

## Grade 6: Sample Mini-Lesson

### **Week 15: Complete Sentences** **Sentence Fragments / Run-ons**

**Prior Knowledge**-Students know that a sentence must include a subject (a noun or pronoun) and a predicate and express a complete thought. Sentence fragments and run-ons were first introduced in the Grade 3 DLI materials.

**Lesson Content**-This skill will benefit from continued reinforcement and review. As students begin to use longer sentences, do more sentence-combining, and employ compound sentences, the fragments and run-ons in their work will increase. Taking risks and experimenting will eventually lead to more varied sentence structures, but some “growing pains” will occur in the process.

Students will review the following incorrect structures.

**Sentence fragments** are missing one or more of the following: a subject, a predicate, or a complete thought. To develop an understanding of the term *fragment*, compare it to a “piece” of a sentence.

**Run-on sentences** are created when two separate sentences are connected without correct punctuation or a connecting word.

#### **Lesson Strategy 1- Sentence Sort**

This activity is patterned after word sorts similar to those you have done with spelling or vocabulary words. The items on pages 1 and 2 of the mini-lesson are recommended for all students.

**Enrichment**- The items on page 3 may be included for enrichment, if desired, and are more difficult.

#### **Materials**

- For each pair of students duplicate “Week 15: Mini-Lesson-Sort Them: Complete Sentence or Sentence Fragment?” pages 1-2.
- Teachers should copy pages 1-2 to project.

#### **Preparation**

Tell students that all groups of words are not sentences. Ask them what requirements must be met for a group of words to be considered a sentence. Draw from their previous instruction and create a list that includes the criteria on the next page.

Review the meaning of the term *sentence fragment* using the information above.

## Requirements for Complete Sentences

1-The group of words must have a subject and a predicate.  
(Display "Week 4: Day One" to review these concepts.)

The subject tells *who* or *what* the sentence is about.

The predicate tells what the subject *is*, what the subject *has*,  
or what the subject *does*.

2-The group of words must express a complete thought.

The phrase *complete thought* is abstract and difficult to put into words. Sometimes the words of students can be more effective in reaching other students than our words. In the book, Mechanically Inclined, one of Jeff Anderson's students says that a sentence fragment "kind of leaves you hanging." The corollary of this would be that a complete sentence does not leave you hanging.

### **A complete sentence tells**

who or what *is*,  
who or what *has*,  
or who or what *does*.

3- If a group of words has a subject, a predicate, and expresses a complete thought, it is a complete sentence. Further, complete sentences should begin with a capital letter and end with an appropriate end mark.

## **Activity Directions- "Week 15: Mini-Lesson-Sort Them: Complete Sentence or Sentence Fragment?"**

1-Distribute pages 1 and 2 to each pair of students. (Depending upon your student group, you may also include the more difficult items on page 3.)

2-Ask students to cut the groups of words apart on the lines and sort them into the three groups that appear in the directions on the top of page 1: complete sentences, sentence fragments, and items about which they are not sure.

3- Students need to be prepared to defend their placement of items into groups using the two criteria above: a subject/predicate and a complete thought. Discuss one or two examples together as a group to provide a model for how they could defend the placement of an item in a certain group.

4- Think-Pair-Share. Combine two pairs to create a group of four students. Continue to do this until all pairs of students are working with another pair. Have both pairs of students bring their paper strips. Each pair explains their decisions about the placement of items into groups and together the foursome arrives at a consensus.

5- Share as a large group and clarify any questions.

6- Students should not be fooled and believe that because a group of words is long that it is a complete sentence. A sentence can be very short and still be complete (I sat.) This sentence includes a subject (I) and a predicate (sat) and expresses a complete thought. It tells who did something. Conversely, a word group can be very long and not be a complete sentence.

7-Some groups of words are not complete sentences because they do not express a complete thought. A few dependent clauses, which students will learn more about in Week 27, are included in the page 3 items. While they have a subject and a predicate, they do not express a complete thought.

Ex: Since I was afraid of spiders (These words do not express a complete thought.)

Students could argue that this word group includes a subject (I) and a predicate. (was afraid of spiders) However, the words do not express a complete thought and need more words to complete their meaning. This topic will be fully explored in Week 27.

## Key (pages 1-2)

### Complete Sentences

Stephen coughed.

Abby won the spelling bee.

I sat.

Danny was surprised

Maya watched the movie.

The weather is warm.

### Sentence Fragments

#### Missing subjects

Stopped for milk on the way home

Washed, waxed, and cleaned Dad's car

Swerved and slipped off the road

Jumped rope for half an hour

#### Missing predicates

Kim, Sam, Randy, and their big dog

The slimy, slippery creature

The biggest dog in the litter

My favorite pair of jeans

#### Missing a complete thought

When you get to the bus stop

#### Missing a subject/predicate/complete thought

Between the two trash cans (prepositional phrase)

## Key (page 3)

**NOTE: Students are NOT expected to tell the reasons in parenthesis: this information is for teacher benefit.**

### Complete Sentences

I was shocked.

Angie cheered.

He waited at the bus stop.

### Sentence Fragments

#### Missing a subject/predicate/complete thought

In my bedroom under the bed (two back-to-back prepositional phrases)

Beneath the flag at school (two back-to-back prepositional phrases)

#### Missing a complete thought

Since I was afraid of spiders (dependent clause-includes a S+V but no complete thought)

After we won our soccer game (dependent clause-includes a S+V but no complete thought)

If Mom leaves home on time (dependent clause-includes a S+V but no complete thought)

**Important Note:** One way to help students see what is missing in the fragments above is to ask them to add more to the word group so that it does NOT "leave you hanging." Two fragments from the list above get some help from the phrases in bold:

(**I found my soccer cleats**) in my bedroom under the bed.

After we won our soccer game, (**we went for pizza.**)

The words in **bold face type** that were added are independent clauses that have both a subject and verb; they provide the missing elements and complete the meaning.