

Worksheet 1, Sentence Fragments (7 Exercises)

1. Salt-water fish can be very colorful. For example, Parrot Fish.

Answer 1: Salt-water fish can be very colorful. Take, for example, Parrot Fish.

Answer 2: Salt-water fish, such as the Parrot Fish, can be very colorful.

Answer 3: Salt-water fish can be very colorful. For example, Parrot Fish have neon-like stripes of yellow, orange, and blue.

Answer 4: Salt-water fish can be very colorful, for example, Parrot Fish.

Teaching Tip: Sentence fragments give students problems because 1) They see fragments in advertisements and published writings, 2) The fragments make sense; they do not obscure the intended meaning, and 3) The fragments seem intuitively right.

Impress upon students that in formal, academic writing, sentence fragments should not occur.

2. Merwin passed the exam. Although, he got the last five questions wrong.

Answer 1: Merwin passed the exam, although he got the last five questions wrong.

Answer 2: Although Merwin got the last five questions wrong, he passed the exam.

Answer 3: Merwin passed the exam; however, he got the last five questions wrong.

Answer 4: Merwin passed the exam, but he got the last five questions wrong.

Teaching Tip: Impress upon students not to ever start a sentence with the word although followed by a comma. Ever! Notice that the RELATIONSHIP between the two ideas is fundamental. Ask the students to make the "contrast" relationship clear by using transitional words that establish a contrast (although, however, but).

3. Robert has met his long-lost daughter. Who had been searching for him over twenty years.

Answer 1: Robert has met his long-lost daughter who had been searching for him over twenty years.

Answer 2: Robert has met his long-lost daughter. She had been searching for him over twenty years.

Answer 3: Robert met his long-lost daughter after she had been searching for him over twenty years.

4. Because the cities on the west coast of Florida receive cool breezes and warm water from the Gulf of Mexico.

Answer 1: The cities on the west coast of Florida receive cool breezes and warm water from the Gulf of Mexico.

Answer 2: Visitors enjoy Siesta Key because the cities on the west coast of Florida receive cool breezes and warm water from the Gulf of Mexico.

5. Jenny never finished high school. Despite the fact that her parents were supportive and allowed her to stay at home after her arrest.

Answer 1: Jenny never finished high school despite the fact that her parents were supportive and allowed her to stay at home after her arrest.

Answer 2: Despite the fact that Jenny's parents were supportive and allowed her to stay at home after her arrest, Jenny never finished high school.

Answer 3: Although Jenny's parents were supportive and allowed her to stay at home after her arrest, Jenny never finished high school. (Better than 2.)

Teaching Tip: Encourage students to use fewer, rather than more, words in their writing. Despite the fact that and although mean the same thing; although is shorter.

6. The conductor finished with a flourish. Waving his baton and gesticulating wildly with his free hand.

Answer 1: The conductor finished with a flourish, waving his baton and gesticulating wildly with his free hand.

Answer 2: The conductor finished with a flourish as he waved his baton and gesticulated wildly with his free hand.

7. The house survived the tornado. Which clearly demonstrated that the building and zoning codes were sufficiently strict.

Answer 1: The house survived the tornado, which clearly demonstrated that the building and zoning codes were sufficiently strict.

Answer 2: The house survived the tornado, clearly demonstrating that the building and zoning codes were sufficiently strict.

Answer 3: The house survived the tornado, so the building and zoning codes were sufficiently strict.

Answer 4: The house survived the tornado; therefore, the building and zoning codes were sufficiently strict.

Teaching Tip: Notice the cause/effect relationship that the transitional words so and therefore establish in Answer 3 and Answer 4.

Worksheet 2, Sentence Fragments (18 Exercises)

1. Jason Smith, who was the first man from Georgia to serve on the ADFR Commission.

Answer 1: Jason Smith was the first man from Georgia to serve on the ADFR Commission.

Answer 2: Jason Smith, who was the first man from Georgia to serve on the ADFR Commission, was elected to the Georgia senate.

2. When I was given the opportunity to write a research paper on any topic of my choice.

Answer 1: I was given the opportunity to write a research paper on any topic of my choice.

Answer 2: When I was given the opportunity to write a research paper on any topic of my choice, I got nervous and asked my instructor to pick the topic.

Teaching Tip: Something happened when "I was given the opportunity to write a research paper on any topic of my choice." That SOMETHING that happened is the main idea in Answer 2. Answer 1 merely takes the existing words and eliminates the subordinating conjunction when.

3. Not just this wonderful appetizer, but the entire meal.

Answer 1: Marie ate not just this wonderful appetizer, but the entire meal.

Answer 2: Not just this wonderful appetizer, but the entire meal was a gastronomical delight.

4. Making Florida the fourth largest state in the country.

Answer 1: Florida is the fourth largest state in the country.

Answer 2: From the year 2000 through 2010, the population in Florida increased by 10%, making Florida the fourth largest state in the country.

Answer 3: With increased immigration making Florida the fourth largest state in the country, its tax base has also increased.

5. Roddy Burdine set up his trading post along Brickell Avenue. And traded with settlers along the banks of the Miami River.

Answer 1: Roddy Burdine set up his trading post along Brickell Avenue and traded with settlers along the banks of the Miami River.

Answer 2: Roddy Burdine set up his trading post along Brickell Avenue. He traded with settlers along the banks of the Miami River.

Answer 3: Setting up his trading post along Brickell Avenue, Roddy Burdine traded with settlers along the banks of the Miami River.

6. No idea about the relationship between the parents' divorce and the child's behavior.

Answer 1: Many parents have no idea about the relationship between the parents' divorce and the child's behavior.

Answer 2: The teacher had no idea about the relationship between the parents' divorce and the child's behavior.

Teaching Tip: The fragment in this exercise is a noun, so the fragment works well as part of a sentence with the verb have.

7. For example, attending ski camp over the winter holidays.

Answer 1: Some students find exciting ways to spend their vacation, for example, attending ski camp over the winter holidays.

Answer 2: Some students find exciting ways to spend their vacation. Take, for example, attending ski camp over the winter holidays.

Answer 3: Some students find exciting ways to spend their vacation like attending ski camp over the winter holidays.

Answer 4: Some students find exciting ways to spend their vacation. For example, some attend ski camp over the winter holidays.

Teaching Tip: This exercise gives students the opportunity to practice using for example in a sentence. I find the "Take, for example, ..." construction useful but some students will be tempted to write a complete sentence (independent clause) after it. Make sure they use a participial phrase or some other noun form with ing.

8. In the midst of the storm, when thunder roars and lightning strikes.

Answer 1: In the midst of the storm, when thunder roars and lightning strikes, I pray.

Answer 2: It is usually dark in the midst of the storm, when thunder roars and lightning strikes.

Answer 3: In the midst of the storm, thunder roars and lightning strikes.

9. Elvis Presley reacted to the situation. Running quickly to avoid the rapidly approaching mob.

Answer 1: Elvis Presley reacted to the situation, running quickly to avoid the rapidly approaching mob.

Answer 2: Elvis Presley reacted to the situation. He ran quickly to avoid the rapidly approaching mob.

Answer 3: Running quickly to avoid the rapidly approaching mob, Elvis Presley reacted to the situation.

10. Like the time my cousin threw me to the ground and yelled at me.

Answer 1: I felt horrible after my performance evaluation, like the time my cousin threw me to the ground and yelled at me.

Answer 2: When the coach reprimanded me, I felt like the time my cousin threw me to the ground and yelled at me.

Answer 3: As soon as I walked in on my parents' argument, it felt like the time my cousin threw me to the ground and yelled at me.

Teaching Tip: This exercise calls for a **comparison** with some other time that was "like the time my cousin threw me to the ground and yelled at me." Almost any other instance that was unpleasant will do.

11. Beneath the expressway ramp outside the city limits.

Answer 1: Some homeless men camp beneath the expressway ramp outside the city limits.

Answer 2: State troopers often park beneath the expressway ramp outside the city limits.

Teaching Tip: "Beneath the expressway ramp outside the city limits" just identifies a location. Something must HAPPEN in a location; "homeless men camp" or "state troopers often park" are two things that happen "beneath the expressway ramp outside the city limits."

12. Suffering from acute personality disorders for most of his adult life.

Answer 1: Suffering from acute personality disorders for most of his adult life, Harold started taking medication.

Answer 2: James struggled in his career, suffering from acute personality disorders for most of his adult life.

Answer 3: Damon suffered from acute personality disorders for most of his adult life.

13. In order to become a cosmetologist and open her own beauty salon.

Answer 1: In order to become a cosmetologist and open her own beauty salon, Jasmine earned both her cosmetology license and her bachelor's degree in business.

Answer 2: Melinda studied hard in order to become a cosmetologist and open her own beauty salon.

Teaching Tip: SOMEONE must DO something "in order to become a cosmetologist and open her own beauty salon. That SOMEONE accompanied by the verb constitute the main idea that must be attached to the fragment. In Answer 1, "Jasmine earned..." and in Answer 2, "Melinda Studied hard..."

14. Beatrice was suspended. Despite the teacher's having given her permission to publish a class web page.

Answer 1: Beatrice was suspended, despite the teacher's having given her permission to publish a class web page.

Answer 2: Although the teacher had given Beatrice permission to publish a class web page, Beatrice was suspended.

Answer 3: Her teacher had given Beatrice permission to publish a class web page; however, Beatrice was still suspended.

Answer 4: The teacher had given Beatrice permission to publish a class web page, but Beatrice was still suspended.

Teaching Tip: The main idea is that Beatrice was suspended. The relationship between the two clauses is one of contrast. Note that the adverb still helps to emphasize the contrast relationship.

15. With Dwayne Wade, LeBron James, and Chris Bosh all playing for the same team.

Answer 1: The Miami Heat basketball team should do well in 2010 with Dwayne Wade, LeBron James, and Chris Bosh all playing for the same team.

Answer 2: With Dwayne Wade, LeBron James, and Chris Bosh all playing for the same team, the Miami Heat are well prepared to make the playoffs.

Answer 3: Dwayne Wade, LeBron James, and Chris Bosh all play for the same team.

Teaching Tip: It seems that the writer wants to make a point about the significance of all three players being on the same team. The first two answers make this point. Answer three merely states that all three players are on the same team.

16. I got involved in extracurricular activities. Auditioning for the dance company during my first year of college.

Answer 1: I got involved in extracurricular activities, auditioning for the dance company during my first year of college.

Answer 2: I got involved in extracurricular activities by auditioning for the dance company during my first year of college.

Answer 3: I got involved in extracurricular activities. I auditioned for the dance company during my first year of college.

Teaching Tip: Note the use of by in Answer 2. Answer 3 may be the least desirable answer because it does not emphasize the relationship between the two clauses. It simply adds the second idea as additional information, an example of sorts.

17. Disgruntled by the reduction in health benefits because of the significant drop in tax revenue.

Answer 1: State workers were disgruntled by the reduction in health benefits because of the significant drop in tax revenue.

Answer 2: Disgruntled by the reduction in health benefits because of the significant drop in tax revenue, county employees threatened to strike.

Answer 3: The reduction in health benefits because of the significant drop in tax revenue upset university and community college employees.

Teaching Tip: The key here is that SOMEONE (a group, a person, an entity of some sort) was disgruntled. Make sure that students identify that entity.

18. When Mr. Jenkins stumbled into the restaurant, reeking of alcohol and cigarettes.

Answer 1: Mr. Jenkins stumbled into the restaurant, reeking of alcohol and cigarettes.

Answer 2: When Mr. Jenkins stumbled into the restaurant, reeking of alcohol and cigarettes, the hostess asked him to leave.

Answer 3: The couple at the table closest to the door was shocked when Mr. Jenkins stumbled into the restaurant, reeking of alcohol and cigarettes.

Teaching Tip: Each of these sentences is fine, and students can write several variations, depending on the context the students want to create. Encourage students to think of a main idea and to craft the rest of the sentence around that idea.

Worksheet 3, Sentence Fragments (16 Exercises)

Each item below contains a sentence fragment. Fix it in the space provided.

1. The economy has everyone in the world worried and stressed. Especially in the Midwest.

Answer 1: The economy has everyone in the world worried and stressed, especially in the Midwest.

Answer 2: The economy has everyone in the world worried and stressed. People in the Midwest are especially worried.

Teaching Tip: Heck, the economy has me worried ☺

2. I have learned a lot in the five months I have worked at Walmart. Even more than I learned throughout high school.

Answer 1: I have learned a lot in the five months I have worked at Walmart, even more than I learned throughout high school.

Answer 2: I have learned a lot in the five months I have worked at Walmart. In fact, I have learned even more than I did throughout high school.

3. Over the years as my aunt grew up into a woman and we adopted many of her traditions.

Answer 1: Over the years my aunt grew up into a woman and we adopted many of her traditions.

Answer 2: Over the years as my aunt grew up into a woman, we adopted many of her traditions.

4. As I sit in my writing class to take the exit exam, so that I can pass this class.

Answer 1: As I sit in my writing class to take the exit exam, I jot down verb tenses so that I can pass this class.

Answer 2: I sit in my writing class to take the exit exam, and I try to recall my grammar and usage exercises so that I can pass this class.

5. Especially since most people in the United States would never travel to a strange new land just for adventure.

Answer 1: Most people in the United States would never travel to a strange new land just for adventure.

Answer 2: Domestic tourism remains important in a sluggish economy, especially since most people in the United States would never travel to a strange new land just for adventure.

6. For example, my boyfriend my freshman year of high school.

Answer 1: Take, for example, my boyfriend my freshman year of high school.

Answer 2: Some people have taught me a lot through negative example, for example, my boyfriend my freshman year of high school.

7. After treatment with a therapist and his recovery from a life of alcohol addiction.

Answer 1: After treatment with a therapist and his recovery from a life of alcohol addiction, Jason got married and started a family.

Answer 2: Julio is living at home again after treatment with a therapist and his recovery from a life of alcohol addiction.

8. I would lie to my boss. Saying I could not work on a given day because I was busy with schoolwork or some other activity.

Answer 1: I would lie to my boss, saying I could not work on a given day because I was busy with schoolwork or some other activity.

Answer 2: I would lie to my boss by telling her I could not work on a given day because I was busy with schoolwork or some other activity.

9. My mother, a nurse who gives so much of her time to the community by doing charity work, visiting nursing homes, and feeding the homeless.

Answer 1: My mother works as a nurse who gives so much of her time to the community by doing charity work, visiting nursing homes, and feeding the homeless.

Answer 2: My mother, a nurse who gives so much of her time to the community by doing charity work, visiting nursing homes, and feeding the homeless, **is an inspiration to me.**

Teaching Tip: I am not too keen on Answer 2. A long appositive between the subject and the verb tends to confuse readers.

10. Over the past few years, I have made many dumb decisions. Decisions ranging from not attending school on a test date to running from mall security guards.

Answer 1: Over the past few years, I have made many dumb decisions, decisions ranging from not attending school on a test date to running from mall security guards.

Answer 2: Over the past few years, I have made many dumb decisions. These decisions range from not attending school on a test date to running from mall security guards.

11. In May of 2009, when my dad gave me an ultimatum of either going back to school or moving out of his house. I had to make a decision that would affect the rest of my life.

Answer 1: In May of 2009, my dad gave me an ultimatum of either going back to school or moving out of his house. I had to make a decision that would affect the rest of my life.

Answer 2: In May of 2009, when my dad gave me an ultimatum of either going back to school or moving out of his house, I had to make a decision that would affect the rest of my life.

12. I started working at the university. Which not only helped me with money but also helped me focus on school.

Answer 1: I started working at the university, which not only helped me with money but also helped me focus on school.

Answer 2: I started working at the university. This job not only helped me with money, but it also helped me focus on school.

Teaching Tip: I am a sucker for correlative conjunctions. I tell students that they “expand their syntactic options and provide a base for lexical and syntactic growth.” They stare at me and I chuckle at my own pompous pronouncements. Humor and self-deprecation are one of the many joys of teaching English. Some get it.

13. I had been doing drugs for more than half my life. Letting the lives of my children pass by without my presence.

Answer 1: I had been doing drugs for more than half my life, letting the lives of my children pass by without my presence.

Answer 2: I had been doing drugs for more than half my life. I had let the lives of my children pass by without my presence.

Teaching Tip: This sentence was written by a student, a single mom who is a recovering addict. Her decision to attend college inspires and motivates me.

14. My mom always trying to make the right decisions so I could become a better person.

Answer 1: My mom always tries to make the right decisions so I could become a better person.

Answer 2: My mom is always trying to make the right decisions so I could become a better person.

Teaching Tip: I prefer Answer 1 because it is shorter. Usually the simple present tense works better than the present progressive.

15. On a four-day, three-night college summit workshop held at Nova Southeastern University.

Answer 1: My classmates and I learned a lot on a four-day, three-night college summit workshop held at Nova Southeastern University.

Answer 2: During a four-day, three-night college summit workshop held at Nova Southeastern University I decided to study business administration.

16. Decisions are made every day. Difficult decisions and even decisions about what to have for dinner.

Answer 1: Decisions are made every day, difficult decisions and even decisions about what to have for dinner.

Answer 2: We make decisions every day, difficult decisions and even decisions about what to have for dinner.

Teaching Tip: I recognize that Answers 1 and 2 use the same technique to "fix" the fragment, but the larger issue is the writer's use of the passive voice. Answer 2 uses active voice and includes the agent, or "doer" of the action.