

# The Basic Sentence

March 6, 2011



## Understanding the Basic Sentence

If you are not familiar with any of the following terms, look them up in the Guide to Grammar Terminology.

[comma splice](#)

[fragment](#)

[complete sentence](#)

[fused sentence](#)

[run-on sentence](#)

This worksheet will help you understand the most basic concept in writing: the correct punctuation of complete sentences. A complete sentence has the following characteristics:

- It contains both a subject and a verb.
- It expresses a complete thought – a free standing, self-contained idea.

There are two ways a sentence can be mis-punctuated: as a fragment or as a run-on.

**Lesson Concept 1:** Identify and correct each fragment. In a sentence fragment something less than a sentence has been punctuated as though it were a complete sentence.

**Example:** Haleemah found a ~~cat. Which~~ she promptly took home.

The fragment ***which she promptly took home*** contains both a subject and a verb, but it cannot stand alone as a self-contained idea. Most fragments are continuations of the preceding sentence, so the easiest way to correct the fragments is to attach them to the preceding sentence.

**Correction:** Haleemah found a cat, which she promptly took home.

**Lesson Concept 2:** Identify and correct run-ons. In a run-on, two complete sentences have been joined together incorrectly and punctuated as though they were a single sentence.

**Example:** The principal liked my ~~idea, she~~ said she would take it to the board of educators for approval.

This kind of run-on is called a ***comma splice*** because it incorrectly uses a comma to join two complete sentences. If two sentences had been put together without any punctuation at all, it would be another kind of run-on called a ***fused sentence***.

**Correction:** The principal liked my idea; she said she would take it to the board of educators for approval.

Writers sometimes create run-ons when they try to keep closely related ideas together within the same sentence. A good way to achieve the same goal is to join the related sentences together with a semicolon (;).