Writing Skills

Fundamentals of the English Sentences

1.1. **Definition of sentence:** a sentence is defined as a grammatically independent unit made of a group of words so as to convey a complete thought. It is the basic unit of thought somebody uses to express her/himself. Furthermore, sentence is basically a group of words which are tied together and convey an idea, event or description. The words in an English sentence have a certain order and rules regarding ways to either expand or shorten it. The boundaries of a sentence are easily recognized, as it begins with a capital letter and ends with a terminal punctuation mark (period, question mark or exclamation point). It is important for English writers to know the language of sentence grammar terms in order to be able to analyze and develop their writing._

1.2. Constituent elements of a sentence

Every sentence, short or long, is made up of one or more unit containing two main parts: subject and predicate.

Subject: is a part of sentence about which a statement is made. It is a noun or pronoun, with any of its modifiers. To identify subject ask who or what the sentence is talking about.

Predicate: the statement made about the subject. It is a verb or verb phrase, with any modifiers or words used to complete its meaning. To identify predicate/verb ask what the sentence says about the subject.

Example: Our foot ball team won the championship.

↓ ↓

Subject predicate

Exercise: Identify the subject and predicate for the following sentences.

1. They run.
2. Stand up.
3. Are you a student?
4. The man who came from Addis is his brother-in-law.

1.3. Types of sentences:

Sentences can be categorized into different groups based on parameters. Therefore; based on their **function** sentences can be divided into four: declarative, interrogative, exclamatory and imperative.

1. Declarative sentence /statement

A declarative sentence simply states a fact or argument, without requiring either an answer or action from the reader. It is used to provide information**.**

Example**:** Addis Ababa is the capital of Ethiopia.

The distance between deconstruction and post modernism eludes me.

He asked me which path leads to the theatre.

He writes a letter to his uncle.

2. Interrogative sentence

An Interrogative sentence asks a direct question and always ends in question mark. It requires response.

Example: who can write a memo?

How many of you can write a good paragraph?

Do they come to school?

3. Exclamatory sentence

An Exclamatory sentence, or exclamation, is simply a more forceful version of a declarative sentence, and marked with an exclamation mark at the end. It shows strong feeling/emotion (fear, surprise, excitement, frightening, etc.).

Example: How beautiful she is!

What a beautiful garden!

4. Imperative sentence-command, order

An Imperative sentence gives a direct command to someone. This type of sentence can end with either a period or an exclamation mark, depending on how forceful the command is.

Example: sit!

Read this book for tomorrow.

Please wash the window.

Wash the window!

Note: Normally, you should not use imperative in academic writing.

In terms of their construction, there are four types of sentences:

1. simple sentence
2. compound sentence
3. complex sentence
4. compound-complex sentence

1. **Simple sentence** is a sentence consisting of one subject and one predicate, either or both of which may be compound.

Example: 1. the players arrived.

2. The players and the judges arrived.

3. The players and the judges arrived and reported.

2. Compound sentence is a sentence which consists of two or more independent clauses connected by a coordinating conjunction, conjunctive adverbs, or separated by a semi-colon.

Example: 1. I have never played tennis, **but** I hope to start taking lessons next year.

2. I steamed the carrot, **and** then I backed the potatoes.

3. I ate everything on the tray**;** I was really hungry.

4. My stomach is hungry, **so** I will have a light snack before dinner.

3. **Complex sentence** is a sentence which consists of one main clause and one or more subordinate clause(s).

Example: 1.Although I have never played, I planned to start taking lessons next year.

2. He met a student **who** left school last year.

3. **After** I took a nap, I felt better.

4. **Compound-complex** sentence is a sentence which consists of two independent clauses with one or more subordinate clause(s).

Example: 1. Although I have never played tennis, I planned to start taking lessons next year; I really need aerobic exercise that tennis provides.

2. I bought coca-cola, and I drank it at once **because** I was very thirsty.

Exercise : Read the following sentences and identify whether each of them is simple, Compound, Complex, or Compound-complex.

1. Ayele dislikes sitting on the beach; he always gets nasty sunburn.
2. Although Abebe and Almaz are hundred miles apart, they keep in constant contact on the internet.
3. Those students who live in the area often find the local college boring, but students from out of the area seem to like it.
4. A gentle man of wealth and position has been found guilty of theft.
5. The life which seems so fair is like a bubble blown in the air.
6. Reading a novel after work is a pleasant way of spending leisure.
7. My brother who used to give me money whenever I want has been fired out of his work, and I am in a financial problem now.

1.4. Sentence combination:

Sentences can be combined in two methods: **coordination** and **subordination**. Subordination and coordination are ways of showing the exact relationship of ideas within a sentence. Through **coordination,** we show that ideas are of equal importance. When we coordinate, we use the words like *for, and, nor, but, or, yet,* and *so (fan boys)*. Through **subordination,** we show that one idea is less important than another. When we subordinate, we use dependent words such as *when, although, while, because,* after *and so on.*

Coordination: is a method of joining the independent sentences by using coordinators. The linking devices (coordinators) we use in coordination are: coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions, and adverb conjunctions.

Coordination conjunctions: the following are the seven coordinating conjunctions which we use to join sentences.

For- shows result-cause relationship

And – shows addition

Nor-equality of two negative ideas

But **–** shows opposition or contrast

Or**-** shows alternative or choice

Yet**-** shows opposition

So**-** shows cause and effect relationship

Examples

- ✓ She studied hard, **so** she scored 'A' in sophomore English.
- ✓ You should study hard, **or** you will fail the exam.
- ✓ He could not eat anything, **for** he was severely sick.
- ✓ The student didn't take mid exam, **nor** did he take final exam.
- ✓ She studied hard, **but** she failed the exam.
- ✓ Yesterday, I ate my breakfast, **and** I went to my friend's home.
- ✓ My stomach is hungry, **so** I will have a light snack before dinner.

When a coordinating conjunction connects two independent clauses it is usually (not always) accompanied by comma.

Exercise: combine the following pairs of sentences by using coordinating conjunctions.

1. A) the dog eats the food very fast

   B) It was very hungry

2. A) everyone wants a tax cut.

   B) No one wants to give up any service.

3. A) you should submit the paper on time

   B) You will loss thirty marks.

Correlative conjunctions: are coordinating words that work in pairs to join words, phrases, and sentences. The items joined by them must be parallel. The most common correlative conjunctions are:

Either----------or

Neither----------nor

Both----------and

Whether----------or

Not only----------but also

Example:

- ✓ *Either* goes to bed early *or* stops complaining.
- ✓ *Neither* Kebede *nor* Ayele was willing to give me money.
- ✓ Abebe is *not only* a poet but *also* a writer.
- ✓ You are not sure *whether* a word should be spelled "dependent" *or* "dependant."
- ✓ Decide *whether* to use point-by-point *or* whole-to-whole organization.

Bruce wants *both* freedom *and* to be wealthy. **Not parallel**
Bruce wants *both* freedom *and* wealth. **Parallel**
Bruce wants *both* to have freedom *and* to be wealthy. **Parallel**

Exercise

Combine the following pairs of sentences by using correlative conjunctions.

1. A) To go to Bahir Dar, you can use a bus. B) To go to Bahir Dar, you can use a plane.

2. A) Tigist is beautiful. B) Tigist is honest.

3. A) I didn’t go out yesterday. B) My sister didn’t go out yesterday.

4. (I am in confusion). A) I want to study physics. B) I want to study mathematics.

Using Semicolons

A **semicolon** is a punctuation mark that can join two sentences through coordination. Use semicolons *only* when the ideas in the two sentences are closely related. Do not over use semicolons.

Example: Antarctica is a mystery; few people know much about it.

Its climate is extreme; few people want to endure it.

A semicolon alone does not tell readers much about the relationship between the two ideas. To give more information about the relationship, use a **conjunctive adverb** after the semicolon. Put a comma after the conjunctive adverb.

Exercise: Daniel is very clever. He can convince anyone that he is right.

a. , but **b.** ; **c.** ,

Conjunctive adverbs are adverbs which we use to connect main clauses in a sentence. Common conjunctive adverbs are: *also, hence, thus, still, indeed, then, instead, otherwise, consequently furthermore, nevertheless, likewise, however, moreover, therefore, in addition, besides,…*

Examples*:*

- ✓ Abebe must be sick; *otherwise*, he would be here.
- ✓ The band struck up a familiar tune; *indeed*, they were playing our songs.
- ✓ Everyone liked the hotel; *however*, no one was able to pay the required price.
- ✓ We arrived early**;** *consequently***,** we found a good place to sit.

Exercise: combine the following pairs of sentences by using the appropriate conjunctive adverb.

1.a. He won a lottery. 1.b. his father gave him a lot of money.

2.a. He worked hard. 2.b. He became rich.

Circle the correct choice to fill in each blank.

1. I do not have to pay extra for long-distance cell phone calls; _____ I use my cell phone for all my out-of-state calls.

a. besides, b. then, c. as a result,

2. I did not like the teacher's criticism of my paper; _____ I must admit that everything she said was right.

a. as a result, b. in addition, c. still,

Subordination/subordinating conjunction

Another method of joining related thoughts is to use subordination. **Subordination** is a way of showing that one thought in a sentence is not as important as another thought. When you add subordinating conjunction to a clause, you make a clause dependent. Here are three sentences where one idea is subordinated to (made less emphatic than) the other idea:

1. **Because** Rita didn't want to die of lung cancer, she decided to stop smoking.
2. The wedding reception began to get out of hand **when** the guests started to throw food at each other.
3. **Although** my brothers wanted to watch a *lost* rerun, the rest of the family insisted on turning to the network news.

Dependent Words: Notice that when we subordinate, we use dependent words.

subordinating conjunction	*Indication*	*Examples*
So that	*Purpose*	*He went to Harvard **so that** he could upgrade his education.* I skipped lunch **so that** I could study for an exam. She's opening an account on a social networking site **so that** she can keep in touch with her daughter.
As, because, since	*Reason/ cause*	**As** Carlo set the table, his wife finished cooking dinner.
after before when, while, since, until, whenever	*Time*	**After** the volcano erupted, the sky turned black with smoke. **When** Jerry lost his temper, he also lost his job. ***While*** Aisha was eating breakfast, she began to feel sick.
As long as, even if, if , unless, as if	*Conditional*	You won't get very far on the bike **unless** you add more air to its tires. You can have many friends **as long as** you're sociable. He behaved **as if** nothing had happened.
Although, even though , though	*Contrast*	***Although*** I practiced for three months, I failed my driving test.
Where, wherever	*Location/ place*	***Where ever** you go, you need to write a diary.*
Which, who, whose, whom	*Relative clause*	My brother, **who** is an engineer, figured it out for me. Chocolate, ***which*** is my favourite food, upsets my stomach.

		Some of the books **which** I borrowed from the public library are overdue now. I don't know **whose** book it is. Only the reserved seats**, which** were replaced last year**,** had good views.

Exercise:

1. Jane has now sold the old car. (she was given it by her parents)
2. The house is for sale, (it is next to ours)

1.5. Faulty Sentence: some of the common faults in sentence construction are:

a) Sentence fragments:

Sentence fragments is an incomplete sentence lacking a verb and a subject or a complement, or in other words a word group that lacks a subject or a verb and does not express a complete thought is **fragment**. The following are some of the common types of fragments that people write:

i) **Dependant-word fragments**: some word groups that begin with dependent words are fragment.

Dependent words=subordinate conjunctions include:

After, although, as, because, since, if, even if, that, so that, unless, whatever, what, when, whenever, where, wherever, whether, which, whichever, while, who, whose

Examples:

After I cashed my pay check. I treated to dinner. (x)

After I cashed my pay check, I treated to dinner. (√)

I won't leave the house. Until I hear from you(x)

I won't leave the house until I hear from you. (√)

Eliminating:I cashed my pay check and then treated to dinner.

Exercise: Before I came to the class. I ate my breakfast.

ii) **–ing** or **to** fragments**:** when an –ing word appears at or near the start of a word group, a fragment may result. such fragment often lack a subject and a verb.

Examples:

Ellen walked all over the neighboring hood yesterday. Trying to find her dog Bo. (x)

Trying to find her dog Bo, Ellen walked all over the neighboring hood yesterday (√)

We sat back to watch the movie. Not expecting anything special. To our surprise, we clapped, cheered, and cried for the next few hours. (X)

We sat back to watch the movie. We didn't expect anything special. To our surprise, we clapped, cheered, and cried for the next few hours. (√)

Not expecting anything special, we sat back to watch the movie. To our surprise, we clapped cheered, and cried for the next few hours. (√)

At the Chinese restaurant, Tim used chopsticks. To impress his date. He spent one hour eating a small bowl of rice. (x)

At the Chinese restaurant, Tim used chopsticks to impress his date. He spent one hour eating a small bowl of rice. (√)

iii) **added-detail fragments**: added-detail fragments lack a subject and a verb. They often begin with one of the following words: *also, especially, except, for example, like, including, such as*

Examples:

1. Before a race, I eat starchy foods. Such as bread and spaghetti. The carbohydrates provide quick energy. (x)

Before a race, I eat starchy foods such as bread and spaghetti. The carbohydrates provide quick energy. (√)

2. Bob is taking a night course in auto-mechanics. Also, one in plumbing. He wants to save money on house hold repairs. (x)

Bob is taking a night course in auto-mechanics. Also, he is taking one in plumbing. He wants to save money on house hold repairs. (√)

3. M y son keeps several pets in his room. Including hamsters and mice. (x)

M y son keeps several pets including hamsters and mice in his room. (√)

4. My mother likes watching day time television shows. Especially old movies and soap opera (x)

My mother likes watching day time television shows especially old movies and soap opera. (√)

5. Luiz works evenings in a video store. He enjoys the fringe benefits. For example, seeing the new movies first. (X)

Luiz works evenings in a video store. He enjoys the fringe benefits; for example, he sees the new movies first. (√)

iv) Missing-subject fragments. It is a kind of fragment when the Subject missed from the sentence.

Examples:

1. Alicia loved getting wedding presents. But hated writing thank-you notes. (x)

Alicia loved getting wedding presents, but she hated writing thank-you notes. (√)

Alicia loved getting wedding presents but hated writing thank-you notes. (√)

2. Mickey has orange soda and potato chips for breakfast. Then eats more junk foods, like root beer and cookies, for lunch. (x)

Mickey has orange soda and potato chips for breakfast. Then he eats more junk foods, like root beer and cookies, for lunch.

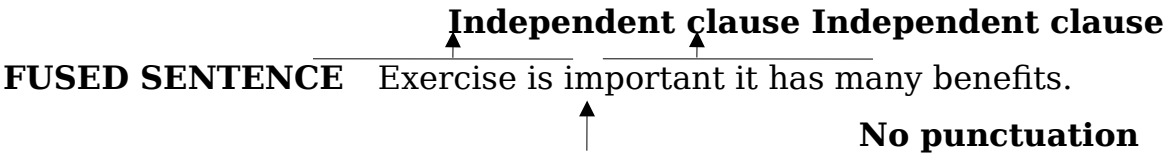
b) run-ons

A run-on is two complete thoughts that are run together with no adequate sign given to mark the break between them. There are two kinds of **run-**

ons: **fused sentences** and **comma splices**. A **run-on** is two complete sentences joined incorrectly as one sentence.

i) Fused sentences: when two complete thoughts fused or joined together without a punctuation mark that uses to separate between the thoughts (clauses), it is called **fused sentence**.

Example:



1. She is a thin, strong girl. (Fused)

   She is a thin and strong girl (correct).

2. He showed me the direction to his house I couldn't find it. (Fused)

   He showed me the direction to his house, but I couldn't find it. *(correct)

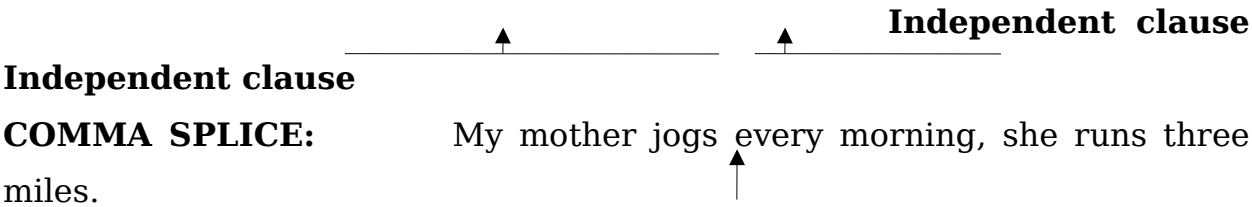
3. The bus stopped suddenly, I spilled coffee all over my shirt. (Fused)

The bus stopped suddenly, and I spilled coffee all over my shirt. (Correct)

Exercise: My mother jogs every morning she runs three miles.

ii) Comma splice: is the misplacement of comma in a sentence, or comma splice occurs when a comma is used to join two independent clauses without a coordinating conjunction. This resulted in message distortion or incomprehensibility, or conveys unintended meaning. A **comma splice** is also occurred when two complete sentences are joined by only a comma.

Example:



Comma

1. If I were him I, would marry the girl. (Spliced)

   If I were him, I would marry the girl. (Correct)

2. After the break out of the war the native people, migrated to the neighboring war free-zones. (spliced)

After the break out of the war, the native people migrated to the neighboring war free-zones. (√)

Exercise: Exercise is important, it has many benefits.

c) Modifiers

Modifiers are words or word groups that describe other words in a sentence. Modifiers should be near the words they modify; otherwise, the sentence can be unintentionally funny. A modifier can be an **adjective**, **adverb** or a phrase or clause acting as an adjective or adverb. The modifiers basically use to **add information** to another element in a sentence.

i) Misplaced modifier

A modifier should be placed near the word or words it modifies. However, people may wrongly place modifiers that results message distortion. This is called misplaced modifier. A **misplaced modifier**, because it is in the wrong place, describes the wrong word or words.

MISPLACED: Linda saw the White House *flying over Washington, D.C.*

[Was the White House flying over Washington?]

CLEAR: *Flying over Washington, D.C.*, Linda saw the White House.

To correct a misplaced modifier, place the modifier as close as possible to the word or words it modifies, often directly before it.

Example: **a**) Almaz is my sister **whom you saw with me yesterday.** (x)

Almaz whom you saw with me yesterday is my sister. (√)

b) **Nearly** she fainted when she met her lost brother. (Wrong)

She nearly fainted when she met her lost brother. (√)

c) Alien spaceships were reported to have landed **on the radio.** (Wrong)

Alien spaceships were reported on the radio to have landed (√)

Exercise: I only found two old photos in the drawer.

Joanne almost ate the whole cake.

I had invited to the birthday party my loudest, wildest friends wanting the video to be funny.

ii) Dangling modifier

A dangling modifier is a word or phrase that cannot **logically describe, limit, or restrict** any word or word group in the sentence. A **dangling modifier** "dangles" because the word or words it modifies are not in the sentence. Dangling modifiers usually appear at the beginning of a sentence and seem to modify the noun or pronoun that immediately follows them; however, they are really modifying another word or group of words. If you find a **dangling modifier**, fill in the missing information or substitute confusing and vague words with specific and accurate ones.

For example, look at this sentence:

While sleeping in his backyard, a Frisbee hit Bill on the head.

The unintended meaning is that the *Frisbee* was sleeping in his backyard.

What the writer meant, of course, was that *Bill* was sleeping in his backyard.

The writer should have placed *Bill* right after the modifier, revising the rest of the sentence as necessary:

While sleeping in his backyard, *Bill* was hit on the head by a Frisbee.

The sentence could also be corrected by adding the missing subject and verb to the opening word group:

While *Bill* was sleeping in his backyard, a Frisbee hit him on the head.

More Examples:

1. *Rushing to class*, the books fell out of my bag. [The books were not rushing to class.]

   Rushing to class, I dropped my books. **(Clear)**

2. Using a variety of pedagogical techniques, the students were taught grammar.**DM**

Using a variety of pedagogical techniques, the teacher taught the students grammar. **Correct**

3. To improve his essay, each page was proofread. **DM**

To improve his essay, David proofread each page. **Correct**

4. While reading the novel, the pages that contain important information should be marked. **DM**

While reading the novel, you should mark the pages that contain important information. **Correct**

d) Faulty Parallelism

Faulty parallelism occurs when there are non-parallel constructions in a sentence. In a sentence we must use similar structure-two or more ways of construction in a sentence should be eliminated. However, people may fail to maintain the same construction in a sentence. This results in **faulty parallelism**. Use nouns with nouns, verbs with verbs, and phrases with phrases to keep parallelism.

Example:

1. I enjoy basketball more than playing video games. (**Not parallel**)

[*Basketball* is a noun, but *playing video games* is a phrase.]

I enjoy basketball more than video games. **Parallel**

I enjoy playing basketball more than playing video games. **Parallel**

2. Martha likes walking, mountaineering, swimming and she likes reading. (**FP**)

Martha likes walking, mountaineering, swimming and reading. (**Correct**)

3. The students attended the classes, did their home work, and they were going back to home. (FP)

The students attended the classes, did their home work, and went back to home. (**Correct**)

4. The women were shouting, laughing, insulting each other and they quarreled with each other. (**FP)**

The women were shouting, laughing, insulting and quarrelling with each other. **Correct**

5. The dismissed workers were marching along the main street, chanting slogans, condemning their boss and they sang songs. **Wrong**

The dismissed workers were marching along the main street, chanting slogans, condemning their boss and singing songs. **Correct**

e) Faulty Agreement

Agreement deals with the relationship between a subject and a verb, a pronoun and its antecedent and number.

i) **Subject- verb Agreement**

A verb must agree with its subject in number. A singular subject (one person or thing) takes a singular verb. A plural subject (more than one person or thing) takes a plural verb. Faulty agreement occurs when these relations are not kept.

Example: Tadelech and her younger sister **is** studying computer science. (**Wrong**)

Tadelech and her younger sister **are** studying computer science. (**Correct**)

Faulty Subject-verb agreement can be made in one of the following situations:

1. When words come between the subject and the verb

2. When the verb comes before the subject

3. with compound subjects

4. with indefinite pronouns

1. Words between subject and verb

Words that come between the subject and the verb do not change the subject-verb agreement.

Example:

1. Some members of the parents' association (**want**, wants) to ban certain books from the school library.
2. The teacher along with his students (**is**, are) singing the national anthem.

2. **Verb before subject**

A verb agrees with its subject even when the verb comes before the subject. Words that may precede the subject include there, here, and, in questions, who, what which, and where.

Examples:

There **are** wild dogs in our neighborhood.

Here **is** the news paper.

Where **are** the children's coats?

There **is** no secrets talk in China.

If you are unsure about the subject, ask who or what of the verb, like "what are in our neighborhood" in the above example. So, the answer, **wild dogs,** is the subject.

3. Compound subjects:

Subjects joined by *and* generally take a plural verb.

Example:

Yoga and biking **are** Lola's ways of staying in shape.

Ambition and good luck **are** the keys to his success.

When subjects are joined by *either . . . or, neither . . . nor,* or *not only . . . but also,* the verb agrees with the subject closer to the verb.

Either the restaurant manager or his assistants deserve to be fired for the spoiled meat used in the stew.

4. Indefinite pronoun

The following words, known as *indefinite pronouns,* always take singular verbs.

***-one* words**	***-body* words**	***-thing* words**	
One	nobody	Nothing	each
anyone	anybody	anything	either
everyone	everybody	everything	neither
someone	somebody	something	

Example: Everyone wants the semester to end.

Either of the meals is good.

Exercise: Write the correct form of the verb in the space provided.

1. Something always_____ (keep, keeps) me from getting to bed on time.
2. Nobody that I know _____ (work, works) as hard as Manuel.
3. Neither of the jobs offered to me _____ (pay, pays) more than eight dollars an hour.
4. Both of the speakers _____ (has, have) told us more than we care to know about the dangers of water pollution.
5. Someone in Inez's apartment house_____(slip, slips) an unsigned valentine under her door every year.

ii) Pronoun agreement and Reference

Nouns are names of persons, places, or things; whereas pronouns are words that take the places of nouns.

Pronoun Agreement

A pronoun must agree with the word or words it replace(s).

Example: Yemisrach showed me **her** photo Album. (Singular)

Students must utilize **their** effort in studying **their** lessons. (Plural)

The clothes were still damp, but I decided to fold------any way. (**Them**, their)

R.Vanpersie feels happy about ------ contract at Manchester united. (**His**, him)

Pronoun Reference

A sentence may be confusing and unclear if a pronoun appears to refer to more than one word or does not refer to any specific words.

Examples

Martha told Senait that she should had written her a letter. Wrong

Martha told Senait, "You should have written me a letter". Correct

Peter told Alan that his wife was unhappy. Wrong

Peter said to Alan, “My wife is unhappy”. Correct

Marsha attributed her success to her husband’s support, which was generous. Incorrect

Does which mean that Marsh’s action or her husband’s support was generous?

Marsha attributed her success to her husband’s generous support. Correct

Diction:

Paragraph

Definition: A paragraph is a group of sentences that supports and develops a single idea. In other words, a paragraph is a group of related sentences with a **single** or **unified idea** that has been adequately developed. A paragraph normally contains several sentences but they are all concerned with the theme contained/stated in the **topic or key sentence** (i.e. the main sentence). **The key sentence** is usually the first one, which contains the main idea or topic. The other sentences support it by adding further information or examples. A paragraph is self contained should link logically with the previous and following paragraphs so that the flow and cohesion of the writing is maintained.

Nature/structure of a Paragraph

a) Introduction

The paragraph usually has a topic sentence that states the main idea. It informs the reader what the paragraph is going to discuss. Commonly, the topic sentence is the opening sentence in the paragraph, and makes a broad statement about the person, place, animal, building, idea, event; etc. that is being discussed in the paragraph.

b) Body

Detail (supporting, specific) Sentences follow the topic sentences that are made up of facts, examples, illustration, definitions, arguments, etc. These are evidences directly related to the general statement. These sentences could be few or many depending on how adequately the idea raised on the topic sentence is developed. If the idea could be developed with few sentences, the supporting sentences will be few, but if the idea requires

more elaboration and development, the number of supporting sentences will be many. As a result, the paragraph becomes long.

c) Conclusion

Towards the end of the paragraph, a clincher sentence comes to conclude the paragraph by bringing up the main idea rather than merely repeating it in terms of the nature of the development of the paragraph.

Example: Topic sentence: police officers perform many important services.

Details include: what are these services? Why are they important? When and where they preformed etc?

The clincher sentence restates the main idea rather than merely repeating it. And hence, the clincher sentence of the above topic sentence could be for instance, “Thus essential services are provided by police officers”

Exercises 1) Read the following paragraph carefully and answer the

> The benefits of regular exercise extend to nearly every aspect of physical functioning. In some cases, as with the muscular system and posture, the relationship of fitness to exercise is obvious. On the other hand, you may not be aware of a link between exercise and respiration, for example. Exercise does bring importance in many areas.

1. What is the main idea of this paragraph?
   _____
2. What evidence is given to support this main idea?
   _____
3. What is the clincher sentence?
   _____
4. In Which sentence does the main idea occur?
   _____

Topic sentence

A topic sentence reveals the main idea of the paragraph. Other sentences in the paragraph serve to clarify, develop, and illustrate this idea. Usually, the topic sentence is more effective when presented as the first sentence, but it may have any position in the paragraph. Furthermore, the topic sentence may actually be more than one sentence.

Therefore; writers, to promote clarity and precision, often use topic sentences to announce the main ideas of the paragraphs. In fact, most good writers probably are not worried whether their paragraphs have topic sentences. Certainly, if you have never had problem with paragraph unity, you need not worry about including topic sentence in every paragraph. If you have the problem, use it.

Principles of paragraph Development

Paragraph is effective to the degree that its internal structure is sound; its substance concrete, and its length appropriate. These qualities all contribute to the common purpose of transmitting a specific unit of thought or feeling from the writer to the reader.

Effective paragraph has sound internal structure. The qualities that indicate sound internal structure are unity, completeness, Coherence, and emphasis. As the development of a single topic, idea or emotional effect, the good paragraph is **unified**; as a cluster of logically related sentences, it is **coherent**; and as an appropriately focused group of main and supporting points, it is **empathic**.

2.1. Unity (oneness)

When every sentence in the paragraph contributes to developing the **core idea**, which is usually stated in a topic sentence, the paragraph has unity. However, long or short a paragraph may be, it must stick to its subject. That is to say, every sentence in a paragraph must mesh together like the gears in a smooth running engine. To achieve the quality of unity (oneness) of a paragraph, all essential information could be included. However, if essential information is excluded or omitted, the paragraph remains less than a unit and hence lacks oneness. Again to maintain unity of the paragraph all

information that is not essential to the development of the topic must be rigorously excluded because that sort of information destroys the unity of the paragraph. Therefore, needless sentences (or unity destroyers) should be excluded.

Example: Look at the following paragraph.

(1)When I was a freshman in high school, I enjoyed most of my courses. (2) Physical education to be sure, I didn't like, probably because I was small for by age ten and rather frail. (3)But English was easy for me, as I had always been a great reader. (4) I found algebra fun, too, as I am naturally good at figures and logical relationships. (5) It was biology; however, that I enjoyed most of all; this study of plants and animals opened a whole new word to me.

Therefore; paragraph unity is achieved in that the writer sticks to the subject announced in opening topic sentence.

Exercise: Examine the following paragraph and answer the questions that follow it.

My mother is going back to school for her Master of Arts degree. She is taking courses at North Eastern Illinois University. She will become a remedial reading teacher she___ teaching. Her course work consists of learning about problems of reading and how to deal with them. Her tuition money comes out of our grocery budget. As part of her program, she will work in the reading clinic during the summer. The whole program will take two years to complete. It is a good investment; however, because she will be a well- qualified expert in the field of reading at the end of her schooling.

3. Is the paragraph unified; if not, which sentence affects its oneness?

Here is an example of a unified **Model paragraph**

Your sister is attractive woman. Her large, dark eyes are beautiful. Her complexion is flawless, and she has a lovely big smile. Her long, black hair is full and shiny. She is tall and slender, and her every movement is graceful. She also dresses stylish, and her assortment of passant skirts and loose-fitting blouses look great on her.

Exercise:

Cross out a sentence/ sentences that is/ are not clearly related to the topic sentences

1. My brother is driving me crazy. First he borrows my razor and doesn't put it back. He will sneak into the kitchen and eat the pancakes I have cooked for myself. He helps me with my home work, which I appreciate. Then he borrows my car with the gas tank empty. Finally he borrows money from me and never pays it back. I'll be glad when he moves out of the house.

2. When I was growing up, one of the places I enjoyed most was the cherry tree in the back yard. Behind me the yard were an alley and then more houses. Every summer when the cherries try to ripen, I used to spend hours high in the tree, picking and eating the sweet, sun warmed cherries. My mother always worried about my falling out of the tree, but I never did. But I had some competitions for the cherries-flocks of birds that enjoyed them as much as I did and would perch all over the tree, devouring the fruit whenever I wasn't there. I used to wonder why the grown-ups never ate any of the cherries, but actually when the birds and I had finished, there weren't many left.

2.2. Completeness

Completeness in a paragraph means that the topic is adequately developed by details, explanations, definitions, evidences and the likes so that the reader is not left a fuzzy idea of what the writer means. The amount of development necessary for any given paragraph will vary according to the topic, the evidence and the purpose of the paper of which the paragraph is a part. However, completeness does not mean simply that you could keep writing until you have 200 or 250 words and then start new paragraph. A paragraph may contain a fair amount of information, but still be incomplete if the information is not developed.

Incomplete paragraph

New filming technique and new methodology of creating, special effects contribute to the influence a film will have on the industry. This influence is one of aspect of whether or not a film is considered a classic. Star Wars is one of the most important films in movie history and has had a profound effect on the technical aspects of the film industry. This influence is one of aspect of whether or not a film is considered a classic. Star wars is one of the most important films in movie history and has had a profound effect on the technical aspects of the film industry.

This is not a paragraph rather an *outline*. The reader is left wandering about the nature of new filming techniques and special effects.

Complete paragraph

Railway travel in Spain is a nightmare that tourists should know about before embarking on a voyage. Each compartment holds eight people, which usually results in conglomeration of soldiers, tourists, farmers and villages. Within minutes after the train pulls out of the station, the compartments become saturated with a mixed odor of wine, urine and sweat. Children and dogs usually stroll the narrow passageways. Drunkards and perverts roam through the cars shouting obscenities and pinching the rear ends of standing or passing women. Travelers suffer silently, passing the dreary hours by

Notice that the reader makes the test of completeness. It is s/he, not writer, who must be satisfied. The writer must, in effect, see his work as the reader will see it. He does so partly by being aware of his reader's needs-that is, by analyzing the situation-and eternally conscious that the reader gets the full meaning from detailed development, not from general statement alone.

The most common devices for gritting completeness in a paragraph are supporting details, examples, comparisons and contrasts, etc.

2.3. Coherence

Unity is a basic structural component of a good writing. In addition, it should be also coherent. Literally the word cohere means to hold together. A paragraph is said to have coherence when its sentences are woven together or flow into each other. If the paragraph is coherent, the reader

moves easily from one sentence to the next without feeling that there are gaps in thought, puzzling jumps, or points not made. But if the paragraph lacks coherence, the reader will feel that the sentence, not the paragraph, is the unit of writing and that s/he is reading a collection of separate statements rather than an integrated discussion.
Look at the following examples:

> Old Man Suggins is the meanest man in North fork. 2) He beats his wife once a week. 3) His kids always have bruises on their cheeks. 4) He burned down old Elmer combine's outhouse because Elmer couldn't pay back a three dollar pocket debit. 5) Old man suggins turpentine our dog Effie last May Day. 6) He said he had his reasons for doing it. 7) That's a pretty rank, don't you believe?

This paragraph certainly has unity- all the facts relate to the idea that the old man Suggins is the meanest man in North fork. But in this case, unity alone is not enough to make the writing good. The prose is choppy and abrupt. There is no transition between individual sentences. The paragraph seems to need some words or phrases or signals to ease the movement of the prose and make the separate facts stick together. This quality, which is presented when individual elements stick together, is called **coherence**. It is the companion of unity. It is also the glue that joins the ideas together.

Consider the following paragraph

> 1. I was accepted and started work. 2) My experience had been derived chiefly from books. 3) I was not prepared for the difficult period of adjustment. 4) I soon become discouraged with myself and so dissatisfied with my job that I was on the point of quitting. 5) My employers must have sensed this. 6) He called me into his office and talked to me about duties of my position and the opportunities for advancement. 7) I realized that there was nothing wrong with me or the job and I decided to stay.

This paragraph is fairly well developed, it is unified, its development is orderly; yet it is a poor paragraph. The writer's idea does not flow from one sentence to the next. Rather they seem to come out in a series of jolts and jerks because the connecting links between them are not expressed. The

sentences are not knitted together, so the reader is forced to tackle each one separately and in hunting the connections s/he loses the flow and continuity which is a more carefully constructed paragraph would provide.

Now look at the same paragraph slightly altered

I was accepted and started work. Until that time my experience had been derived chiefly from books, and unfortunately those books had not prepared me for the difficult period of adjustment that every experienced secretary must face in a new position. Consequently, I soon become so dissatisfied with the job that I was on the point of quitting. I think my employer must have sensed this, for he called me in to his office and talked to me about both duties of my position and the opportunities it offered for advancement. That talk helped me, considerably. From then on I realized that there was nothing wrong with me or the job that experience could not cure and

The second version is distinctly better than the first. The first content is substantially the same, but the difference is that the writer provided transitions- bridges- between the thoughts expressed in the originally sentences. These transitions are created by two means: sometimes by filling a small gap in the thought, thus providing better continuity of statements; sometimes by adding linking words and phrases which tie sentences together.

Devices to keep coherence

There are different devices to keep coherence of a paragraph. The common devices are **pronouns**, **transitions** and **logical** order-key words and synonyms.

Exercise: Complete the following paragraph using the transitions listed below.

many years ago eventually in short
for instance because of this in contrast
however

Addis Ababa and Asmara were established about one hundred years. _____, they are relatively new when compared to cities like Rome, London, Moscow and Paris. The people and ways of life in both cities are very similar. _____, the two cities vary in many other respects. _____, the roads of Addis Ababa are long and meandering, where as those of Asmara are short and usually straight. Likewise, they greatly differ in the construction of houses. _____, such differences are more striking for the visitors than the similarities.

Exercise 2:

You are going to write a paragraph about smoking using the notes below. First look at the frame given. Then organize the jumble notes below into the frame. Discuss and compare your notes with a partner.

Linking words	Notes
Fifty Years ago Therefore Eventually Because of this In spite of this For example Thus, we can say that	

Here are the Jumbled notes:

- Other peoples started to smoke, and many continued to die.
- The battle against smoking is not yet over
- Smoking was not seen as major health risk, it just caused coughs.
- 700 people died in Britain of lung cancer last month.
- No studies were made on the effects of tobacco on health.

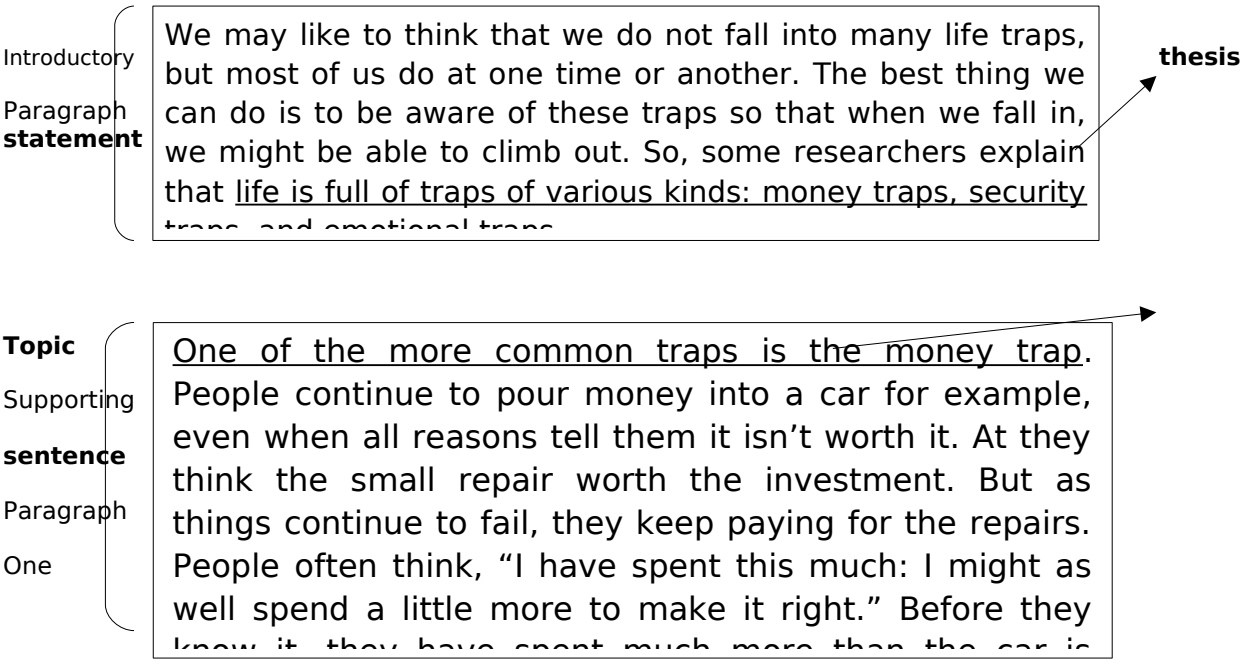
- Some people especially doctors stopped smoking.
- Some link between smoking, cancer and disease was discovered.

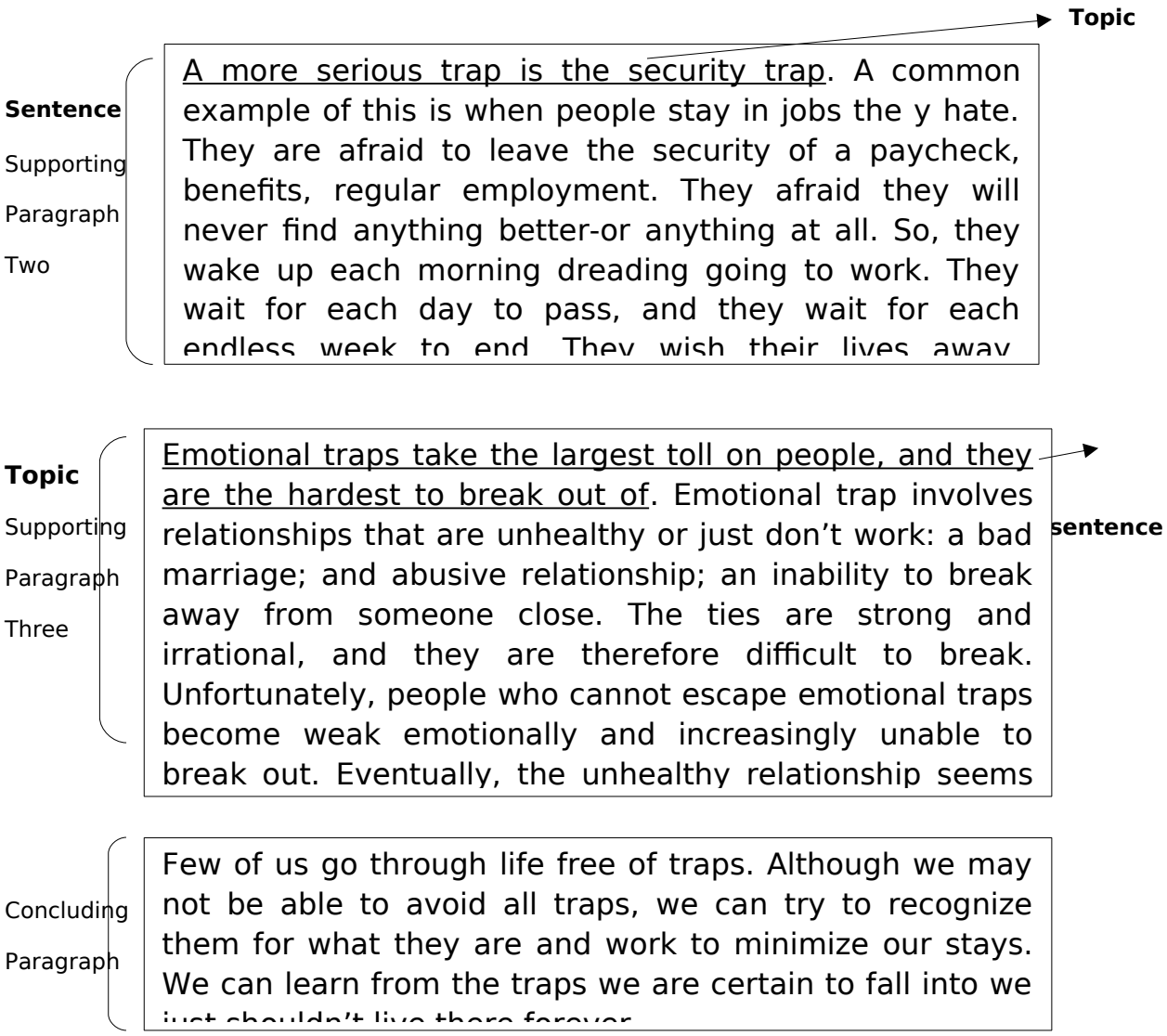
Exercise 3: Look at the outline below. Then organize the jumbled notes into this outline.

The good student _____ , He also has _____ and is able _____ . In contrast, the bad student _____, and he is
Often _____. In addition, _____ and can't Distinguish _____. Therefore, he usually gets _____ . If he wishes to get good grades, he must _____. Secondly, _____
As a result, _____

These are the jumbled notes:

- He has to read more and in fact work longer hours
- Lower marks and risks failing
- Has the ability to concentrate for longer periods of time
- Has a mind that wanders.
- A good memory
- He forgets facts quickly.
- Regarded as lazy.
- To grasp the important points in what he reads or hears
- Important point from unimportant details
- First learn to concentrate easily
- He stands a good chance to succeed.


Introductory
Paragraph
statement
We may like to think that we do not fall into many life traps, but most of us do at one time or another. The best thing we can do is to be aware of these traps so that when we fall in, we might be able to climb out. So, some researchers explain that life is full of traps of various kinds: money traps, security traps, and emotional traps
thesis
Topic
Supporting
sentence
Paragraph
One
One of the more common traps is the money trap. People continue to pour money into a car for example, even when all reasons tell them it isn't worth it. At they think the small repair worth the investment. But as things continue to fail, they keep paying for the repairs. People often think, "I have spent this much: I might as well spend a little more to make it right." Before they know it, they have spent much more than the car is


Topic
Sentence
Supporting
Paragraph
Two
A more serious trap is the security trap. A common example of this is when people stay in jobs the y hate. They are afraid to leave the security of a paycheck, benefits, regular employment. They afraid they will never find anything better-or anything at all. So, they wake up each morning dreading going to work. They wait for each day to pass, and they wait for each endless week to end. They wish their lives away
Topic
Supporting
Paragraph
Three
Emotional traps take the largest toll on people, and they are the hardest to break out of. Emotional trap involves relationships that are unhealthy or just don't work: a bad marriage; and abusive relationship; an inability to break away from someone close. The ties are strong and irrational, and they are therefore difficult to break. Unfortunately, people who cannot escape emotional traps become weak emotionally and increasingly unable to break out. Eventually, the unhealthy relationship seems
sentence
Concluding
Paragraph
Few of us go through life free of traps. Although we may not be able to avoid all traps, we can try to recognize them for what they are and work to minimize our stays. We can learn from the traps we are certain to fall into we just shouldn't live there forever