



Centre Universitaire Abdelhafid Boussouf Cellule e-learning



Anglais–Niveau 3

Lesson2 Common Sentence Errors

Staffpédagogique

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EtudiantsconcernésSemestre1

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Objectives of the Lesson

- To raise students' awareness about the common errors and mistakes which are committed at the level of sentences.
- To differentiate between the types of sentence errors.
- To learn techniques of avoiding such errors as a way towards improving their writing skills.

Common Sentence Errors

1. Consider the following sentences :

- Algeria and Egypt both have large geographical spaces they are still developing countries.
- Cats and dogs belong to a nice family of animals which are called pets.
- Staying late at night is a bad habit and it can affect your mental and physical health and many of your body systems will be programmed differently, and you will suffer a disease called insomnia.
- He left. Yesterday night. Without saying goodbye.
- She will not buy the perfume she does not like it.

Note: All these sentences are grammatically incorrect. To correct them one should identify where the sentence error is. What the type of this error is. And how a correct sentence looks like.

2. Sentence Errors:

A/ There is no comma, semi-colon or a conjunction in the first sentence. This makes it a grammatically incorrect sentence. This type of sentence errors is called **run-on sentences**ⁱ. It can be corrected as follows:

Correction:

- ✓ **Algeria and Egypt both have large geographical spaces, they are still developing countries.**
- ✓ **Algeria and Egypt both have large geographical spaces; they are still developing countries.**
- ✓ **Algeria and Egypt both have large geographical spaces; however, they are still developing countries.**

B/ There is something repetitive in the second sentence. **Pet** is used to describe nice and friendly animals and there is a repetition of the meaning of ‘pet’. This sentence error is called **choppy sentences**ⁱⁱ. It is corrected as follows:

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Correction:

- ✓ **Cats and dogs belong to the pets family.**

C/The third sentence error is visible in the usage of the conjunction **'and'** many times. This makes the sentence very long, and much like pulling a string. This type of errors is called **stringy sentences**ⁱⁱⁱ. It is corrected either by adding conjunctions like “however, because, but, thus, moreover, as a result of, as long as...etc” or commas (,) and periods (.).

Correction:

- ✓ Staying late at night is a bad habit. **It can affect your mental and physical health. Many of your body systems will be programmed differently; as a result of that, you will suffer a disease called insomnia.**
- ✓ Staying late at night is a bad habit; **it can affect your mental and physical health. Many of your body systems will be programmed differently, thus you will suffer a disease called insomnia.**

D/ The fourth sentence error is noticed in the use of separated parts to form a sentence. This error is called **fragmented sentence or 'Fragments'**^{iv}. Each of these fragments can not stand alone to form a complete sentence.

Correction:

- ✓ **He left yesterday night without saying goodbye.**

E/The fifth sentence error is noticed when there is no comma that sets each sentence apart from the other. This type of errors is called **comma splice**^v. There are two complete sentences in the example above; they can be separated out by putting a comma between them.

Correction:

- ✓ **She will not buy the perfume, she does not like it.**

Remark: run-on sentences, choppy sentences, stringy sentences, fragmented sentences and comma splices are only some common sentence errors. There are some others which can not be covered in this lesson.

ⁱSee, Sentence Types and Errors, Writing Center, Beirut. Retrieved from [Wrting.center@lau.edu.lb](mailto:Writing.center@lau.edu.lb)

ⁱⁱSee, Choppy Sentences, Center for writing, University of Minnesota. Retrieved from <http://writing.umn.edu>

ⁱⁱⁱSee, Stringy Sentences by Ron Johnson, L.T.L. Tutoring central. Retrieved from www.tutoringcentral.com

^{iv}See, Correcting Comma Errors in Sentence Structure, The Writing Center, The Ohio State University. Retrieved from <http://cstw.edu>

^vIbid.