

Common sentence problems

Sentence fragments	These are incomplete sentences because one or more of these elements are missing:	
	a verb	<i>The internet ^ an invaluable information resource.</i> <i>The internet is an invaluable information resource.</i>
	a subject	<i>^ Has many career prospects</i> <i>She has many career prospects.</i>
	a subject and verb	For example, <i>^^ a marked increase in enrolments.</i> For example, <i>there is a marked increase in enrolments.</i>
	a main clause	<i>^ Because the bus did not arrive.</i> <i>Because the bus did not arrive, I was late for work.</i> <i>I was late for work, because the bus did not arrive.</i> <i>^ So I was late.</i> <i>The bus did not arrive, so I was late for work.</i> <i>^ And I was late.</i> <i>The bus did not arrive and I was late for work.</i> <i>^ But the bus did not arrive.</i> <i>I waited for hours, but the bus did not arrive.</i>
Faulty parallelism	This problem occurs when sentence elements expressing two or more matching ideas or items in a series are NOT balanced or grammatically equal.	
	Aluminium is <i>light (adjective)</i> in weight, <i>strength (noun)</i> , and <i>resistance (noun)</i> to corrosion. Aluminium is <i>light (adjective)</i> in weight, <i>strong (adjective)</i> , and <i>resistant (adjective)</i> to corrosion.	
	Aluminium is remarkable <i>for its low density (phrase)</i> and <i>it is able to resist corrosion (clause)</i> . Aluminium is remarkable <i>for its low density (phrase)</i> and <i>ability to resist corrosion (phrase)</i> . Aluminium is remarkable <i>because it has low density (clause)</i> and <i>it is able to resist corrosion (clause)</i> .	
Redundant reference	For graph A about email use, it clearly shows that young people are ... Graph A about email use clearly shows that young people are... As for young people in particular, they tend to... Young people, in particular, tend to...	
Misplaced clauses/ clumsy word order	This problem happens when some dependent clauses (e.g. relative (which) clauses) are not placed in the correct position in the sentence, causing confusion as a result:	
	The camera cover is equivalent of a man's weight <i>which is made of strong plastic</i> must be able to withstand a force of 750N, <i>so that sharp camera parts cannot fall out.</i> Write two sentences: The camera cover is made of strong plastic so <i>that the sharp camera parts cannot fall out.</i> It must also be able to withstand a force of 750N, <i>which is equivalent of a man's weight.</i>	
Over-long sentences	Not only must the camera cover be made of strong plastic to keep the camera parts from falling out, but it must also be able to withstand a force of 750N, which is the equivalent of a man's weight. (Controlled structure, but probably far too long: 39 words) The camera cover is made of strong plastic to keep the camera parts from falling out. It must also be able to withstand a force of 750N, which is the equivalent of a man's weight. (General rule for better sentence control: 20-25 words/sentence)	