved!

Coordinating Conjunctions

- “FANBOYS” is a nickname to help you remember the following coordinating conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so.
- Use these with a comma (,) to join independent clauses (complete sentences). Here is the formula:
**independent clause + comma (,) + “FANBOYS” + independent clause**

- Example 1: I arrived on time, but he had already left.
- Example 2: She is the boss, so you should ask her.
- Example 3: I like apples, and I also like oranges.

- You can also use a few of these conjunctions **without a comma** to join grammatically equal items that are **not independent clauses**.
  - Example 1: I like apples and oranges.
  - Example 2: He was exhausted but not crabby.
  - Example 3: Would you like coffee or tea?

- Although you may see some authors begin sentences with conjunctions, it is generally discouraged in formal writing.

**Conjunctive Adverbs and Transitional Phrases**

- Conjunctive adverbs and transitional phrases can join independent clauses (complete sentences) when used **with a semicolon (;) and a comma (,)**. Here is the formula:

  \[
  \text{independent clause} + \text{semicolon (;)} + \text{conjunctive adverb} + \text{comma (,)} + \text{independent clause}
  \]

- There are so many conjunctive adverbs and transitional phrases. Here are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>accordingly</th>
<th>furthermore</th>
<th>moreover</th>
<th>similarly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>also</td>
<td>hence</td>
<td>namely</td>
<td>still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anyway</td>
<td>however</td>
<td>nevertheless</td>
<td>then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>besides</td>
<td>incidentally</td>
<td>next</td>
<td>thereafter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>certainly</td>
<td>indeed</td>
<td>nonetheless</td>
<td>therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consequently</td>
<td>instead</td>
<td>now</td>
<td>thus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finally</td>
<td>likewise</td>
<td>otherwise</td>
<td>undoubtedly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>further</td>
<td>meanwhile</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Example: I’ve completed all of my courses; however, I’m still waiting for my grades.

- The following phrases can be used in a similar way: **for example** and **for instance**.

- All of these words can also be used to start sentences (unlike conjunctions). Here is the formula:

  \[
  \text{independent clause} + \text{period (.)} + \text{conjunctive adverb} + \text{comma (,)} + \text{independent clause}
  \]

- Example: It will be too late to meet by the time we arrive. Besides, we will be tired.

- All of these words can also be used with coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS) and commas. Here is the formula:

  \[
  \text{independent clause} + \text{comma (,)} + \text{FANBOYS} + \text{comma (,)} + \text{conjunctive adverb} + \text{comma (,)} + \text{independent clause}
  \]

- Example: I’ve finished all of my courses, but, undoubtedly, there is still a lot of work to do.