

Learning about reading and writing couldn't be complete without learning something about grammar. However, there's no way that we can possibly cover everything a person might need to learn about grammar. Therefore, we've decided to include grammar exercises related to material that has given participants in the Regina SARAW program some difficulty. Exercises will include:

- Basic sentence structure
 - ▶ S+V pattern
 - ▶ compound sentences
 - ▶ building better sentences
- Capitalization and Punctuation
- Verb Agreement

Sentence Structure

The sentence is the base of the English language. We need to know how to build a strong base and what we can and cannot add to it. Grammar is the study of sentence structure and how words relate to one another in a sentence.

The Sentence

Everyone has thoughts. When we speak, we speak what we are thinking. When we write, we are also communicating our thoughts.

Γ Each complete thought that we write is a sentence.

A sentence can be a statement.

The sun sets in the evening.

A sentence can be a question.

When do you go to work in the morning?

A sentence can be a command or an exclamation.

Get out of my kitchen!

Γ A sentence always starts with a capital letter and ends with some kind of punctuation mark (period, question mark, exclamation point)

See the section on capitalization and punctuation for more information.

Subjects

Whenever you have a thought, it's about something or someone. When you communicate that thought in speech or writing, that something or someone is the **subject** of your speech or writing.

The subject of a sentence can be a thing, a person or an idea. Look at the sentences below. The subject of each sentence is underlined.

Thing

The car rolled to a stop.

Person

Derek rode his bike to work.

Idea

Hating others is the easiest way to limit your experiences.

All of this looks fairly easy, but what happens when you have a sentence that is one word? What is the subject? Sometimes the subject is a part of the sentence without actually showing up in it. For example, if you write, "Stop!" the sentence is correct but the subject does not appear in the sentence. The subject is **You**. Usually, in English, you don't see the subject **You** when you're asking someone to do something or when you're giving a command.

Sometimes a subject is a group of words or phrase instead of just one word. Look at the example above under *Idea*. Look at these sentences. The subject is underlined.

Riding a bus is not much fun.

To type fifty words a minute is my goal.

Seeing him healthy and full of life made me happy.

Sometimes, the subject of the sentence is not even at the beginning of the sentence. Look at these examples.

In the classroom, students were typing.

Around the world, the Internet keeps us connected.

Exercise 1

Type these sentences. Put a * before and after the subject of the sentence.

Example

The ball game was canceled because of rain.

1. Retirement is what you work all your life for.
2. Frank was an old prospector.
3. Dad creamed my hands with Deep Heat.
4. My friends and my family cried too.
5. Who went to the movies?
6. A birthday comes once a year.
7. Listening to the judge made him cry.
8. Reading that book was interesting.
9. Lifting weights is good exercise.
10. The Chinese New Year is in February.

Verbs

The other part of the sentence that helps to make it complete is the verb. The verb can be one word or many. Verbs may show action:

- ! Jerry plays wheelchair basketball on Friday nights.
- ! I read a book while I'm waiting for the bus.
- ! Heather thinks her teacher is a little weird.
- ! The snow drifted across the highway..
- ! The icicles dripped from the eaves.

or they may not show action, but a relationship or condition of the subject

- ! Cathy has Cerebral Palsy.
- ! Linda is beautiful.
- ! I am feeling much better.
- ! I have a cold.
- ! You and your friends were late yesterday.

Verbs also help the reader to understand if the sentence is about something that happened in the past (past tense), something that is happening right now (present tense) or something that will happen in the future (future tense). We will look at verb tenses a little later in this chapter.

Exercise 2

Type out these sentences. Put a * before and after the verb.

Example: Glen *forgot* his coat.

1. Frank was an old prospector.
2. I asked if the new choppers really worked.
3. He ate the deer with his own teeth.
4. An old cat lived in the mine.

5. The wind blew off the open Pacific Ocean.
6. The valley was narrow and the walls steep.
7. The biggest egg in the world is in Vegreville.
8. I made banana and yoghurt cheesecake with Norman.
9. The red syrup ran off the pancakes.
10. Jesse has a blue van.

Verbs may also be more than one word. If a verb is more than one word, it is a verb phrase. Verb phrases contain words that help describe what's going on in the sentence.

- ! Melissa has written a letter today.
- ! Melissa is writing a letter.
- ! Melissa will be writing a letter tomorrow.
- ! Melissa had already written the letter before I got to work.
- ! Melissa will have written the letter before the end of the day.

In the above sentences, the word write is a verb. But the words before the verb that are also underlined are part of the verb too. These words help with the meaning of the verb. A verb may have two, three or four words in it.

However, the words that form the verb may not be right beside it. Often when "not" is in a sentence, it separates the parts of the verb. For example:
He could not eat the worm.

Following is a list of words that may be used as helping verbs.

be	is	have	do	may	could
been	was	has	does	might	should
can	were	had	did	must	would
		shall			

Exercise 3

Type these sentences. Put a * before and after the action verb in the sentence.

1. An old cat lives in the mine.
2. My dad drove me to work yesterday.
3. I cut chicken breasts for eight long, tiring hours.
4. Lord Stanley gave the Cup to the best hockey team in Canada.
5. The tender leaves give us oxygen.
6. The sun rises early in the morning.

Exercise 4

Type these sentences. Put a * before and after the non-action verb in the sentence.

1. The summer is a mixture of rain, heat and breeze.
2. Autumn has a romantic side.
3. Seeing the tall mountains and trees was a special part of my trip.
4. Justin has a good watch.
5. Baisaikhi is a Sikh holiday.
6. Many groups have special days in April.

Exercise 5

Type three sentences using action verbs (make sure you put a * before and after the verb in the sentence).

Type three sentences using non-action verbs (again, put a * before and after the verb in the sentence).

Exercise 6

Type these sentences. Put a * before and after the verb phrase. Remember that some parts of the phrase may not be right beside the verb.

1. The snow is falling in Central Park.
2. Your dentist will check your teeth and gums.
3. The dentist may tell you to see a hygienist.
4. The doctor had already checked Dad's blood pressure before I arrived.
5. The librarian may not know where the book is.
6. My aunt may have been smoking when the fire started.

A sentence may have more than one subject and more than one verb. The sentences you've already looked at had one subject and one verb. For example, look at this sentence:

Leslie lives in an apartment in Saskatoon.

"Leslie" is the subject.

"Lives" is the verb.

Now look at this sentence:

Leslie and Tom live in an apartment in Saskatoon.

The two subjects in this sentence are "Leslie and Tom".

"Live" is still the verb.

Finally, look at this sentence:

Leslie and Tom live in an apartment in Saskatoon and work for the government.

"Leslie" and "Tom" are the two subjects of the sentence.

"Live" and "work" are the two verbs of the sentence.

Exercise 7

Type the following sentences. Put a * before and after the subjects in the sentences.

1. Tony and Pat sell packages of seeds to gardeners.
2. Herbs and spices are easy to grow.
3. My friend and I worked underground for nine and a half years.
4. Jack and Bob looked for the cook.
5. The boat and the canoe were out on the lake.

Exercise 8

Type the following sentences. Put a * before and after the verbs in the sentence.

1. The snow melted and flooded the streets.
2. Three men saw a deer and caught it.
3. I walked to the closest desk and asked for help.
4. She stepped up and pushed herself between two other ladies.
5. She lit a smoke and fell asleep.

Exercise 9

Find a short story in the READ section of SARAW (or a longer one if finding subjects and verbs is easy for you). Print it out (or look at the story in Chapter 1 of this workbook). Retype the story but type the subjects and verbs (verb phrases too) in all capital letters. See below for an example.

In June, I WENT on a holiday with seven other people. WE TRAVELED by van west across Canada to Vancouver Island. The VAN WAS very FULL with so many bodies, tents, sleeping bags, food and other things.

Capitalization and Punctuation

Every good sentence contains both capitalization and punctuation. The first word of a sentence must be capitalized and the end of the sentence must have some type of punctuation after it. The capital letter at the beginning of a sentence tells the reader that a new sentence is starting. The punctuation at the end of a sentence tells you that one thought is ending. However, we need to know that we use capital letters for more than just the beginning of a sentence and punctuation more than at the end. In this section we will learn where to use a capital letter and where to use the proper punctuation.

Capital Letters

Many words in the English language need to have capital letters. The following is a list of where you should use capital letters:

Use capital letters to mark the start of:

- the first word in a sentence.
The man walked to work.
- the word “I”
He and I ran to the store.
- names of people or important things
Donna, Martin Luther King, the Stanley Cup
- names of organizations (or businesses)
Walmart, Neil Squire Foundation, Royal Bank
- names of towns/cities/streets
Kindersley, Ottawa, Elm Street
- names of countries
Canada, United States, Venezuela, Kenya
- names of the days of the week and months of the year
Saturday, February
- the important words in the title of a book, movie, play
Phantom of the Opera, Gone with the Wind
- abbreviations of titles that come before names
Dr., Mr., Ms, Rev. etc.

Exercise 1

Type these sentences. Put capital letters at the beginning of each sentence.

1. the dog chased the ball.
2. frank knew how to take care of his simple needs.
3. chris made breakfast.
4. the nurse took me to my room.
5. herbs are the most popular seeds.

Exercise 2

Type these sentences. Put capital letters where they are needed.

1. the national hockey league has 26 teams.
2. the stanley cup gets its name from lord stanley.
3. we drove to sault saint marie and stopped for a submarine sandwich.
4. we went to big nickel park and went underground.
5. tomorrow i will go and see dr. jones.
6. did you see the movie called there's something about mary?
7. on saturday, paratransit will take me to the northgate mall.
8. april is a beautiful month.
9. black mike agreed to go to diamond gertie's with me.
10. tony ziegler's shop is in vancouver british columbia.

Exercise 3

Type these paragraphs on your computer. Put the capital letters in where they are needed.

passover is a jewish holiday. it lasts for eight days. during passover, families have a special meal called a seder. they tell the story of how the jews escaped from egypt 3000 years ago.

wayne gretzky broke a hockey record on october 15, 1989. he scored an important goal in a game against the edmonton oilers. gordie howe was at the game between the edmonton oilers and the los angeles kings. he said, "there's no end to gretzky's brilliance."

Punctuation

We need to use good punctuation when we're writing. Why? Because good punctuation tells us when one sentence ends and another is beginning. It also tells us whether the sentence is a statement, a question or a command. Punctuation also tells us where to pause when we're reading out loud. Look at the paragraph below. How easy is it to read this paragraph without the punctuation?

I don't have any fun just work straight work from morning to night My work is construction My upbringing is that if you're occupied day and night you don't get into any trouble What do you think about that I like my work Do you like your work Good It's hard to go to work if you don't like it

Now look at the paragraph with the right punctuation. Notice how much easier it is to figure out when one thought ends and another begins. Also notice how punctuation gives the paragraph emotion and feeling.

I don't have any fun. Just work, straight work from morning to night! My work is construction. My upbringing is that if you're occupied day and night, you don't get into any trouble. What do you think about that? I like my work. Do you like your work? Good! It's hard to go to work if you don't like it.

In this section, we will learn where to use:

a period •

a comma ,

a question mark ?

an exclamation point !

Period

Using a period is easy. Use a period at the end of a sentence that is not asking a question or commanding an action. Remember, a sentence is a complete thought. Look at these two sentences. One is a sentence and one isn't.

We drove up to Merritt and had a milkshake. Because they have the best milkshakes.

The underlined sentence is not a sentence. It is not a complete sentence because there is no subject. This is called a sentence fragment. You will learn more about fragments later. For now, just remember that your sentence must have a subject and a verb before you put a period at the end of it.

Exercise 4

Type these sentences. Put the periods in the right places. If the sentence is not really a sentence, or is a question or command, do not type it on your computer. Go on to the next one.

1. I like my work
2. Canada has a two dollar coin
3. The government counts the people who live in Canada
4. Because the coin has a loon on it
5. Is the information in your form confidential

Question Marks

You use a question mark when you write a question. There are some special words at the beginning of a sentence that tell us that a question is being asked. They are:

!	What	!	Who
!	Why	!	Is
!	Do	!	May I
!	Did	!	Can I
!	When	!	Are you/Am I
!	Where		

Exercise 5

Type three questions. Remember to use the question mark at the end of each.

Example:

Where do you want to go today?

Exercise 6

Please make up questions to go with the answer below. Example:

I don't like cheese.

Do you like cheese?

1. I know how to make a cheesecake.
2. The time is 2 o'clock.
3. The baby's name is Jake.
4. You don't need a stamp to mail that envelope.
5. Your dog is in my yard.
6. The car is out of gas.

Exclamation Points



Exclamation points are not used very often. They are used to give emphasis. Think of it this way, if you use an exclamation point, you are yelling at your reader, but you don't want to yell at him or her too often or the exclamation loses its force. You don't want to use these punctuation marks too often. You could be yelling for joy, anger, fear, surprise or impatience For example:

Don't walk on the grass!

You are commanding the person not to walk on the grass. If you were talking to a person, you might be yelling at them.

Happy Birthday!

This would also be yelling, but you would be happy if you were shouting this to someone.

Exercise 7

Type each of the following sentences, but make them more forceful.

1. Watch out for that deer.
2. Don't touch that hot stove.
3. Write soon.
4. You're the best.
5. You're going the wrong way.

Exercise 8

Type each sentence on your computer. Put the right punctuation at the end of the sentence.

1. Can you imagine living all your life underground because you had no schooling
2. Some days I go to school and feel I haven't learned anything
3. Ouch
4. I dragged my sore body to the front door
5. Dad creamed my hands with Deep Heat and put gloves on them
6. Duck
7. How old was Jill when she decided to get a summer job
8. When you're trying to raise a family you live payday to payday
9. On Monday, we woke up late to hear the seagulls
10. Norman and I went for a small walk to Trout Lake

The Comma ,

To know when to use a comma, you must know a couple of things. First, the comma tells you when you should pause if you're reading out loud. If you can figure out where a natural pause would come in reading, then you know most of the time where the comma should go. If you aren't able to figure out where the natural pause comes, the following information may help you learn to use a comma in the right place:

1. If a sentence has two ideas but only the second idea can stand alone as a sentence, you need to separate the two ideas with a comma

When I saw the cake, I was surprised.

If you wrote the sentence with the partial idea at the end of the sentence, you wouldn't need a comma.

I was surprised when I saw the cake.

2. You also use a comma if you want to add more words to describe the subject. If you don't use the comma, the meaning of your sentence changes.

The woman, who was our teacher, was very nice.

This words surrounded by commas tell us that the teacher was a nice woman. They are not necessary to understand the sentence, they just give the reader more information. Look at the same sentence without commas.

The woman who was our teacher was nice.

This sentence seems to say that there is more than one woman and that only the teacher is nice.

3. You also use a comma to separate things in a list.

I went to the store to buy milk, eggs, and butter.

4. You need a comma if you're writing to a specific person.

Justin, how was your trip to Vancouver?

Remember, these are not all the rules for using commas. Ask your instructor or tutor for more information if you're interested.

Exercise 9

Type each sentence on your computer. Put the commas in the right places.

1. The van was full with so many bodies tents sleeping bags and food.
2. Norman I'd like to go for a walk.
3. After we waited for hours we went home.
4. Justin a friend of mine drives a wheelchair.
5. Most libraries have magazines tapes records compact discs and videos.
6. If you go to the library you must have a library card.
7. Wayne the class is full for today.
8. This fall Frank shot a deer and froze it for the winter.
9. During the summer the last of his diseased teeth had fallen out.

Exercise 10

Look at the sentences below. If the sentence is correct, type it on your computer. If the punctuation (period, comma, question mark, exclamation point) is wrong, type the sentence with the right punctuation.

1. Frank, an old prospector, lived in a cabin in the bush.
2. An old woman named Jane lived at the nursing home.
3. My dream was about Aunt Sandy her three year old boy and her two girls.
4. Why do you want to drive to Rosetown for a milkshake.
5. When I woke up I was sitting on my bed?
6. The clearing, about fifty feet by fifty feet, now boasted picnic tables, chairs, swings and benches.
7. Stop thief.
8. When the ambulance got there the girls were fine.
9. I like reading books about murder crime and prisons.
10. Do you have a job yet!

Exercise 11

Read the paragraph below. Type the paragraph onto your computer and put the punctuation in the right place.

Last night I had a dream It was about my Aunt Sandy her three year old boy and two girls aged eight and nine respectively My aunt was drinking in her home She lit a smoke then fell asleep When the smoke hit the floor the house quickly caught fire My aunt was on the couch when Adam her son came crawling out of his room He tried to wake her but she wouldn't wake up Do you think he was able to get her out The two girls woke up and felt the door It was so hot they jumped out of their bedroom window When the ambulance got there the girls were fine. However their mom brother and two cats died in the fire.

Other Kinds of Sentences

At the beginning of this chapter, you learned that a simple sentence is one complete thought and has a subject (or subjects) and a verb (or verbs). Now you will learn other types of sentences and how to write them.

Compound Sentence

A compound sentence is like a compound word. A compound word is two separate words that are put together to make one.

cross + walk = crosswalk

A compound sentence is like that. It takes two or more complete sentences and puts them together. Remember, you have to use a comma before a connecting word like “and”, “but” or “or” if you’re making a compound sentence.

The grass is green. + The flowers are beautiful. =

The grass is green and the flowers are beautiful.

Complex Sentence

A complex sentence has a simple sentence and an idea or ideas that won’t stand alone.

Simple sentence = The dog buries a bone.

Idea that can’t stand alone = that wears a red collar.

Complex sentence:

The dog, that wears a red collar, buries the bone.

Review Sentence Types

The sentences below will give you a better idea of simple, compound and complex sentences.

Simple

Justin went to Vancouver.

Subject = Justin

Verb = went

Justin and Norman went to Vancouver.

Subjects = Justin, Norman

Verb = went

Justin went to Vancouver and visited his aunt.

Subject = Justin

Verbs = went, visited

Justin and Norman went to Vancouver and visited their aunt.

Subjects = Justin, Norman

Verbs = went, visited

Compound Sentences

Justin went to Vancouver, but he did not see his friends.

Two simple sentences connected by the word “but”.

Justin and Norman went to Vancouver and they visited their aunt.

Two simple sentences connected by the word “and”. Notice the difference between this sentence and the one similar to it in the Simple sentence section. There are two separate sentences in this sentence.

Complex Sentences

Justin and Norman went to Vancouver where their aunt lives.

The simple sentence = Justin and Norman went to Vancouver.

The idea that isn't a sentence on its own = where their aunt lives.

Exercise 1

Look at these sentences. Decide whether the sentence is: **simple, compound or complex**. Write down your answers on the computer.

1.

2. The wheelchair is electric.

3. I like to go to work, but my boss hates me.

4. When fall comes, we will go to the coast.

5. Austin threw the snowball, but Janice caught it.
6. The cheese looks moldy.
7. The social worker, who is my mother's friend, was assigned my case.
8. Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday.

Exercise 2

Make the simple sentences below into compound sentences.

1. Fred went swimming. He had a great time.
2. Angela likes to walk to work. Today it is raining.
3. This computer crashes all the time. That computer works fine.
4. Jackie is in love with George. She doesn't want to marry him.

Exercise 3

What do you and your family (or house-mates) like to do for fun? Do you like to do the same things or different things? Type 3 compound sentences on your computer that answer these questions.

Exercise 4

Look back at Exercise 1. Type each sentence and put a - before and after the subject(s) and a * before and after the verb(s).

Exercise 5

Practice combining simple sentences with ideas that aren't sentences on their own. Try to make two complex sentences for each pair.

Example

Julie listened to the radio while she did her homework.

Julie listened to the radio while she did her homework.

While Julie did her homework, she listened to the radio.

1. Jordan slipped in quietly after the class started.
2. The dog chewed his bone while the baby pulled his ears.
3. The boys sleep in the basement when it gets very hot outside.
4. The psycho stalked the woman as she walked through the park.

Exercise 6

Add a simple sentence to the following unfinished ideas to make complex sentences.

1. when David fell in love
2. before I get a job
3. while I am on holidays
4. after I finish this class.

Agreement

When you write a good sentence, you need to make sure that everything agrees with everything else. Your sentence will agree if

1. the number of the subject and verb agree
If you use a singular (one) subject, your verb must also be singular or
If you use a plural (more than one) subject, your verb must also be plural.
2. if there is more than one verb in a sentence, they all agree.

Subject - Verb Agreement

In any good sentence, the subject and verb must agree in number and person. Singular subjects need singular verbs and plural subjects need plural verbs. This can be confusing because we usually think about adding an “s” to make something plural. This may be true of subjects. The opposite is true for most verbs. The singular form of many verbs ends in “s”. For example:

The kid runs to the store. (singular)

The kids run to the store. (plural)

Sometimes it’s hard to know exactly what the subject of the sentence is. You need to know this to know what kind of verb to use. Look at the following sentences. The subjects and verbs are in underlined.

My boss, who is a great speaker, gave a speech at lunch yesterday.

The problem of high unemployment in the disabled community and what to do about it was discussed at the last meeting.

If you are having trouble finding the subject in the sentence, try getting rid of all the words that you don’t really need in the sentence. If you look at the first sentence, you

can see that you don't really need the words "who is a great speaker" to understand the sentence. If you get rid of "of high employment in the disabled community and what to do about it" you still have a strong simple sentence. So what you should try to do when figuring out the subjects and verbs in a long sentence is to find the simple sentence within the longer one.

More things to remember about subjects:

- lists within a subject that are joined by "and" make the subject plural.

My best friend, her sister and I are going to the movies.

- lists within a subject that are joined by "or" have the same number (singular or plural) as the part of the subject closest to the verb.

I don't know if my best friend's brothers or her sister is home.

I don't know if my best friend's sister or her brothers are home.

The following words need a singular verb because they describe one person, place or thing.

each	either	someone	somebody	something
that	neither	everyone	everybody	everything
this	whoever	no one	nobody	everybody

Everything on the menu tastes great.

Each of the books has a dustjacket.

Everyone hates the snow.

These words need a plural verb because they describe many things.

few	some	several	these	they
many	both	others	those	we

He has many ties, but most are old and few are good enough for the wedding.

Sometimes it's hard to know if a word is singular or plural. For example, the words below look plural because they end in "s" but they're really singular.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| news | The news is on TV. |
| aerobics | Aerobics is good exercise. |
| economics | Economics is the study of the economy. |
| politics | Politics is his passion. |

Exercise 1

In these sentences, the subjects and verbs do not agree. Rewrite the sentences, making them agree.

1. The first snowfall of the season were a day before Thanksgiving.
2. The sun rise early in the morning.
3. A birthday come once a year.
4. Murray and his brother-in-law goes to see the water.
5. Every year on New Year's Day some people in Vancouver swims in the ocean.
6. The new clothes is uncomfortable.
7. Each of the traditions are interesting.

Exercise 2

Use some of these words and phrases to write five sentences about friends, classmates, house-mates or family:

- many people in this class
- something in this room
- nobody in this room
- someone I just met
- everybody I know
- politics

Using the Same Verb Tense

When you are writing, you want to be clear. You want to write what you mean and that means staying within the time-frame you set for yourself. If you're writing about what's going on now (present tense) you need to try to keep all the verbs in the present tense. If you're writing about what happened yesterday, last week, last year, etc. (past) you need to try to keep all of the verbs in the past tense

Look at these sentences:

Hard to understand: We go to church on Sunday and then we drove around

Is this sentence written in the **present tense - go** or the **past tense - drove**?

This sentence is good: We went to church on Sunday and then we drove around.
Past Tense

This sentence is also right: We go to church and then we drive around.
Present Tense

So is this sentence: We will go to church and then we will drive around.
Future Tense

Sometimes, you need to change tense for the sentence to make better sense. If you do, be careful to be really clear about past, present and future.

Hard to understand

Justin is in a special school all his life. When he was little, the doctors tell his family that he wasn't smart enough to go to the regular school. Today his teachers will tell him that he could go to a regular school. He hopes someday he went to a regular school.

Easy to understand

Justin has gone to a special school all his life. When he was little, the doctors told his family that he wasn't smart enough to go to the regular school. Today, his teachers tell him that he should go to a regular school. Someday, he hopes to go to a regular school.

Some verb phrases don't change tense. Phrases like: "to study", "to eat", "to sleep" don't change. Only the main verb changes.

I started to ate before supper. (Hard to understand)

I started to eat before supper. (Better)

Exercise 3

Fix the verb tense problems in these sentences. Type out the correct sentence on your computer.

1. Justin eats hamburgers and Norman ate ice-cream.
2. When you mix Kraft Dinner with ketchup, you got a great meal.
3. Last year, the team tries to win the championship.
4. Kim wrote a story and corrects his mistakes.
5. Eating right is good for your health and helped you lose weight.
6. Trudy knew that it will be a good class.
7. Before, Jim hated going to class, but later he starts to like it.

Exercise 4

Use these opening words to write a short paragraph (at least 4 sentences long):

On the first day of my vacation,

In the future I will go back there and

The Possessive Case

The possessive case shows ownership. You make a word possessive by adding an apostrophe ‘ and **S** in the singular and just a ‘ in the plural. Sometimes, it gets a bit confusing where to use the apostrophe and “s” and where to use just the apostrophe. Also, some people get confused with the possessive form of a word and a contraction. We will look at both here.

Making a singular word possessive

To make a singular word possessive, add apostrophe and “s”.

Neil’s wheelchair blew a tire.
The doctor’s stethoscope was cold.
The dog’s tail was wagging all the time.

To form the possessive of a singular word that ends in “s”, you use the same rule as above. It might look a little funny, but just add an apostrophe and an “s” to the end:

Mr. Blevins’s car

Doris’s book

The singular form of a compound word is still an apostrophe and “s”.

My mother-in-law’s retirement is near.

Making a plural word ending in “s” possessive

You make a plural word that ends in “s” possessive by putting an apostrophe after the “s”.

The dogs’ bones were scattered all over the yard.
The residents’ rooms were searched for drugs.

Making a plural word that doesn't end in "s" possessive

You make this type of plural word possessive by adding an apostrophe and an "s".

The women's work-boots were smaller than the men's.
The mice's hole was boarded shut.

If two or more words are showing possession, you only add apostrophe and "s" to the last name.

Wendy, Kathleen and Kalyna's business.

If both names own the thing, add apostrophe and "s" to both names.

Wendy's and Kathleen's brushes.

Exercise 1

Type the possessive form of each.

Example

The office of the doctor.

The doctor's office.

1. The offices of the doctors.
2. The baby belonging to Maria.
3. The dog team belonging to my family.
4. Ochapowace, the Reserve belonging to the Cree First Nation.
5. The diary of Lois.
6. The car of the Jones family.

Exercise 2

Correct these sentences.

1. The dentists' office was very fancy.
2. The dogs bone was filthy.
3. It's bone was buried in the backyard.
4. Jame's and Doris's home is very clean.
5. The dentists and doctor's offices were in the same building.

Contractions

Even though contractions use an apostrophe, they do not show possession. They are the shorter, more informal form of two words.

who is	= who's
did not	= didn't
you are	= you're
it is	= it's

It is easy to confuse words like:

who's with whose
you're with your
it's with its

Who's means **who is** while **whose** is possessive.

You're means **you are** while **your** is possessive.

It's means **it is** while **its** is possessive.

Exercise 1

Make the following words contractions

1. who is
2. they are
3. can not
4. do not
5. will not
6. they will

Exercise 4

Put the following contractions back into their original form.

1. won't
2. can't
3. he's
4. it's
5. I'm
6. you'll
7. she'd
8. weren't

Other uses of the Apostrophe

As you have seen, you can use the apostrophe to show possession of something, or to make a shorter form of two words. You can also use an apostrophe for the following:

- To shorten a year

summer of '69
'63 Mustang
Flood of '97

- To form the plural of letters and numbers.

The teacher made sure we crossed our t's and dotted our i's.

The child learned his ABC's before he was three years old.

World War II was still going on in the 1940's.

Remember: don't make regular words plural by adding an apostrophe and "s", only use the apostrophe and "s" to make numbers and letters.

Writing a Good Sentence

It doesn't matter how much you learn about the rules of grammar if you don't use them. When you try to learn grammar, your goal should be to improve your writing to make it easier for others to understand the idea you're trying to get across. When you change the structure of a sentence, pile too much information into a sentence, use only parts of a sentence or jam two different sentences together, you make it hard for the reader to understand you. In this section, we will look at mistakes that everyone makes from time to time and how to correct them.

Keeping Structure the Same when Ideas are Similar

When you write a sentence, you should try to keep things equal. If you use one form of a verb in one part of a sentence, you should use the same form of the verb in the other part of the sentence if the ideas are similar. This usually happens in longer sentences, but can also happen in short ones.

He likes reading and to write on the computer.

If you look at the first underlined word, you see that it ends in "ing". The second underlined word is similar to the first (they are both things that he does using a computer). But the second words are written differently than the first. The sentence should look like this:

He likes reading and writing on the computer.

Or

He likes to read and to write on the computer.

It can be hard to see this problem in a longer sentence. Look at the sentence below. Can you find the problem with it?

We should do these things to improve living conditions, increasing volunteer work and for keeping our community spirit stronger.

You may understand the sentence, but it just seems clumsy to you. Look at the underlined words. Could they be written in the same way? This would be a better way to write the sentence:

We should do these things to improve living conditions, to increase volunteerism, and to keep our community spirit strong.

We fixed the sentence by making the structure of the ideas the same.

Exercise 1

Fix the following sentences

1. They had dog teams to travel to town and back in the winter which often makes it difficult to get things you needed.
2. At supertime, Dad came in with sawdust all over his clothes and face and grinning from ear to ear.
3. He made the crow a cage which had all the comforts of home: light bulb to keep warm, drinking water and food.
4. When I was young and in school, I was never able to have friends because we are moving from place to place.
5. When he comes home, he was very tired.
6. I enjoy watching my friend eat because he had such a good appetite.
7. When I was about five years old, I am put in a boarding school for a short time.

Exercise 3

The following sentences are in the passive voice. Type them on your computer and make them active.

1. The hammock was jumped into by Dad.
2. Room and board were worked for by me.
3. Good dinners are made by me.
4. First the children would come to the afternoon service, then they would be given a gift by Santa.
5. The advice was taken by Johnny and his wife.
6. I gave the woman my resume and my hand was shaken by her.

Exercise 4

Some of these sentences are in the active voice and some are in the passive voice. Look at each sentence. Decide if the sentence is active or passive. If the sentence is active, type the word “active” on your computer. If the sentence is passive, make the sentence active and type it on your computer.

1. The United States built the Alaska Highway during World War II.
2. Peace River Country was settled by Canadian and American homesteaders.
3. A great summer show is staged by the locals.
4. An Eskimo camp was visited by a ship.
5. An Eskimo bought the gun with good skins.
6. The little port town of Tuktoyuktut was strongly considered as the site for the new university.
7. I was sent to a doctor in Toronto by my doctor here.
8. I learned how to use the computer and I found a friend.

Common Mistakes to Watch For

There are so many things to watch for when you're writing that it's hard to think of them all. It's easy to forget to put everything into your sentence. It's also easy to put too much in your sentence. Every writer makes mistakes, but a good writer looks back at his or her writing and corrects the mistakes. In this section, you will learn how to find and correct common writing mistakes like sentence fragments, run-on sentences and comma splices.

Sentence Fragments

Sentence Fragments are thoughts that are not complete. A fragment could be missing a verb or a subject, or it should be a part of another sentence. Fragments do not make sense by themselves. Look at these sentences:

I went to school last night. But I don't like the teacher.

The fragment is underlined. When it comes after the first sentence, you can make sense of it, but if you take the first sentence away, you can't figure out what the sentence means. It makes you ask questions like:

- But what?
- Where is the teacher?

The sentence should look like this:

I went to school last night but I don't like the teacher.

By joining the sentences you answer the questions about the fragment.

Exercise 1

Each set of sentences has a sentence fragment. Join the set of sentences to make one complete sentence.

1. Every weekend we would hound dad to drive us somewhere. But he wouldn't because he drives a lot for his job.
2. By the end of Sunday, we were very suspicious. But no one went into the forest.
3. I don't know what a good life is like. Because I have only a robot.
4. The people who bought our home had a problem with the sale of their house. So they couldn't pay us.

Exercise 2

Look at these sentences. If they are sentences, type correct on your computer. If they are fragments, make them into full sentences and type them onto your computer.

1. Remembering Invergarry School.
2. My husband has to sleep in a van to watch over things.
3. Because we were forced to move.
4. Frank grinned and showed me his new teeth.
5. Having a drink on the beach.

Run-on Sentences

Run-on sentences are more than one sentence jammed together. Usually a run-on sentence has two ideas that are related, but they should be in separate sentences. Look at this sentence.

The captain wanted some white fox furs all he had to trade for them was a gun and a coat.

Even though these ideas are related, they are not the same. They have to be joined by a connecting word. To fix this sentence, you need to add a connecting word:

The captain wanted some white fox furs, but all he had to trade for them was a gun and a coat.

Or even better, make them two sentences:

The captain wanted some white fox furs. All he had to trade for them was a gun and a coat.

Exercise 3

The following sentences are run-on sentences. Correct them and type them on your computer.

1. Elaine Mills is a telephone operator she helps more than 700 people every day.
2. Sometimes people call her in an emergency she says most emergency calls are from children or seniors.
3. Tony is a tailor he makes robes for British Columbia judges.
4. Tony worked as a tailor in one shop for 19 years now he owns the shop.
5. The mine was on an island and faced the west the wind blew off the open Pacific Ocean.

Exercise 4

Look at these sentences. Are they correct or are they run-on sentences? If they are correct, type "correct". If they are run-on sentences, correct them and type them on your computer.

1. We worked hard because jobs were hard to get.
2. It was a hot day for June and walking was very difficult.
3. I cut chicken breasts for eight hours and my legs were stiff and sore, my back ached and my head hurt but my arms and hands got the worst treatment of all.
4. The bell went off and back to work we went for another two hours finally we came to the end of the day.
5. The first snowfall of the season was a day before Thanksgiving Day.
6. The wind blows the trees' leaves they are gone until the spring comes again.

Comma Splices

A comma splice is like a run-on sentence. When you make a comma splice, you make two complete sentences into one by putting a comma between them without a connector word. Look at this sentence:

Canada Day came on Thursday this year, next year it will be on Saturday because of the Leap Year.

This sentence is wrong because there is no connecting word to connect the two ideas. The sentence would be correct if it was written like this:

Canada Day came on Thursday this year, and next year it will be on Saturday because of the Leap Year.

Or

Canada Day came on Thursday this year. Next year it will be on Saturday because of the Leap Year.

If you're not listing things or describing someone or something and you're not sure whether or not to use a comma, be safe and make your sentence into two shorter sentences.

Exercise 5

Look at these comma splices. Fix the sentences and rewrite them on your computer. Remember, there are two ways to fix each sentence.

1. I roomed with a man that was tough, he was short but very strong.
2. A cavity is a hole in the tooth, it starts small.
3. I liked seeing the tall mountains and trees, this was a special part of my trip.
4. Bernie made pancakes, we went swimming behind the dam.
5. Bernie's sister's name is Theresa, she made us a beautiful dinner.

Writing Strong Paragraphs

If a sentence expresses a complete thought, a paragraph groups the sentences or related thoughts together. A paragraph usually has three or more sentences, but this doesn't have to be the case. Some paragraphs have but one sentence and that one sentence may have only two or three words.

Each paragraph should start with an opening sentence that gives the reader a general idea of what the paragraph will be about. For example, if you are writing about dogs, you may write a paragraph on each breed. To help the reader understand your paragraphs better, the first sentence of each should introduce the breed.

Example:

The border collie comes from Great Britain, where for centuries it has worked herding sheep. The border collie is a medium shaped dog, with long black and white hair...

Note how the first sentence of the paragraph **generally** lets the reader know that the paragraph is about, in this case border collies. The second sentence continues the thought with more detail – the dog's size and color.

Paragraphs also need a concluding sentence that lets the reader know that you are finished with the group of related thoughts. This sentence is as important as the opening sentence.

Example:

The border collie is a beautiful, intelligent dog and makes a wonderful pet.

Some paragraphs are so short that they have only one sentence. The one sentence is both an opening and a closing sentence, strongly relating one specific thought. It is often used to give extra emphasis to the paragraph.

Example:

Because the end of the year is approaching, we would like to know the head office's plans for us next year. We have our own budget to plan. We need to know how many people can be hired and what our office expenses will be. Some advice from the head office in these matters would be greatly appreciated.

I hope you will send this information as soon as possible.

The first paragraph is a normal paragraph, with different opening and closing sentences. The second paragraph is just one sentence, relating one complete thought: the writer would like the information as soon as possible. If the second paragraph was added to the end of the first paragraph, it would not convey the thought as strongly as the writer would like it too. But on its own, the one-sentence paragraph makes the writer's thoughts very clear.

Paragraphs are used in all types of writing. They are very necessary because they put sentences into logical groups, making the writer's thoughts easier to understand. A writer who uses paragraphs correctly is understood much better. His or her work is organized and easy to read.

Exercise 1 _____

Write a paragraph about something you are interested in. Make sure your paragraph has at least 3 sentences and has a strong first and last sentence.

Exercise 2 _____

Look at the following paragraph. Use the WRITE function of the SARAW program to list the problems with this paragraph. Underneath that list, rewrite the paragraph, making it better.

It was raining cats and dogs last night. I will go to visit my friend in Edmonton this weekend. She has CP too and lives alone. It will be nice to get away from my parents. Her house is close to the West Edmonton Mall. I don't have class on Thursday. The trip will be too short.

Exercise 3

Write a paragraph that describes one thing. It could be anything: a piece of fruit, a place, a person...anything. Remember to write an introductory sentence and a closing sentence.

Exercise 4

Use this list of words to write a paragraph. You don't have to use all the words. Pick words that are related in some way.

sun
grass
wind
prairie
cold

wheelchair
pool
bed
table
airplane
car

Exercise 5

Look at the following picture. Use it to write a paragraph. You can describe what's in the picture or write about what you think might be going on in the picture, or even what you don't like about the picture. Be creative.

Note to Tutor/Instructor: Bring other pictures to class to use for this exercise. You could bring magazine pictures, newspaper pictures, pictures off of the Internet etc.

