

# The Prose Toolbox Series

# SENTENCE

## USING THE ROOTS OF SENTENCE STRUCTURE TO DEVELOP SENTENCE SENSE

# Sentence Structure Summary Sheet

What follows is an overview of the entire unit:

**Definition:** A sentence contains a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a complete thought.

**Independent clause** is a synonym for **sentence**.

A sentence stripped down to its essential subject and verb can be referred to as a **base sentence**. To this foundational base sentence, other phrases, clauses, and modifiers can be added.

A sentence can be viewed as a **subject** and a **predicate**:

- A girl / flings her hair down.

Or we can focus on the **simple subject** and the **verb**:

- A girl / flings her hair down.

There are a number of steps we can take in order to help us determine the **simple subject** . . .

—Cross out all phrases, including prepositional phrases:

- Engines of war / move toward certain houses.

—Eliminate articles (a, an, the):

- ~~The~~ journey / requires more preparation.

—Eliminate relative clauses (focus on **who** and **that**):

- Journeys ~~that go against the prevailing current~~ / require more preparation.

—Place parentheses around noun clusters; the noun to the right will be the subject:

- (This new self) / walks away from the world.

**Verbs** take tense; therefore, we can use this sentence frame to help us determine main verbs:

- Today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED.
- Today I *conform*; yesterday I *conformed*.

If we add **helping verbs** to **main verbs**, we can create verb phrases ranging from two to four words long:

- The bees / will be making sweet honey.

In the absence of a true **main verb**, a **helping verb** will become the **main verb**.

An **infinitive** is the word **to** plus a verb. Infinitives are never *the* verb in a sentence; they should be crossed out:

- She / rose one morning and went ~~to live~~ in America.

Adverbs like *not* do not qualify as **main verbs** and are not found on the list of **helping verbs**; therefore, such words are not part of the verb:

- This new self / did not walk into the world.

Contractions must be **unpacked**:

- This new self / didn't walk into the world.
- This new self / did not walk into the world.

Often (but not always), **active verbs** are preferred over **passive verbs**:

- **passive:** The field rat was startled by the scythe.
- **active:** The scythe startled the field rat.

Both subjects and verbs can be **compound**:

- Stanford and Crocker stole our pensions and poured their smoke into our lungs.

**Subjects** usually appear to the left of **verbs**, but there are some exceptions:

- Upon his western wing leaned the starling.
- ~~There was~~ (a sudden break) ~~in the subject matter~~.

Commands and questions also create nonstandard subject/verb arrangements:

- (You) Ask the questions that have no answers.
- Has Thad been sleeping all day?

In **compound sentences**, subjects and verbs appear on both sides of the coordinating conjunction, conjunctive adverb, or semicolon:

- She saw nothing else saw all day long, for she would bend sidelong and sing a faery's song.
- Jacob sold his house and his library, his love of twelve years; finally, he parted.
- (A swift carriage) flashed before them; snow and mud flew everywhere, splashing the girls.

**Complex sentences** also contain two sets of subjects and verbs. In **compound sentences** the two subject/verb combos carry equal weight; in **complex sentences** the subject/verb in the **independent** clause is primary while the subject/verb in the **subordinate** clause is secondary:

- We sojourn here though the sedge has withered from the lake.
- Though the sedge has withered from the lake, we sojourn here.
- They know that the hand of God is the elderhand of their own.

Adverbial subordinate clauses begin with **subordinating conjunctions**; among the words that begin noun clauses, the most common is the word *that*.

Both sentence **fragments** and **run-on** sentences are *sentence boundary errors*. Both are considered to be serious errors.

A **fragment** can be a part of a sentence:

- Flings her hair down.

A **fragment** can also be a **subordinate** clause with no **independent** clause to attach to:

- Although a carriage flashed before them.

Normally we expect to see a period (or a semicolon) between two sentences. When that period is not there, a **run-on** is created:

- Two roads diverged in a wood, she took the one less traveled by.

- Two roads diverged in a wood she took the one less traveled by.

However, there are a couple exceptions.

**Intentional fragments** may be appear when they are consciously used so as to achieve a stylistic effect. Three or more sentences can be linked together without periods if they are short and arranged in *items-in-a-series* fashion.

**Subjects** and **verbs** must *agree* in number. This means that **plural** subjects must be matched up with **plural** verbs and that **singular** subjects must be matched up with **singular** verbs. Normally writers have little trouble with subject/verb agreement, but situations such as intervening prepositional phrases, compound subjects, and *there*-expletives must be given extra attention.

## WORD LISTS

**Common Prepositions:** above, across, against, at, before, behind, below, between, by, down, except, for, from, in, into, like, of, on, past, since, to, under, until, with

**23 Helping Verbs:** is, am, are, was, were; be, being, been; has, have, had; do, does, did; may, might, must; can, could; shall, should; will, would

**Coordinating Conjunctions:** for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so

**Common Conjunctive Adverbs:** consequently, finally, for example, furthermore, however, later, meanwhile, moreover, nevertheless, next, otherwise, subsequently, then, therefore

**Common Subordinating Conjunctions:** after, although, as, because, before, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while



# Sentence Structure 1: Subjects and Predicates

The first step toward understanding the structure of language is to understand the term *sentence*. It is imperative that we be able to discern which word groups create a sentence and which word groups do not. Once we've established a sound "sentence sense," we can use that knowledge as a basis for furthering our understanding of language.

A basic English sentence requires an *action* and a *performer* of that action. We call the action portion of a sentence the predicate; we call the performer portion of a sentence the subject. Most commonly, the subject appears to the left of the predicate.

We can divide a sentence into its subject and predicate by using a slash (/), like this:

- Subject / predicate.

The subject will likely be our *who* or *what*; the predicate will tell us what the *who* or *what* did. Examples:

- A girl / flings her hair down. (*Who?* A girl. *Did what?* Flung her hair down.)
- The whole world / fits into seventeen syllables. (*What?* The whole world. *Does what?* Fits into seventeen syllables.)

**Exercise 1:** For each of the following, copy the last word of the subject and the first word of the predicate. Place a slash between them. Example:

- A girl flings her hair down.
- **answer:** girl / flings

1. The kids get candy.
2. The nosy neighbors moved into the empty houses.
3. The Persian astronomer began walking toward the hills.
4. Pure water spills from the cup of the daisy.
5. Grandfather carried his voice in the wrinkled palm of his right hand.



## Sentence Structure 2: Sentences Contain Subjects and Verbs

When we look at subject and predicates—as we did in Sentence Structure 1—we are accounting for every word in the sentence. We can think of *subject-predicate* as a *lens* for looking at sentence structure. Another such lens is the lens of **subject/verb**. With subject/verb, we are no longer accounting for *every* word in a sentence; instead, we are focusing on the key words only.

**DEFINITION:** What is a sentence? A group of words containing a **subject** and a **verb**.

The subject and verb are the most important words in a sentence. They give any sentence an excuse for existing, and they are the life support system for all the other words in a sentence. In a hypothetical 100-word sentence with a one-word subject and a one-word verb, the other 98 words can only exist because the subject and verb allow them to exist. Remove either the subject or verb, and the entire 100-word structure comes crashing down. Example:

- His robes flowing behind him, **Zeus**, who had just given birth to Athena, **roared**, hurling the Titans down into the Underworld.

In this sentence, *Zeus* is the subject and *roared* is the verb. Note that this sentence contains three other groups of words:

1. His robes flowing behind him.
2. Who had just given birth to Athena.
3. Hurling the Titans down into the Underworld.

By themselves, each of these word groups is a fragment and cannot stand alone. However, when attached to a subject/verb combo like *Zeus roared*, these fragments are allowed to exist as part of a larger sentence.

**Exercise 2:** Each of the following is a longer, somewhat complex sentence; yet each is created on the foundation of a one-word subject and a one-word verb. For each, identify the subject and verb. Write the subject and verb only (“the base sentence”). All answers will be two words.

- A young soldier stands on battle-pocked land with his helmet at a jaunty tilt.
  - **answer:** soldier stands
1. Huddling together for warmth, we sat, troubled by noises that came from outside.
  2. She stared, watching the traffic, thinking about her boyfriend.
  3. Her face angry, her mouth twitching in disgust, Molly gestured.

## Sentence Structure 3: Complete Subjects Vs. Simple Subjects

These two examples appeared in Sentence Structure 1:

- A girl flings her hair down.
- The whole world fits into seventeen syllables.

By placing slash marks to the right of *girl* and *world*, we identified *a girl* and *the whole world* as the subjects of those sentences. Now let's fine-tune our understanding of **subject**.

In fact, each of these example sentences has both a *complete* subject and a *simple* subject. **The complete subject consists of all the words to the left of the slash mark; the simple subject will usually consist of a one-word noun (or pronoun).**

Though a simple subject will usually be one word long, there are a few exceptions—like a person's name, for example. The two words *John Doe* could serve as a simple subject simply because we could not reduce those two words to anything less.

- A girl flings her hair down. (In this sentence, *a girl* is the **complete** subject, but *girl* is the **simple** subject.)
- The whole world fits into seventeen syllables. (In this sentence, *the whole world* is the **complete** subject, but *world* is the **simple** subject.)

To arrive at the simple subjects, we eliminate articles (*a*, *the*) and adjectives (*whole*). We can think of word groups such as *the whole world* as **noun clusters**. With few exceptions, the right-hand word in a **noun cluster** is the **simple** subject.

**Exercise 3:** For each of the following, write the simple subject only. Example:

- The whole world fits into seventeen syllables.
- **answer:** world  
**explanation:** (*world* is the right-hand word within the cluster *the whole world*)

1. The kids get candy.
2. The nosy neighbors moved into the empty houses.
3. The Persian astronomer began walking toward the hills.
4. Pure water spills from the cup of the daisy.
5. Grandfather carried his voice in the wrinkled palm of his right hand.

## Sentence Structure 4: Eliminating Prepositional Phrases

In Sentence Structure 3, we encountered such complete subjects as *engines of war*, *pure water*, and *the Persian astronomer*. Each of these word groups is, in fact, a **noun cluster**. (*Noun phrase* is the official grammatical term.) A **noun cluster** is a word group that acts *as if* it were a single noun. *The Persian astronomer*, for example, is a three-word cluster, but the three words work together to name one single entity.

We learned that, quite often, if we want to identify the **simple** subject from within a **complete** subject (or noun cluster), we simply need to find the noun (or pronoun) to the right. There are, however, some exceptions to this trick.

One such example can be found in this sentence:

- Engines of war / move toward certain houses.

In this case, applying the noun-to-the-right trick would lead us into identifying *war* as the simple subject. However, the simple subject of this sentence is not *war*, but *engines*. So we need to add a new trick to our repertoire:

**RULE:** The (simple) subject of a sentence is never found inside a phrase.

In *engines of war*, the noun *war* is actually the **object of the preposition**. It is the last word of the two-word **prepositional phrase** *of war*.

Our job of identifying **simple** subjects is simplified when we can delete all the words that are not candidates for **simple** subjects. In this case, we can simply cross out all **prepositional phrases**. Example:

- Engines ~~of war~~ / move toward certain houses.

The elimination of the **prepositional phrase** reveals that the noun from the **complete** subject (noun cluster) that stands as the **simple** subject is the noun *engines*.

**Prepositional phrases** begin with **prepositions** and end with nouns or pronouns. (The phrase-ending noun is known as the **object of the preposition**.) **Prepositional phrases** are easy to identify if you have a list of common **prepositions**, like this one: *above, across, against, around, at, before, behind, below, between, by, down, except, for, from, in, into, like, of, on, past, since, to, under, until, with*.

**TAKE OUT A SHEET OF PAPER. TITLE IT "SENTENCE STRUCTURE—WORD LISTS." WRITE THE SUBTITLE "COMMON PREPOSITIONS"; THEN COPY THE LIST OF PREPOSITIONS FOUND ABOVE. SAVE THIS PAPER.**

**Exercise 4:** For each, copy the complete sentence. Draw a slash between the complete subject and the predicate. Cross out any prepositional phrases appearing **to the left** of a slash mark. Single underline your simple subject.

**Example:** Workers in a manhole / imagine themselves working at other professions.

(Hint: one phrase is 2-words long; two phrases are 3-words long; 1 phrase is 4-words long.)

- Explorers in the jungle stalk a rare green deer.
- Trees on the cypress mountain blend into the autumn evening.
- Reapers with scythes spend the afternoon sharpening their blades.
- Writers of well-written sonnets fill their first eight lines with a single meaning.



## Sentence Structure 5: Eliminating Articles and Relative Clauses

In the previous lesson, we learned that, when moving from complete subject to simple subject, we need to eliminate prepositional phrases. In this lesson we will learn that it is also necessary to eliminate articles and relative clauses.

There are only three articles: *a*, *an*, and *the*. These three words serve as *noun markers*, but they themselves are not nouns and, therefore, not part of the simple subject. Example:

- A candle / burns.

In this example, *a candle* is the complete subject. By eliminating the article *a*, we arrive at our simple subject: *candle*.

Relative clauses begin with relative pronouns: *who*, *that*, *which*, *whom*, and *whose*. For our purposes here, we will focus on the two relative pronouns ***who*** and ***that***. Example:

- Anyone ~~who falls in love~~ / knows the movement of time.

In this example, “anyone ***who*** falls in love” is the complete subject. By eliminating the relative clause ***who falls in love***, we arrive at our simple subject: *anyone*. Note that we are crossing out, not just the single relative pronoun ***who***, but the entire relative clause ***who falls in love***.

**Exercise 5:** For each, copy the complete sentence. Draw a slash between the **complete** subject and the **predicate**. Cross out all articles and relative clauses (word groups beginning with ***who*** or ***that***) appearing to the left of a slash mark. Single underline your **simple** subject.

**Example:** ~~The journey that goes against the prevailing current~~ / requires more preparation.

1. A man who sees an empty street stumbles in his attempt to rise.
2. The trout that swim in the center of the river keep themselves safe.
3. The boys who respect the mysterious leader bow their heads to their chests.
4. An eye that looked upon him blinked in warning.

## Sentence Structure 6: Verbs Vs. Predicates

We have seen that there are two ways to look at subjects. We can focus on larger word groups, in which case we are looking at **complete subjects**; or we can focus on smaller word groups, in which case we are looking at **simple subjects**.

This same principle of focusing on larger or smaller word groups also applies to verbs. We've already met the larger word groups; we call these **predicates**. The smaller word groups are simply called **verbs**.

Here are two sentences:

- A girl / **flings** her hair down.
- The baby / **crawls** along the sidewalk.

In the first example, the predicate is **flings her hair down**, but the verb is **flings**. In the second example, the predicate is **crawls along the sidewalk**, but the verb is **crawls**.

**Verbs take tense**; for example, a verb can be in the past or in the present tense. Because verbs take tense, we will test for verbs using this sentence frame:

- Today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED.

Let's try this sentence frame with the verb *crawl*: Today I crawl; yesterday I crawled.

This sentence frame does do a good job of testing for verbs, but it does an even better job of determining which words are *not* verbs. Let's test each word in *crawls along the sidewalk* for *verb-ness*. If the word is not a verb, placing it in the sentence frame will create nonsense.

- Today I crawl; yesterday I crawled. —good
- Today I along; yesterday I alonged. —nonsense
- Today I the; yesterday I the-ed. — nonsense
- Today I sidewalk; yesterday I sidewalked. — nonsense

As a rule, main verbs consist of one single word. However, *phrasal verbs* are exceptions to this rule. Phrasal verbs consist of a verb plus a preposition. Here are a few examples: *back up, calm down, cross out, hand over, throw away, try on, wash off*.

**Exercise 6:** For each, identify the verb. Use the sentence frame to test for that word's verb-ness. Underline both the present tense and past tense form of your verb.

**Example:**

- I pity the exile's lot.
- **answer:** Today I pity; yesterday I pitied.

1. A knife glimmered in the kitchen.
2. New lives require a death of some kind.
3. The light fills the world.
4. A poetry of bodies trickled from the deepest fountain.

## Sentence Structure 7: Main Verbs and Helping Verbs

In the previous exercise, we learned that **verbs take tense** and, because verbs take tense, this sentence frame can help to determine whether a word is a verb: **Today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED.**

In reality, that sentence frame tests for **main** verbs. In addition to determining those words that qualify as **main** verbs, we also want to determine those words that qualify as **helping** verbs. In fact, determining which words are helping verbs is actually quite simple: we simply need to ask “Is it on the list?” Here is the list of 23 helping verbs:

- ❖ is, am, are, was, were
- ❖ be, being, been
- ❖ has, have, had
- ❖ do, does, did
- ❖ may, might, must
- ❖ can, could
- ❖ shall, should
- ❖ will, would

**TAKE OUT “SENTENCE STRUCTURE—WORD LISTS.” CREATE A NEW SUBTITLE: “23 HELPING VERBS”; THEN COPY THE LIST OF HELPING VERBS FOUND ABOVE. SAVE THIS PAPER.**

By adding helping verbs to main verbs, we create what is known as a **verb phrase**—the longest of which is four words long. However, whether our verbs are one-, two-, three-, or four-words long, we will simply refer to them as *verbs*.

- **Example:** Not every song / **should drift** past every ear and heart.

First we identify our main verb: *drift*. Does it take tense? Today I drift; yesterday I drifted. Yes, it takes tense; it’s the main verb in the sentence. Then we move to the left: *should*. Is it on the list? Yes, it’s on the list. It’s a helping verb. What is the verb in this sentence? Answer: *should drift*.

- **Another example:** By then, the golden bees / **will have been making** sweet honey for five years.

First let’s identify our main verb: *making*. Does it take tense? Today I make; yesterday I made. Yes, it takes tense; it’s the main verb in the sentence. Then we’ll move to the left: *been*. Is it on the list? Yes, it’s on the list. It’s a helping verb. Continue to the left: *have*. Is it on the list? Yes, it’s on the list. It’s a helping verb. Continue to the left: *will*. Is it on the list? Yes, it’s on the list. It’s a helping verb. What is the verb in this sentence? Answer: *will have been making*.

**Exercise 7:** For each of the following, write the verb only. Two of the verbs are two words long and two of the verbs are three words long. Example:

- The eye-balls were seared with a milky mucus.
  - **answer:** were seared
1. A tree’s name should reveal its nature.
  2. He may be dangling a head by its hair.
  3. They’re curling on the pavement. (*They’re* is a contraction. You must *unpack* the contraction into the two words *they are*.)
  4. More than one shaky answer has been given to this question.



## Sentence Structure 8: Subjects and Verbs

**Review:** We began by looking at sentences as **complete subjects** plus **predicates**, and we indicated where **subjects** end and **predicates** begin by placing a slash mark between them. Then we began reducing **complete subjects** and **predicates** to the more specific—and more essential—concept of **simple subjects** and **verbs**. We learned that, with **subjects**, we often need to delete words or word groups to arrive at the one-word **subject**. We learned that **verbs** are one-, two-, three-, or four-words long, and that we can use the *Does it take tense?* test to test for **main verbs** and the *Is it on the list?* test to test for **helping verbs**.

Now let's put all our learning together. **Example:**

- The hands ~~of a plasterer~~ / are holding a room together.

With this sentence, we begin by placing a slash between the **complete subject** and the **predicate**; the **article** *the* is crossed out; the **prepositional phrase** *of a plasterer* is crossed out; the **subject** *hands* is underlined; the **main verb** *hold* is double underlined; the helping verb *are* is double underlined. What is the **subject/verb** of this sentence? *Hands are holding*. Ultimately, the words *hands are holding* are the key, foundational words that make this sentence a sentence.

**Another example:**

- (This new self) ~~that we have created~~ / does not walk away from the world.

With this sentence, we begin by placing a slash between the **complete subject** and the **predicate**; the **relative clause** *that we have created* is crossed out; knowing that our **subject** is within the three-word noun cluster *this new self*, we underline *self*, the noun-to-the-right; the **main verb** *walk* is double underlined; the **helping verb** *does* is double underlined. Because it fails both the **main verb** and the **helping verb** test, we ignore *not*. What is the **subject/verb** of this sentence? *Self does walk*. Ultimately, the words *self does walk* are the key, foundational words that make this sentence a sentence.

**Exercise 8:** Determine the subject/verb in each of the following. Separate instructions are given for each.

1. Those human beings who are truly alive will journey all about the globe.

**Instructions for #1:** (a) Copy the sentence. (b) Place a slash mark between the complete subject and the predicate. (c) Cross out the relative clause. (d) Place parentheses around the three-word noun cluster. (e) Underline the subject—the noun to the right. (f) Find the main verb (today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED); double underline that word. (g) Move to the left. Is *will* on the list? Yes. Therefore it's a helping verb. Double underline it. (h) Now, below your marked-up sentence #1, write the three-word base sentence (the subject/verb combo) that serves as the foundation of this sentence.

2. The last lion might be roaring his furious, golden protest.

**Instructions for #2:** (a) Copy the sentence. (b) Place a slash mark between the complete subject and the predicate. (c) Place parentheses around the three-word noun cluster. (d) Underline the subject—the noun to the right. (e) Find the main verb (today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED); double underline that word. (f) Move to the left. Is *be* on the list? Yes. Therefore it's a helping verb. Double underline it. (g) Move to the left. Is *might* on the list? Yes. Therefore it's a helping verb. Double underline it. (h) Now, below your marked-up sentence #2, write the four-word base sentence (the subject/verb combo) that serves as the foundation of this sentence.

3. The wounded heart in your chest will somehow be sustained by your knowing the rightness of it all.

**Instructions for #3:** (a) Copy the sentence. (b) Place a slash mark between the complete subject and the predicate. (c) Cross out the first prepositional phrase. (d) Place parentheses around the three-word noun cluster. (e) Underline the subject—the noun to the right. (f) Find the main verb (today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED); double underline that word. (g) Move to the left. Is *be* on the list? Yes. Therefore it's a helping verb. Double underline it. (h) Move to the left. Is *somehow* on the list? No. Therefore it's not a helping verb. Ignore it. (i) Move to the left. Is *will* on the list? Yes. Therefore it's a helping verb. Double underline it. (j) Now, below your marked-up sentence #3, write the four-word base sentence (the subject/verb combo) that serves as the foundation of this sentence.

## Sentence Structure 9: Active Vs. Passive Verbs

Study these two sentences:

- **active sentence:** Alfred Nobel established the Nobel prizes.
- **passive sentence:** The Nobel Prizes were established by Alfred Nobel.

By studying these two sentences, we note the following:

- Though the word order differs, these two sentences say the same thing.
- The concepts **active** and **passive** have nothing to do with how much *action* is occurring.
- The **passive sentence** contains two extra words: (1) the helping verb *were* and (2) the preposition *by*.

In addition, when we examine the **subjects** and **verbs** of the **active** and **passive** sentences above, we notice a curious situation. In the **active sentence**, the **subject** is *performing* the action of the **verb**. Alfred Nobel is doing the establishing. But in the **passive sentence** the performer of the **verb** has been kicked out of the **subject** position and demoted to the end of the sentence. This is why **active sentences** are *often* preferable to **passive sentences**.

By studying the sentences above, we can create a new rule to accompany what we've learned about **subjects** and **verbs**:

1. In general, subjects appear to the left of verbs.
2. It is usually preferable to place *actors* to the left of *actions*.

Examples:

- **example 1:** The field rat was startled by the scythe.
- **example 2:** The scythe startled the field rat.

The *action* in these two sentences is the action of *startling*. The *actor* (the person or thing performing the action) is the *scythe*—a long handle with a sharp blade at the end. In example 1 (the **passive sentence**), the field rat is *not* the actor. The field rat is not startling anyone. In example 2 (the **active sentence**), the *scythe* is the actor. The **active sentence** correctly places the actor to the left of the action.

In summary, **active sentences** are generally to be preferred because, unlike **passive sentences**, **active sentences** place actors to the left of actions. Note also that active and passive sentences are *flip-flopped* versions of one another.

**Exercise 9:** Each of the following is a **passive sentence**. Rewrite each so that it is **active** instead of **passive**. *Flip-flop* each sentence, and make any additional changes that are necessary.

1. A cinder-block wall is shared by two houses.
2. The branches have been conquered by the weight of birds.
3. An announcement or two could be made by a child-ventriloquist.
4. A blue-bottomed saucer was toppled by the sky.
5. The harpoons are hurled by beings made in the image of Jehovah.

# Sentence Structure 10: Compound Subjects and Compound Verbs

## Examples of compound subjects:

- Our souls, our reason, our thumbs, and our speech / devoted themselves to learning the truth. (*Souls, reason, thumbs, and speech* create the **compound subject**. Note that the conjunction *and* is not part of the **subject**.)
- His gold chariots and courtiers / might be gone. (*Chariots and courtiers* create the **compound subject**. Note that both *might* and *be* are **helping verbs**. In the absence of a true **main verb**, the **helping verb** to the right [*be*] becomes the default main verb.)

## Examples of compound verbs:

- He / lived, died, and was resurrected many times. (*Lived, died, and was resurrected* create the **compound verb**.)
- She / rose one morning and discovered the truth and went to live in America. (*Rose, discovered, and went* create the **compound verb**. Note that any **verb** following the word *to* is an **infinitive**. Though **infinitives** are members of the **verb** family, they cannot serve as *the foundational verb* in any sentence. Therefore, we will cross out all appearances of *to + a verb*.)

## Examples of compound subjects *and* compound verbs:

- An army of mercenaries and their paymasters will be approaching the hut and knocking at the door. (*Army and paymasters* create the **compound subject**; *will be approaching* and *knocking* create the **compound verb**.)
- Stanford or Crocker stole our pensions and poured their smoke into our lungs. (*Stanford and Crocker* create the **compound subject**; *stole* and *poured* create the **compound verb**. Note that although *and* is the conjunction most often used in compounding, other conjunctions can be used as well. Here, the conjunction *or* is used.)

**Exercise 10:** Determine the **subject/verb** in each of the following. Separate instructions are given for each.

1. The pain of loss, the grief, and the despair ignite the transformation.

**Instructions for #1:** (a) Copy the sentence. (b) Place a slash mark between the **complete subject** and the **predicate**. (c) Cross out the **prepositional phrase**. (d) Cross out the first three appearances of the article *the*. (e) Underline all three one-word **subjects**. (f) Find the **main verb** (today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED); double underline that word. (g) Now, below your marked-up sentence #1, write the four-word base sentence (the **subject/verb** combo) that serves as the foundation of this sentence. Place commas between your three subjects, but don't add the word *and*.

2. An auto wreck invites the occult mind, cancels our physics with a sneer, and spatters our clear conclusion across the expedient and wicked stones.

**Instructions for #2:** (a) Copy the sentence. (b) Place a slash mark between the **complete subject** and the **predicate**. (c) Place parentheses around the three-word **noun cluster**. (d) Underline the **subject**—the noun to the right. (e) Find the three **main verbs** (today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED); double underline all three. (f) Now, below your marked-up sentence #2, write the four-word base sentence (the **subject/verb** combo) that serves as the foundation of this sentence. Place commas between your three **verbs**, but don't add the word *and*.

3. The egg of the wren and the singing toad favor the angels and adorn the parlors of heaven.

**Instructions for #3:** (a) Copy the sentence. (b) Place a slash mark between the **complete subject** and the **predicate**. (c) To the left of the slash mark, cross out the **prepositional phrase**. (d) Cross out the article *the* and underline the first **subject**. (e) Place parentheses around the remaining three-word **noun cluster** and underline the second **subject**—the noun to the right. (e) Find the first **main verb** (today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED); double underline that word. (f) Find the second **main verb** (today I BLANK; yesterday I BLANKED); double underline that word. (h) Now, below your marked-up sentence #3, write the four-word base sentence (the **subject/verb** combo) that serves as the foundation of this sentence. Place commas between your two **subjects** and your two **verbs**, but don't add the word *and*.



## Sentence Structure 11: Verbs Before Subjects

As a general rule, subjects appear to the left of verbs—as has been the case in the sentences we’ve looked at so far. However, there are a few English sentence patterns that reverse this customary order by presenting verbs to the left of subjects.

Here are some flip-floppable sentence patterns. These patterns may be written in their conventional order, or they may be flip-flopped into their reverse order.

- **Subject verb prepositional phrase:** The starling leaned upon his western wing.
- **Prepositional phrase verb subject:** Upon his western wing leaned the starling.
- **Subject verb predicate adjective:** The trousers appeared baggy in the waist and legs. (*Baggy in the waist and legs* is an adjective phrase describing the subject *trousers*.)
- **Predicate adjective verb subject:** Baggy in the waist and legs appeared the trousers.
- **Subject verb predicate nominative:** We were a dozen boys and girls. (*Nominative* means *noun*. *A dozen boys and girls* is a noun cluster that renames or is the equivalent of the subject *we*.)
- **Predicate nominative verb subject:** A dozen boys and girls were we.

Another sentence pattern that places the verb before the subject is the expletive construction. Expletives are sentences that begin with *it*, *there*, or *here*, followed by a *to be* verb (*is*, *am*, *are*, *was*, *were*). The expletive word (*it*, *there*, *here*) is like a placeholder word. Because these words are not the subject of sentence, we will cross them out.

- **It expletive:** ~~It~~ is a flash ~~from some other domain~~.
- **There expletive:** ~~There~~ was (a sudden break) ~~in the subject matter~~.
- **Here expletive:** ~~Here~~ are (ten thousand fruit) ~~to touch~~.

**Exercise 11:** For each of the following, copy the complete sentence. Then cross out phrases, articles, and expletive words. Then double underline the verb. Then single underline the subject, which will be found *to the right* of the verb.

1. Into the cellar bin rolled the load of apples.
2. Victims of his fits of pride were they.
3. Watchful like a mother hen appeared the musician.
4. There was the sound of my long scythe.
5. It is a reminder to remain in the truth.

# Sentence Structure 12: Subjects and Verbs in Commands and Questions

Sentences can be classified according to their functions.

- **Declarative sentences** are standard, statement-making sentences. Most sentences are declarative.
- **Exclamatory sentences** show strong emotion.
- **Imperative sentences** issue a command.
- **Interrogative sentences** are questions.

So far, the sentences we've been studying have been declarative. Declarative sentences are created from standard subjects and verbs with the subject (usually) to the left of the verb. However, both imperative sentences and interrogative sentences deviate from the standard subject/verb pattern found in declarative sentences.

## Subjects and Verbs in Imperative Sentences

A sentence is a sentence because it contains a subject and a verb. However, there is one exception to that rule, and that exception is found in imperative sentences—sentences that issue commands. **Examples:**

- Ask the questions that have no answers.
- Sing. (Normally, the shortest complete sentence is a two-word sentence; but in the case of commands, one single word can be considered a complete sentence.)

In the first example, the person being spoken to is being told (commanded) to ask a certain type of question. In the second example, the person being spoken to is being told to sing. If we were giving a command, we would likely be giving that command to someone who knows that he or she is being spoken to. If we were to address that person, we could refer to that person as *you*. Therefore, the assumed subject of all commands is *you*, which we place inside parentheses and add to the sentence.

- (You) Ask the questions that have no answers.

## Subjects and Verbs in Interrogative Sentences

A common method of creating interrogative sentences (questions) is to move the subject from the left side of a helping verb to the right side of the helping verb. Examples:

- **declarative:** Thad has been sleeping all day.
- **interrogative:** Has Thad been sleeping all day?
- **declarative:** We are spies in the land of the living.
- **interrogative:** Are we spies in the land of the living?

**Exercise 12:** Copy each of the following. After each sentence, label it either **command** or **question**. Single underline subjects and double underline verbs. For commands, you must write in the subject (You) just to the left of the sentence.

1. Are you reliving the past?
2. Mend my life.
3. Love someone who doesn't deserve it.
4. Did they wear uniforms the color of a shriveled robber crab?

## Sentence Structure 13: Mixed Practice

**Review:** All sentences are built on foundations, and those foundations are subjects and verbs. We have looked at sentences through two different lenses: the complete subject/predicate lens and the simple subject/verb lens. We have practiced identifying subjects and verbs in sentences. We have learned to cross out various words and word groups to simplify our task of determining subject/verb. And we have examined various sentence patterns that do not fit the conventional subject-then-verb pattern.

This exercise will provide you the opportunity to demonstrate what you've learned.

**Exercise 13:** For each of the following, write the base sentence. The base sentence consists of nothing but the simple subject, a slash mark, and the verb. Examples:

- See who will answer!
- **base sentence:** You / see.
- Maru Mori has been bringing me pairs of socks.
- **base sentence:** Maru Mori / has been bringing.
- Are you lying down under the weight of humbleness?
- **base sentence:** You / are lying.

1. On Lenox swayed the jazzman.
2. Danger and darkness may accompany us on our pilgrimage.
3. A youth who was wearing a red cap leaped to her side and snatched away the bandage.
4. The lashes had been dissolved by the oozy eyelids.
5. A swallow shouldn't spend all its time singing. (*Unpack the contraction.*)
6. A brisk breeze might have been covering all in darkness.
7. Your howls of bewilderment will echo with the mountain winds.
8. The drums, the traps, the banjos, the horns, and the tin cans can make two people fight on the top of a stairway and scratch each other's eyes in a clinch on the stairs.
9. Stones have stood for a thousand years and have found the honey of peace in old poems.
10. Give me a chainless soul with courage to endure.
11. The dark cloud on the ends of your wings soars toward us.
12. Did your father beg for mercy in the kitchen?



# Sentence Structure 14: Subject-Verb Agreement

Subjects must *agree* with verbs in two ways:

1. In **person**: The **first-person** subject *I* agrees with the verb *speaks*; the **third-person** subject *she* agrees with the verb *speaks*.
2. In **number**: The **singular** subject *she* agrees with the verb *speaks*; the **plural** subject *they* agrees with the verb *speaks*.

If a writer were to make an error in agreement, that error is more likely to be a *number* error than a *person* error. For that reason, we will focus our study on agreement in *number*.

When we refer to a subject's *number*, we are simply referring to the fact that subjects are singular or plural. *Door, hut, and rock* are **singular**; *doors, huts, and rocks* are **plural**.

As for verbs, they are not *inherently singular or plural*; however, verbs must change form in order to agree with subjects. In that sense verbs, too, are **singular or plural**. Examples:

- The rainbow shows our journey's end.
- The rainbows show our journey's end.

By focusing on the **s** endings, we can determine a rule:

- With singular agreement, the **s** attaches to the verb; with plural agreement, the **s** attaches to the subject. (*However, there are a few exceptions to this rule.*)

At this point, let's begin looking at those sentence patterns that may cause errors in agreement. The first type of agreement error we'll turn our attention to is the error that results from *identifying the wrong subject*. Example:

- A blue spurt from the lighted matches (illuminate, illuminates) the room.

If an error were to result, it would result from pairing the word *matches* with the verb *illuminate*. This is where our skill in identifying subjects comes into play.

- (A blue spurt) ~~from the lighted matches~~ (illuminate, illuminates) the room.

The key here is that we cross out and eliminate the prepositional phrase *from the lighted matches*. By doing so, we eliminate the word *matches* as a potential subject.

**Exercise 14:** Copy each of the following. Single underline subjects and double underline verbs. As for the verb, choose the one correct verb and copy that verb only. Use all of the subject/verb identification skills we have learned. In particular, be certain to cross out prepositional phrases and relative clauses that might interfere with identifying the proper subject. Example:

- The chief of all the area's tribes (refuse, refuses) to turn men into wolves and swine.
  - **answer:** ~~The chief of all the area's tribes~~ refuses to turn men into wolves and swine.
1. The voice that fills your ears with soft sounds (keep, keeps) you company on your journey.
  2. The whistling sounds from the boats that sit deep within the harbor (call, calls) like a lost child in tears.
  3. The object in the center of the circle of men (resemble, resembles) a silver tear, a tiny flame.
  4. The hostages who must be rescued by the language of a poet (insist, insists) on revealing their mysteries.

## Sentence Structure 15: Subject-Verb Agreement, Continued

In the previous lesson, we saw how crossing out certain phrases and clauses helps us to properly identify the subject, which in turn helps us to identify the verb that agrees with the subject. Here in Sentence Structure 15, we'll look at two other situations that lead to subject-verb agreement difficulties: compound subjects and *there*-expletives.

### Compound Subjects

Compound subjects are plural. Example:

- (The missing oars) and (the overturned kayak) hint at foul play.

It's possible that what our ears hear can betray us. Because the singular *kayak* appears directly next to the verb *hint*, our ears might lead us to hear *kayak hints* as correct. So with compound subjects, we must remember that the two subjects are always plural: oars (and) kayak hint.

### There-Expletives

With *there*-expletives, the verb must match the subject, which will be found to the right of the verb. Example:

- ~~There~~ are (many good games) that are rule-governed.

Again, the trick is to not be fooled by what we hear. We might hear the words *there* and *is* as sounding good together. But *there* is not the subject in an expletive construction. In this case, we must look further to the right and hear the words games are as sounding correct. The plural subject *games* agrees with the plural verb *are*.

**Exercise 15:** Copy each of the following. Single underline subjects and double underline verbs. Choose the one correct verb and copy that verb only. Use all of the subject/verb identification skills we have learned.

1. There (is, are) several salt shakers on the shelf.
2. The huts and the long journey (remain, remains) in my memory.
3. The twiggy bushes and the small dead tree (call, calls) for the approaching spring.
4. There (is, are) too many voices in the room.

## Sentence Structure 16: Subjects and Verbs in Compound Sentences

A compound sentence is two sentences linked together. There are three common methods for turning two sentences into a single, linked compound sentence:

- comma + coordinating conjunction
- semicolon + conjunctive adverb + comma
- semicolon

Here in Sentence Structure 16, we will focus on the first of these methods: a comma + a coordinating conjunction. There are seven **coordinating conjunctions**. The mnemonic device **FANBOYS** can help us to memorize these seven conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.

TAKE OUT “SENTENCE STRUCTURE—WORD LISTS.” CREATE A NEW SUBTITLE: “COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS”; THEN COPY THE LIST OF 7 COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS FOUND ABOVE. SAVE THIS PAPER.

Example:

- The fishermen in the cold sea would not harm the whales, and the man who is gathering salt would look at his hurt hands.

**base sentence:** Fishermen would harm and man would look.

Note that the conjunction *and* is boxed. To the left of *and* we find a complete sentence with its own subject/verb (*fishermen would harm*). To the right of *and* we find another complete sentence with its own subject/verb (*man would look*). When two sentences are joined into a single compound sentence, it is customary to refer to each of the two sentences as an **independent clause**. The term *sentence* and the term *independent clause* are two interchangeable terms.

Here is a second example to study. Note once again how each sentence (independent clause) contains its own subject/verb combo. And note that the conjunction *for* is boxed.

- She saw nothing else saw all day long, for she would bend sidelong and sing a faery’s song.

**base sentence:** She saw for she would bend, sing.

**Exercise 16:** Copy each of the following. Place a box around each conjunction. Then use the steps we’ve learned for determining subject/verb—one subject/verb combo on the left side of the conjunction and another on the right side. You will need to cross out prepositional phrases, articles, and infinitives. Then single underline the subjects and double underline the verbs.

1. Everything is the same, yet everything is different.
2. I sit on the grass, but the future slowly disappears.
3. She would fly far away into the sky, or she would rest in the eaves with uncombed hair.
4. He wanted a job waiting tables, but you proclaimed his black dreadlocks unclean.

## Sentence Structure 17: Compound Sentences— Conjunctive Adverbs and Semicolons

There are three common methods for turning two sentences into a single, linked compound sentence:

- comma + coordinating conjunction
- semicolon + conjunctive adverb + comma
- semicolon

In Sentence Structure 16, we practiced identifying subjects and verbs in compound sentences linked by commas and coordinating conjunctions. Here in Sentence Structure 17 we'll continue our study of compound sentences by moving on to the other two methods listed above.

We have already seen how coordinating conjunctions can be used to create compound sentences. The other word group that can perform this same job is the group known as the **conjunctive adverbs**. Here is a list of common conjunctive adverbs: *consequently, finally, for example, furthermore, however, later, meanwhile, moreover, nevertheless, next, otherwise, subsequently, then, therefore*.

**TAKE OUT "SENTENCE STRUCTURE—WORD LISTS." CREATE A NEW SUBTITLE: "COMMON CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS"; THEN COPY THE LIST OF CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS FOUND ABOVE. SAVE THIS PAPER.**

**Example:**

- Jacob sold his house and his library, his love of twelve years; finally, he parted.  
**base sentence:** Jacob sold finally he parted.

Note the similarities between this compound sentence and the compound sentences joined by coordinating conjunctions. Also note that conjunctive adverbs are usually preceded by semicolons and followed by commas.

The third method of linking sentences we'll look at is the semicolon. The semicolon joins two closely related independent clauses (sentences). It can do this work by itself, without the need for any members of the conjunction family to assist it.

**Example:**

- (A swift carriage) flashed ~~before them~~; snow and mud flew everywhere, splashing the girls.  
**base sentence:** Carriage flashed; snow, mud flew.

**Exercise 17:** Copy each of the following. Place a box around each conjunctive adverb. (Not all sentences will need boxes.) Then use the steps we've learned for determining subject/verb—one subject/verb combo on the left side of the conjunctive adverb or semicolon and another on the right side. You will need to cross out prepositional phrases, articles, and infinitives; you will need to place parentheses around noun clusters; and you will need to single underline subjects and double underline verbs.

1. In her right hand she held a scale; in her left hand she held a sword.
2. Umberto has been invited to the White House; however, to his regret, he must decline to attend.
3. Like a felon, your path is dark; wormwood infects your foreign bread.
4. Some common things will be impossible for me; for example, I won't applaud at shows. (*Unpack the contraction: won't = will not.*)
5. The socks were so beautiful; nevertheless, I resisted the sharp temptation to save them.

# Sentence Structure 18: Complex Sentences

We have seen that compound sentences contain two subject/verb combos—one on each side of the conjunction or semicolon. Now we'll take a look at complex sentences.

- **Compound sentence = independent clause + independent clause.**
- **Complex sentence = independent clause + subordinate clause.**

A **clause** is a word group that contains a subject and verb. If that clause can stand alone as a complete thought, then it is an **independent** clause (the same as a sentence). Example:

- She held a scale.

However, if a word group has a subject and verb but cannot stand alone as a complete thought, it is a **subordinate** clause. Example:

- Because she held a scale.

Subordinate clauses can be classified as noun (nominal) clauses, adjective (adjectival) clauses, or adverb (adverbial) clauses. We've already had a sneak peek at adjective clauses: the relative clauses we've been crossing out are adjective clauses. In Sentence Structure 20 we'll study noun clauses. But here in Sentence Structure 18 we'll focus on adverb clauses.

**Adverb clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions.** We can take any independent clause (sentence), add a subordinating conjunction to the front of it, and we will have created an adverbial subordinate clause. Here is a list of common subordinating conjunctions:

- *after, although, as, because, before, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while.*

TAKE OUT "SENTENCE STRUCTURE—WORD LISTS."  
CREATE A NEW SUBTITLE: "COMMON SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS"; THEN COPY THE LIST OF SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS FOUND ABOVE. SAVE THIS PAPER.

Once again, the pattern is (1) take a sentence and (2) add a subordinating conjunction to the front of that

sentence. What results is a subordinate clause. *Note that the independent clause is a complete thought—but the subordinate clause is not a complete thought and could not stand alone as a sentence.*

**Examples:**

- **independent clause/sentence:** Jacob sold his house.
- **subordinate clause:** After Jacob sold his house.
- **independent clause/sentence:** A carriage flashed before them.
- **subordinate clause:** Although a carriage flashed before them.

**Exercise 18:** Here in exercise 18, the subjects and verbs will be given to you, but don't copy the underlines. Instead, copy each sentence, box each subordinating conjunction, and underline each subordinate clause. Most commonly, an adverbial subordinate clause will appear either as the right-half of a sentence or as the left-half of a sentence.

**example:** I sojourn here though the sedge has withered from the lake.

**example:** Though the sedge has withered from the lake, I sojourn here

1. You begin when you are ready.
2. When you are ready, you begin.
3. The weathermen clomped four miles on snowshoes to get to their seats after they had thumped the vending machines empty.
4. After they had thumped the vending machines empty, the weathermen clomped four miles on snowshoes to get to their seats.
5. (a) When a subordinate clause appears as the right-half of a sentence, do we punctuate with a comma? (b) When a subordinate clause appears as the left-half of a sentence, do we punctuate with a comma?

# Sentence Structure 19: Subjects and Verbs in Complex Sentences

An **independent** clause (sentence) contains a subject and verb. When we add a **subordinate** clause to an **independent** clause, the added **subordinate** clause also contains a subject and verb. However, there is a difference between the two sets of subjects and verbs. The subject/verb in the **independent** clause is the *primary* subject/verb. These words are the foundational words upon which the entire sentence is built. The subject/verb in the **subordinate** clause is a *secondary* subject/verb. This is because **subordinate** words are not essential to the sentence. They could be deleted, and a complete sentence would still remain.

Therefore, a subject/verb in a **subordinate** clause is a subject/verb, but not the subject/verb of the sentence.

Here are two of the sentences from the previous exercise:

- **example 1:** You begin when you are ready.
- **example 2:** After they'd thumped the vending machines empty, the weathermen clomped four miles on snowshoes to get to their seats. (*Unpack the contraction*)

The *primary* subject/verb in example 1: *You begin*.

The *secondary* subject/verb in example 1: *You are*.

The *primary* subject/verb in example 2: *Weathermen clomped*.

The *secondary* subject/verb in example 2: *They had thumped*.

**Exercise 19:** Do not copy the sentences. Instead, each sentence will require a three-part answer: (a) Is the **subordinate** clause on the left side or right side of the sentence? (b) What is the sentence's primary subject/verb? (c) What is the sentence's secondary subject/verb?

**tips:** (1) The subordinating conjunction is the first word of the subordinate clause. (2) The primary subject/verb is found within the **independent** clause. (3) The secondary subject/verb is found within the **subordinate** clause.

- **example:** As our teeth sank into their flesh, we had to deny them.
  - **answer:** (a) left (b) We had. (c) Teeth sank.
1. When you find the body, it will have cauliflower ears.
  2. The whole building collapses before she can remove her hand from the knob.
  3. China marches its men down Po-teng Road while Tartar troops peer across the blue waters of the bay.
  4. Though the voices around you were shouting their bad advice, you felt the old tug at your ankles.
  5. If an apple has been spiked with stubble, it will go surely to the cider-apple heap.
  6. The stars began to burn through the sheets of clouds as you left their voices behind.

## Sentence Structure 20: Subjects and Verbs in *That*-Clauses

Earlier we learned that when we add **subordinate** clauses to **independent** clauses, we create **complex sentences**. We also learned that some **subordinate** clauses act as adjectives, some as adverbs, and some as nouns.

Among the noun clauses, the most common construction we will encounter is the noun clause beginning with the word *that*. Because *that*-clauses appear so frequently, we will devote this lesson to studying these clauses. **Example:**

- I know that the hand of God is the elderhand of my own.

Clauses contain subjects and verbs. Therefore, our *that*-clauses will contain subjects and verbs. However, since our *that*-clauses are subordinate clauses, the subjects and verbs they contain will be secondary, not primary. Here are the subjects and verbs contained in the example above.

- The *primary* subject/verb: I know.
- The *secondary* subject/verb: Hand is.

Previously, we've practiced crossing out relative clauses that begin with *that*. Let's compare one of those relative clauses to the *that*-clause above:

- **example 1:** The trout that swim in the center of the river keep themselves safe.
- **example 2:** I know that the hand of God is the elderhand of my own.

Both examples contain a clause that begins with *that*. However, there are three differences between these clauses:

1. **Example 1:** A relative clause; it functions as an adjective modifying *trout*. Note how the word *that* connects to the word *trout* to create a single phrase: *trout that swim in the center of the river*.  
**Example 2:** A noun clause.
2. **Example 1:** The word *that* is the part of the subject/verb: *that swim*. **Example 2:** The word *that* is not part of the subject verb: *hand is*.
3. **Example 1:** The word preceding the clause is a noun. **Example 2:** The word preceding the clause is a verb.

The best way to tell the two types of clauses apart is to look at the word immediately to the left of *that*. If the word to the left is a noun and if the clause is modifying that noun, *then the clause is a relative clause, not a noun clause*.

**Exercise 20:** Copy each of the following. Place a box around the word *that* (the first word of the *that*-clause). Then use the steps we've learned for determining subject/verb. You will need to cross out prepositional phrases, to place parentheses around noun clusters, and to single underline subjects and double underline verbs. In each sentence, identify the primary subject/verb found in the independent clause and the secondary subject/verb found in the *that*-clause.

1. I dreamed that I went into a forest.
2. You saw that five old pieces of fish-line hung from his lower lip.
3. They will know that it is all happening in the only possible way.
4. I am afraid that I'll be with the Northern Army on the long march south. (*Unpack the contraction.*)

## Sentence Structure 21: Clauses Review

We have studied **subordinate** clauses that work as adjectives, **subordinate** clauses that work as adverbs, and **subordinate** clauses that work as nouns.

- **adjective:** These are the relative clauses. We have focused on those that begin with *who* and *that*.
- **adverb:** These are the clauses that begin with subordinating conjunctions. They usually appear as the left-side or the right-side of a sentence.
- **noun:** We have focused on the most common of the noun clauses, the *that*-clause.

Also, with relative clauses, we have learned to cross them out so that they don't interfere with our ability to identify the true subject. With adverb and noun clauses we have learned that these clauses contain their own subjects and verbs, but the subjects and verbs they contain are secondary, not primary. This means that if we were asked for *the* subject and verb of the sentence, our answer would not include any subjects and verbs found in **subordinate** clauses.

Here is your chance to demonstrate what you've learned.

**Exercise 21:** Copy each of the following. Place boxes around **subordinating** conjunctions (each of the four sentences contains one) and the word *that*—but only when *that* is the first word of a noun clause. If *that* happens to be the first word of a relative clause, cross out the entire relative clauses. (You will find *that* four times—twice in a relative clause and twice in a noun clause.) Then use the steps we've learned for determining subject/verb.

1. After the poetry of bodies bows to the ground, it rises to the sound of a heartless world that is starved for the sacred.
2. I dropped the phone when I realized that he had become like me.
3. I hoped that the bee would hear the rushing tread and escape while he still had time.
4. Because battles do not send fighters home again, the soldiers pause and think of memories that cannot rest.
5. (a) Which sentences (by number) have *three* sets of subjects and verbs? (b) In numbers 1-4, how many of the subject/verb combos in each sentence are primary?



## Sentence Structure 22: Sentence Fragments

A complete sentence contains a subject and a verb and is **independent**. Anything less—like just a subject or just a predicate or just a subordinate clause—is a sentence **fragment**.

Probably the best way to understand the concept of **fragment** is to imagine a person walking up to us, speaking, then walking away. If what that person speaks is a **fragment**, our reaction would be to call that person back and have that person finish what he or she was saying.

So imagine a person walking up to you and saying “the voices,” then walking away. Or saying “were shouting their bad advice,” then walking away. Or saying “though the voices around you were shouting their bad advice,” then walking away. In each case, we know that the speaker has not delivered a complete thought, a complete sentence. And notice that we don’t need to run the speaker’s words through some sort of internal grammar checker. Instead, we innately understand when a word group is complete and when it is not.

And yet, **fragments** quite commonly appear in student writing. When they do, they are considered as major errors. Therefore, our goal is to be aware of **fragments** and to avoid using them in our writing. There are two ways to fix a **fragment**:

1. Add words.
2. Delete a word.

### Adding Words

- **fragment:** Flings her hair down.
- **sentence:** A girl flings her hair down.
- **fragment:** The whole world.
- **sentence:** The whole world conforms to seventeen syllables.

### Deleting a Word

- **fragment:** Although a carriage flashed before them.
- **sentence:** A carriage flashed before them.
- **fragment:** That I went into the forest.
- **sentence:** I went into the forest.

**Exercise 22:** Each of the following is a sentence **fragment**. Rewrite and edit each; turn each into a complete sentence. For numbers 1-3, add one or more words; for numbers 4-6, delete a word.

1. The duty she had failed to perform.
2. Shouting at the branches.
3. Beside the distant river.
4. When night fell.
5. That I would cross that bridge.
6. If there comes a dissenting voice.

## Sentence Structure 23: Run-On Sentences

In the previous exercise we learned that sentence **fragments** constitute a major writing error. In this exercise, we'll learn that the same is true of **run-on** sentences. **Run-ons** go by several names—names such as *comma fault*, *comma splice*, and *fused sentence*. However, we will simplify our study by placing all **run-ons** in one single category.

Here are a pair of sentences:

- Two roads diverged in a wood. I took the one less traveled by.

The writer of these sentences understands that the word *wood* is the last word of the first sentence and therefore places a period after the word *wood*. The same is true after the word *by* in the second sentence. A **run-on** occurs when a writer fails to understand that a sentence is concluding and fails to use a proper end-of-sentence punctuation mark, like a period.

**Examples:**

- Two roads diverged in a wood, I took the one less traveled by.
- Two roads diverged in a wood I took the one less traveled by.

In the first case, we have a comma trying to do the work of a period; in the second case, the period is simply not there. In both cases, a **run-on** sentence has been created.

Here is an overview:

- **fragment:** not enough; less than a sentence
  - **sentence:** just right; correct
  - **run-on:** too much; more than a sentence

This is one reason a firm understanding of what constitutes a sentence is so important. When we write, the sentence is the building block of the texts we create. A lack of clarity about the meaning of *sentence* leads to **fragments**, **run-ons**, or both. Though **fragments** and **run-ons** seem quite different, both are considered *sentence-boundary* errors.

**Exercise 23:** Two of the six following sentences are correct. Don't copy them; just label them *correct*. Two are **fragments**; rewrite each of them so that each is no longer a **fragment**. Two are **run-ons**; rewrite each of them so that each is no longer a **run-on**.

1. A long and silent street.
2. A young foot soldier stands on battle-pocked land his helmet is at a jaunty tilt.
3. Before he removed the iron sliver.
4. I feel above me the day-blinds stars.
5. It was already late enough, the road was full of fallen branches and stones.
6. We forgot to notice who pulled his golden strings.
7. (a) Before you corrected them, which two sentences (by number) were fragments? (b) Which two sentences (by number) were run-ons?

## Sentence Structure 24: Exception #1—Intentional Fragments

Ironically, fragments in student writing are major errors, yet professional writers quite commonly sprinkle their writing with fragments. Intentional fragments can help a writer create *voice*; they can help lend a certain stylishness to our writing. If you believe you understand when intentional fragments work well and you decide to use one in your writing, label your fragment *intentional fragment*. Your instructor is likely to appreciate your effort.

Here are some examples of intentional fragments. The fragments are underlined:

- Something there is in me that detests a wall. Or a fence, a reservation, or golf course.
- Laertes has groupies, proof he has taste, has cool. Wears skate-board clothes.
- But that's how life parachutes to my home. Home, where they make you do what you don't want to do.

And here are some examples of writers using two or three consecutive fragments. The fragments are underlined:

- Seems like a long time since the waiter took my order. Grimy little luncheonette. The snow falling outside.
- We gobbled cotton candy torches, sweet as furtive kisses, shared on benches beneath summer shadows. Cherry. Elm. Sycamore.
- And Mrs. Whitmore was now reading from the Psalms. Coughing into her handkerchief. Snow above the windows.

Writers who use intentional fragments need to have a good ear for language. When used well, intentional fragments provide writing some dramatic *punch*, as in the examples above.

**Exercise 24:** Copy each of the following. Separate instructions are given for each.

1. She woke me up at dawn, her suitcase like a little brown dog at her heels. And a bus ticket was in her hand. *(Turn the second sentence into an intentional fragment by removing one word. Underline your fragment.)*
2. I had everything: sunlight safe inside the leaves of cottonwoods, pure harmonies of church music, echoes of slave songs, scraps of candy wrappers. I had everything. *(Turn the second sentence into an intentional fragment by removing two words. Underline your fragment.)*
3. I like the generosity of numbers. I like the way, for example, they are willing to count anything or anyone. *(Turn the second sentence into an intentional fragment by removing two words. Underline your fragment.)*
4. Meet me at the Vietnamese café, with its oily light, its odors whose colorful shapes are like flowers. There you will hear laughter and talking. There you will hear the tick of chopsticks. *(Turn the second and third sentence into intentional fragments by removing four words from each. Underline your fragments.)*

## Sentence Structure 25: Exception #2—Sentences in a Series

We will now visit a rather peculiar rule of punctuation. Study the following:

- Sentence. Sentence. (*correct*)
- Sentence, sentence. (*incorrect—run-on*)
- Sentence, sentence, sentence. (*correct—sentences in a series*)

What we learn from the three examples above is that two sentences joined by a comma is an error, but three or more sentences joined by commas is perfectly acceptable. When we do decide to place three or more sentences together joined by commas, we are using what is known as the *items in a series* pattern.

- **common items in a series:** For breakfast I had waffles, strawberries, and walnuts.
- **sentences in a series:** I had waffles for breakfast, I had strawberries for lunch, I had walnuts for dinner.

Writers using sentences in a series should note the following:

1. Sentences being placed in the series are short and to the point. Longer sentences in a series are unlikely to work well.
2. Writers are not limited to three sentences. Any number of sentences beyond three is possible.
3. With common items in a series, we commonly place a conjunction (usually *and*) just prior to the final item. But with sentences in a series, it is better to leave the conjunction out.

Here are two more examples:

- All songs end, memories soar over rooftops, an eyelid swells with desire.
- A star flares on an medallion, a ball rolls out of reach, the glowing line onscreen goes flat, an anonymous bullet strays. (*This one is a four-sentence series.*)

**Exercise 25:** For numbers 1-3, create sentences in a series by copying what you see. Simply convert the commas to periods and convert the following capital letters to lower-case letters. For number 4, you'll create your own example of sentences in a series.

1. April gives to May. Out come the flowers now. It is time for spring.
2. For death in war is done by hands. Suicide has cause. Cancer blooms simply as a flower.
3. And so the moss flourishes. The seaweed whips around. The sea pushes through and rolls back. The rocks seem motionless.
4. Create your own example of sentences in a series.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sentence Structure Practice Test

USE YOUR WORD LISTS AS YOU COMPLETE THIS PRACTICE TEST

### Part 1: Subjects and Verbs

- Underline simple subjects; double underline verbs.
- Cross out prepositional phrases, articles, relative clauses, and infinitives.
- Place parentheses around noun phrases.

1. A raging fire races across the floor of the valley.
2. A trail cut through the valley.
3. Bake loaves for the whole world.
4. By the road to the hospital blows the cold wind.
5. Have the enemies who were captured yesterday agreed to escape in silence?
6. The aging priest bows his head, lays a hand upon his knee, and reflects on the love of his parishioners.
7. The auctioneer's confidence was inflating the bidding amounts.
8. The bobcat mingles with the chickens.
9. The brindled cows and the wings of the finches dot the land and color the sky.

### Part 2: Compound and Complex Sentences

- Underline simple subjects; double underline verbs.
- Cross out prepositional phrases, articles, relative clauses, and infinitives.
- Place parentheses around noun phrases.
- In four of the six sentences, place a box around the key conjunction.

Each sentence will have two sets of subjects and verbs.

1. Men hit only what they aim at; therefore, they should aim at something high.
2. The poppies blow between the crosses, and in the sky the larks sing among the guns.
3. We work, eat, and sleep; a robin sings from a dripping bush.
4. The cousin was fired from his job because he wears dreadlocks.
5. When fireflies burned holes into heaven, he took the path homeward in the dark.
6. Plutarch prays that we will see their faces again in the mirror of creation.

\*\*\* PART 3 IS ON THE BACK \*\*\*

### Part 3: Fragments and Run-Ons

Two of the six following sentences are correct. Don't copy them; just label them "correct." Two are fragments; rewrite each of them so that each is no longer a fragment. Two are run-ons; rewrite each of them so that each is no longer a run-on.

1. Because it is so difficult for a deeper truth to make itself known.
2. Everything needed to change the time was now.
3. He was speckled with barnacles and tiny white sea-lice.
4. I was well upon my way to sleep before it fell, I could tell what form my dreaming was about to take.
5. The waste of broad, muddy fields.
6. This is the most compassionate act you can do for anyone.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Sentence Structure Final Test

USE YOUR WORD LISTS AS YOU COMPLETE THIS TEST

### Part 1: Subjects and Verbs

- Underline simple subjects; double underline verbs.
- Cross out prepositional phrases, articles, relative clauses, and infinitives.
- Place parentheses around noun phrases.

1. The chameleons that bask in the sun change their colors to remain unseen.
2. The child's hand from the peep hole might be blindly waving to remind us of the time.
3. The condor could be making the comeback of the century.
4. The crunching cow, the mouse, and the infidels regard the approaching miracle.
5. The egg of the wren and the singing toad favor the angels and adorn the parlors of heaven.
6. The graduates who write messages on their mortarboards sit in the back row.
7. The professors in the lounge discuss a controversial philosophical topic.
8. The true journey of your life requires a kind of madness.
9. These bits of gravel that cling to each knee bring me pain.

### Part 2: Compound and Complex Sentences

- Underline simple subjects; double underline verbs.
- Cross out prepositional phrases, articles, relative clauses, and infinitives.
- Place parentheses around noun phrases.
- In four of the six sentences, place a box around the key conjunction.

Each sentence will have two sets of subjects and verbs.

1. After the first melodious flourishes were finished, the clarinet player began to take his instrument apart.
2. An order had come to him to support our right; however, he fell forward and went over the hill to the left.
3. Ophelia was filled with anxiety; she needed someone to help her feel more confident.
4. Technology can provide enormous assistance with problem-solving, but it says nothing in the face of life's serious questions.
5. The shrewd reader knows that only one of the two statements is true.
6. The tractor that pulls the plow disappears over a hill until no sound remains.

\*\*\* PART 3 IS ON THE BACK \*\*\*

### Part 3: Fragments and Run-Ons

Two of the six following sentences are correct. Don't copy them; just label them "correct." Two are fragments; rewrite each of them so that each is no longer a fragment. Two are run-ons; rewrite each of them so that each is no longer a run-on.

1. Even though most of us don't want to reach the end for a long time.
2. I love to stay in bed all morning with the covers thrown off and my eyes closed.
3. Life is kind of like a loathsome hag who is forever threatening to turn beautiful.
4. Night and day arrive, what is old remains old.
5. The air is drugged with blossoms deep in the night a pine cone falls.
6. The leaves shivering in the sun as if each day were the last.



# ANSWER KEYS

## Sentence Structure 1: Introduction

### Exercise 1

1. kids / get
2. war / move
3. astronomer / began
4. water / spills
5. Grandfather /carried

## Sentence Structure 2: Sentences Contain Subjects and Verbs

### Exercise 2

1. we sat
2. She stared
3. Molly gestured

## Sentence Structure 3: Complete Subjects Vs. Simple Subjects

### Exercise 3

1. kids
2. neighbors
3. astronomer
4. water
5. Grandfather

## Sentence Structure 4: Eliminating Prepositional Phrases

### Exercise 4

1. Explorers ~~in the jungle~~ / stalk a rare green deer.
2. Trees ~~on the cypress mountain~~ / blend into the autumn evening.
3. Reapers ~~with scythes~~ / spend the afternoon sharpening their blades.

4. Writers ~~of well-written sonnets~~ / fill their first eight lines with a single meaning.

## Sentence Structure 5: Eliminating Articles and Relative Clauses

### Exercise 5

1. A man ~~who sees an empty street~~ / stumbles in his attempt to rise.
2. The trout ~~that swim in the center of the river~~ / keep themselves safe.
3. The boys ~~who respect the mysterious leader~~ / bow their heads to their chests.
4. An eye ~~that looked upon him~~ / blinked in warning.

## Sentence Structure 6: Verbs Vs. Predicates

### Exercise 6

1. Today I glimmer; yesterday I glimmered.
2. Today I require; yesterday I required.
3. Today I fill; yesterday I filled.
4. Today I trickle; yesterday I trickled.

## Sentence Structure 7: Main Verbs and Helping Verbs

### Exercise 7

1. should reveal
2. may be dangling
3. are curling
4. has been given

## Sentence Structure 8: Subjects and Verbs

### Exercise 8

1. (Those human beings) ~~who are truly alive~~ / will journey all about the globe.  
Beings will journey.
2. (The last lion) / might be roaring his furious, golden protest.  
Lion might be roaring.
3. (The wounded heart) ~~in your chest~~ / will somehow be sustained by your knowing the rightness of it all.  
Heart will be sustained.

## Sentence Structure 9: Active Vs. Passive Verbs

### Exercise 9

1. Two houses shared a cinder-block wall.
2. The weight of birds has conquered the branches.
3. A child-ventriloquist could make an announcement or two.
4. The sky toppled a blue-bottomed saucer.
5. Beings made in the image of Jehovah hurled the harpoons.

## Sentence Structure 10: Compound Subjects and Compound Verbs

### Exercise 10

1. ~~The pain of loss, the grief, and the despair~~ / ignite the transformation.  
Pain, grief, despair ignite.
2. (An auto wreck) / invites the occult mind, cancels our physics with a sneer, and spatters our clear conclusion across the expedient and wicked stones.  
Wreck invites, cancels, spatters.

3. ~~The egg of the wren~~ and (the singing toad) / favor the angels and adorn the parlors of heaven.  
Egg, toad favor, adorn.

## Sentence Structure 11: Verbs Before Subjects

### Exercise 11

1. ~~Into the cellar bin~~ rolled the load of apples.
2. Victims ~~of his fits of pride~~ were they.
3. Watchful ~~like a mother hen~~ appeared the musician.
4. ~~There was~~ the sound of my long scythe.
5. ~~It is a reminder to remain in the truth~~.

## Sentence Structure 12: Subjects and Verbs in Commands and Questions

### Exercise 12

1. Are you reliving the past? —question
2. (You) Mend my life. —command
3. (You) Love someone who doesn't deserve it. —command
4. Did they wear uniforms the color of a shriveled robber crab? —question

## Sentence Structure 13: Mixed Practice

### Exercise 13

1. Jazzman / swayed.
2. Danger, darkness / may accompany.
3. Youth / leaped, snatched.
4. Lashes / had been dissolved.
5. Swallow / should spend.
6. Breeze / might have been covering.
7. Howls / will echo.
8. Drums, traps, banjos, horns, cans / can make, scratch.
9. Stones / have stood, have found.
10. (You) / give.
11. Cloud / soars.
12. Father / did beg.

## Sentence Structure 14: Subject-Verb Agreement

### Exercise 14

1. The voice that fills your ears with soft sounds keeps your company ~~on your journey~~.
2. (The whistling sounds) ~~from the boats that sit deep within the harbor~~ call like a lost child in tears.
3. The object in the center of the circle of men resembles a silver tear, a tiny flame.
4. The hostages ~~who must be rescued by the language of a poet~~ insist on revealing their mysteries.

## Sentence Structure 15: Subject-Verb Agreement, Continued

### Exercise 15

1. There are (several salt shakers) ~~on the shelf~~.

2. The huts and (the long journey) remain ~~in my memory~~.
3. (The twiggy bushes) and (the small dead tree) call ~~for the approaching spring~~.
4. There are (too many voices) ~~in the room~~.

## Sentence Structure 16: Subjects and Verbs in Compound Sentences

### Exercise 16

1. Everything is the same, yet everything is different.
2. I sit ~~on the grass~~, but the future slowly disappears.
3. She would fly far away ~~into the sky~~, or she would rest ~~in the eaves with uncombed hair~~.
4. He wanted a job waiting tables, but you proclaimed his black dreadlocks unclean.

## Sentence Structure 17: Compound Sentences—Conjunctive Adverbs and Semicolons

### Exercise 17

1. ~~In her right hand~~ she held a scale; ~~in her left hand~~ she held a sword.
2. Umberto has been invited ~~to the White House~~; however, ~~to his regret~~, he must decline ~~to attend~~.
3. ~~Like a felon~~, (your path) is dark; wormwood infects your foreign bread.
4. (Some common things) will be impossible ~~for me~~; for example, I will not applaud ~~at shows~~.
5. The socks were so beautiful; nevertheless, I resisted the sharp temptation ~~to save them~~.

## Sentence Structure 18: Complex Sentences

### Exercise 18

1. You begin when you are ready.
2. When you are ready, you begin.
3. The weathermen clomped four miles on snowshoes to get to their seats after they had thumped the vending machines empty.
4. After they had thumped the vending machines empty, the weathermen clomped four miles on snowshoes to get to their seats.
5. (a) no (b) yes

## Sentence Structure 19: Subjects and Verbs in Complex Sentences

### Exercise 19

1. (a) left (b) It will have. (c) You find.
2. (a) right (b) Building collapses. (c) She can remove.
3. (a) right (b) China marches. (c) Troops peer.
4. (a) left (b) You felt. (c) Voices were shouting.
5. (a) left (b) It will go. (c) Apple has been spiked.
6. (a) right (b) Stars began. (c) You left.

## Sentence Structure 20: Subjects and Verbs in *That*-Clauses

### Exercise 20

1. I dreamed that I went into a forest.
2. You saw that (five old pieces) of fish-line hung from his lower lip.
3. They will know that it is all happening in the only possible way.
4. I am afraid that I will be with the Northern Army on the long march south.

## Sentence Structure 21: Clauses Review

### Exercise 21

1. After the poetry of bodies bows to the ground, it rises to the sound of a heartless world that is starved for the sacred.
2. I dropped the phone when I realized that he had become like me.
3. I hoped that the bee would hear the rushing tread and escape while he still had time.
4. Because battles do not send fighters home again, the soldiers pause and think of memories that cannot rest.
5. (a) 2 and 3 (b) 1

## Sentence Structure 22: Sentence Fragments

### Exercise 22 [numbers 1-3 are samples of correct answers; numbers 4-6 are answers]

1. The duty she had failed to perform **would come back to haunt her.**  
[or] She **could not stop thinking about** the duty she had failed to perform.
2. Shouting at the branches **will not make your tree grow any taller.**  
[or] John was embarrassed to discover that he **had been** shouting at the branches.
3. Beside the distant river **was a cabin.**  
[or] A cabin **was built** beside the distant river.
4. Night fell.
5. I would cross that bridge.
6. There comes a dissenting voice.

## Sentence Structure 23: Run-On Sentences

### Exercise 23

[numbers 4, 6, and 7 are answers; numbers 1, 2, 3, and 5 are sample answers]

1. A long and silent street **stretched out before us.**
2. A young foot soldier stands on battle-pocked land. His helmet is at a jaunty tilt.
3. Before he'd removed the iron sliver, **he breathed a deep sigh.**
4. I feel above me the day-blinds stars. **correct**
5. It was already late enough. The road was full of fallen branches and stones.
6. We forgot to notice who pulled his golden strings. **correct**
7. (a) 1 and 3 (b) 2 and 5

## Sentence Structure 24: Exception #1—Intentional Fragments

### Exercise 24

1. She woke me up at dawn, her suitcase like a little brown dog at her heels. And a bus ticket was in her hand.
2. I had everything: sunlight safe inside the leaves of cottonwoods, pure harmonies of church music, echoes of slave songs, scraps of candy wrappers. I had Everything.
3. I like the generosity of numbers. Like The way, for example, they are willing to count anything or anyone.
4. Meet me at the Vietnamese café, with its oily light, its odors whose colorful shapes are like flowers. There you will hear laughter and talking. There you will hear The tick of chopsticks.

## Sentence Structure 25: Exception #2—Sentences in a Series

### Exercise 25

[numbers 1-3 are answers; number 4 is a sample answer]

1. April gives to May, out come the flowers now, it is time for spring.
2. For death in war is done by hands, suicide has cause, cancer blooms simply as a flower.
3. And so the moss flourishes, the seaweed whips around, the sea pushes through and rolls back, the rocks seem motionless.
4. The clouds drift eastward, the cow nibbles her cud, the air stands still.

## Sentence Structure Practice Test

### Part 1: Subjects and Verbs

1. (~~A raging fire~~) races ~~across the floor of the valley.~~
2. A trail cut ~~through the valley.~~
3. (~~You~~) Bake loaves ~~for the whole world.~~
4. ~~By the road to the hospital~~ blows (~~the cold wind~~).
5. Have ~~the enemies who were captured yesterday~~ agreed ~~to escape in silence?~~
6. (The aging priest) bows his head, lays a hand upon his knee, and reflects ~~on the love of his parishioners.~~
7. (~~The auctioneer's confidence~~) was inflating the bidding amounts.
8. The bobcat mingles ~~with the chickens.~~
9. (The brindled cows) and ~~the wings of the finches~~ dot the land and color the sky.

### Part 2: Compound and Complex Sentences

1. Men hit only what they aim at; therefore, they should aim at something high.
2. The poppies blow ~~between the crosses,~~ and in the sky the larks sing among the guns.
3. We work, eat, and sleep; a robin sings from a dripping bush.
4. The cousin was fired from his job because he wears dreadlocks.
5. When fireflies burned holes ~~into heaven,~~ he took the path homeward ~~in the dark.~~
6. Plutarch prays that we will see their faces again ~~in the mirror of creation.~~

### Part 3: Fragments and Run-Ons

1. Because it is so difficult for a deeper truth to make itself known. **[Either cross out "because" or add a comma plus an additional clause after the word "known."]**

2. Everything needed to change the time was now. **[After the word "change," add either a semicolon or a period and a capital letter.]**
3. He was speckled with barnacles and tiny white sea-lice. **Correct**
4. I was well upon my way to sleep before it fell, I could tell what form my dreaming was about to take. **[Remove the comma after the word "fell"; then add either a semicolon or a period and a capital letter.]**
5. The waste of broad, muddy fields. **[Words must be added to the front or the end of the sentence. For example, "We trudged across the waste of broad, muddy fields."]**
6. This is the most compassionate act you can do for anyone. **Correct**

## Sentence Structure Final Test

### Part 1: Subjects and Verbs

1. The chameleons ~~that bask in the sun~~ change their colors ~~to remain~~ unseen.
2. ~~(The child's hand)~~ ~~from the peep hole~~ might be blindly waving ~~to remind us of the time~~.
3. ~~The~~ condor could be making the comeback ~~of the century~~.
4. ~~(The crunching cow), the~~ mouse, and ~~the~~ infidels regard ~~the~~ approaching miracle.
5. ~~The egg of the wren~~ and ~~(the singing toad)~~ favor the angels and adorn ~~the~~ parlors ~~of heaven~~.
6. ~~The graduates who write messages on their mortarboards~~ sit in the back row.
7. ~~The professors in the lounge~~ discuss (a controversial philosophical topic).
8. ~~(The true journey) of your life~~ requires a kind of madness.
9. These bits ~~of gravel that cling to each knee~~ bring me pain.

### Part 2: Compound and Complex Sentences

1. After ~~(the first melodious flourishes)~~ were finished, ~~(the clarinet player)~~ began ~~to take~~ his instrument apart.
2. An order had come to him to support our right; however, he fell forward and went over ~~the~~ hill to ~~the~~ left.
3. Ophelia was filled ~~with anxiety~~; she needed someone ~~to help~~ her feel more confident.
4. Technology can provide enormous assistance ~~with problem-solving~~, but it says nothing ~~in the face of life's serious questions~~.
5. ~~(The shrewd reader)~~ knows that only one ~~of the two statements~~ is true.
6. ~~The tractor that pulls the plow~~ disappears ~~over a hill~~ until no sound remains.

### Part 3: Fragments and Run-Ons

1. Even though most of us don't want to reach the end for a long time. **[Simplest method: remove "Even though"; another solution is to add a comma and a clause after the word "time."]**
2. I love to stay in bed all morning with the covers thrown off and my eyes closed. **Correct**
3. Life is kind of like a loathsome hag who is forever threatening to turn beautiful. **Correct**
4. Night and day arrive, what is old remains old. **[Remove the comma after the word "arrive"; then add either a semicolon or a period and a capital letter.]**
5. The air is drugged with blossoms deep in the night a pine cone falls. **[After the word "blossoms," add either a semicolon or a period and a capital letter.]**
6. The leaves shivering in the sun as if each day were the last. **[The simple solution is to change "shivering" to "shiver"; the less simple solution would be to add words to the beginning or end. For example: *The leaves shivering in the sun as if each day were the last remind me of my own mortality.*]**