

OBJECTIVE OF THE HANDOUT

This handout will help you:

1. Identify the characteristics of grammatically correct sentences.
2. Understand the common sentence structure issues.
3. Write grammatically correct sentences.

TECHNICAL EXPLANATION OF SENTENCE STRUCTURE

What is a sentence?

A sentence is a group of words that has a subject, a verb, and a complete thought.

e.g., Solar energy (subject) is (verb) a renewable and free energy source. (The whole sentence presents a complete idea).

The most common sentence structure issues are:

- **Fragments:** A fragment is a group of words that is part of the sentence but not the whole thing. A fragment often misses a subject, a verb, or both.
e.g., *Attended to workers that were injured during the accident. (The subject is missing here. Who attended?)*
- **Run-on sentences:** A run-on sentence is a group of independent clauses that are not correctly linked.
e.g., *I am an artist, I like to paint flowers. (The sentences are not properly connected).*

FOUR TIPS TO AVOID SENTENCE PROBLEMS

- 1) **Make sure each sentence has one complete main idea:**
e.g., *The results were based on empirical research. The structural analysis was used to develop the model.*
- 2) **Make sure each sentence has a clear subject and at least one verb:**
e.g., *The results were based on empirical research. The structural analysis was used to develop the model.*
- 3) **If two ideas are closely related, make a compound sentence by adding a comma and a coordination conjunction** (BOYS FAN= but, or, yet, so, for, and, nor)
e.g., *The results were based on empirical research, and the structural analysis was used to develop the model.*
- 4) **If the combined ideas are slightly more complex, use a conjunctive adverb** (therefore, instead, meanwhile, however, and so on). A conjunctive adverb is preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma.
e.g., *The results were based on empirical research; however, the structural analysis was used to develop the model.*

TAKEAWAYS

- ☐ Well-structured sentences have a complete idea.
- ☐ **To revise for fragments**, ask yourself: Does this group of words have a subject, a verb, and a complete thought?
- ☐ **To revise for run-ons**, ask yourself: How many sentences does this group of words constitute? Are they well-connected?
- ☐ You may combine ideas in a sentence if they are closely related ideas either by a coordination conjunction or a conjunctive adverb.