

## **PART I SENTENCE STRUCTURE**

### **The Eight Sentence Errors Tested**

On this part of the LPI, you will be asked to identify some common errors involving sentence structure. As you will see when you turn to Practice Exercise 1, you do not have to identify these by name, but are asked to recognize where in the sentence an error has been made. The sentence errors tested on each form of the LPI are selected from the following:

1. An incomplete sentence
2. A run-on sentence (sometimes called a comma fault)
3. A misplaced modifier
4. A dangling modifier
5. Faulty reference of a pronoun
6. Faulty subject-verb agreement
7. Faulty parallel structure
8. Redundant subordination/coordination

Although this workbook does not contain any specific instruction on punctuation, you can improve your understanding of how commas (,), semi-colons (;), colons (:), dashes (–), and periods (.) should be used by noting how they have been employed in the various practice exercises and writing samples that are found on the pages that follow.

#### **1. AN INCOMPLETE SENTENCE**

**DEFINITION:** An incomplete sentence is a group of words that does not convey a complete thought because it lacks either a subject or a verb or, possibly, both a subject and a verb. Though experienced writers may, from time to time, purposely use an incomplete sentence for emphasis or effect, the accidental sentence fragment that can either confuse or slow down a reader should be avoided.

INCOMPLETE:

The next time I take my children to their skiing lessons, I'm going to get involved. Perhaps even try to ski.

CORRECTED:

The next time I take my children to their skiing lessons, I'm going to get involved. I may even try to ski.

INCOMPLETE:

His marks were much better this year than last year. Which is good.

CORRECTED:

His marks were much better this year than last year.  
This is a good thing.

## 2. A RUN-ON SENTENCE (SOMETIMES CALLED A COMMA FAULT)

**DEFINITION:** A run-on sentence occurs when two complete sentences are joined together by a comma, rather than by some stronger punctuation such as a period (.), a colon (:), or a semi-colon (;).

RUN-ON:

She likes to tell you in detail about the television programs she finds interesting, they don't seem especially interesting the way she describes them.

CORRECTED:

She likes to tell you in detail about the television programs she finds interesting. They don't seem especially interesting the way she describes them.

ALSO CORRECTED:

She likes to tell you in detail about the television programs she finds interesting, but they don't seem especially interesting the way she describes them.

## 3. MISPLACED MODIFIER

**DEFINITION:** A word, a phrase, or a clause that does not clearly modify the noun or pronoun that it is supposed to modify is said to be misplaced. It should be repositioned in the sentence so that it clearly modifies what it is intended to modify.

MISPLACED:

The sport called biathlon, which combines cross-country skiing with rifle shooting, is thought to have developed during a time when hunters raced over the snow after moose on skis.

CORRECTED:

The sport called biathlon, which combines cross-country skiing with rifle shooting, is thought to have developed during a time when hunters on skis raced over the snow after moose.

#### 4. A DANGLING MODIFIER

**DEFINITION:** If a sentence begins with a present participial phrase (such as “Running across the golf course”), or a past participial phrase (such as “Worried about my friend’s health”), this phrase must be followed by a comma and then by the noun or pronoun that is performing the action conveyed by the participle.

**DANGLING:**

Running across the golf course, a ball nearly hit him on the head. [The ball wasn’t doing the running.]

**CORRECTED:**

Running across the golf course, he was nearly hit on the head by a ball.

**DANGLING:**

Worried about my friend’s health, a get-well card was sent to the hospital. [The get-well card wasn’t worried.]

**CORRECTED:**

Worried about my friend’s health, I sent a get-well card to the hospital.

#### 5. FAULTY REFERENCE OF A PRONOUN

**DEFINITION:** A pronoun should clearly refer to one noun or pronoun that precedes it in the sentence or paragraph in which it is found. If the reference is in any way in doubt, it is faulty, and should be made unambiguous.

**UNCLEAR REFERENCE:**

If you live near the ocean, there are many different types of boats that you might like to own, but it is a very expensive hobby.

**CORRECTED:**

If you live near the ocean, there are many different types of boats that you might like to own, but owning a boat is a very expensive hobby.

#### 6. FAULTY SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

**DEFINITION:** The subject and the verb of a sentence should agree in *number* (“Cars are”, not “Cars is”), and in *person* (“I am”, not “I is”).

**LACK OF AGREEMENT:**

Each speaker were allowed only five minutes to present his point of view on land use.

**CORRECTED:**

Each speaker was allowed only five minutes to present his point of view on land use.

**LACK OF AGREEMENT:**

I think I deserve a better mark on this course than he do.

**CORRECTED:**

I think I deserve a better mark on this course than he does.

**7. FAULTY PARALLEL STRUCTURE**

**DEFINITION:** All parts of a sentence that are joined in an equal (or coordinate) way should be of the same grammatical structure. A word is parallel only to another word; a phrase is parallel only to another phrase; a clause is parallel only to another clause.

**NOT PARALLEL:**

If you want to become a good athlete, you must be motivated, have self-confidence, and willing to practice regularly.

**CORRECTED:**

If you want to become a good athlete, you must be motivated, have self-confidence, and be willing to practice regularly.

**NOT PARALLEL:**

Dennis has three main ambitions in life: he wants to become a lawyer, an alderman, and be able to write novels.

**CORRECTED:**

Dennis has three main ambitions in life: he wants to become a lawyer, an alderman, and a novelist.

**8. REDUNDANT SUBORDINATION/COORDINATION**

**DEFINITION:** This occurs when a sentence that begins with the subordinate conjunction *although* is followed by a main clause that begins with the coordinate conjunction *but*.

**REDUNDANT:**

Although Margaret has never visited eastern Canada, but she plans to study in Toronto next year.

**CORRECTED:**

Although Margaret has never visited eastern Canada, she plans to study in Toronto next year.

**ALSO CORRECTED:**

Margaret has never visited eastern Canada, but she plans to study in Toronto next year.

**NOTE:** The Practice Exercises that are found in Parts I, II, and III of this booklet are in the same format as you will find on all forms of the LPI examination.

## PRACTICE EXERCISE 1

INSTRUCTIONS: Many, though not all, of the ten sentences that follow contain one of the errors in sentence structure defined and illustrated above. Darken the circle beneath the underlined portion of the sentence that you think contains the error. If you think a sentence is correct as it stands, darken the circle to the right of the sentence. (Correct answers are found on page 65.)

1. When we were halfway across the lake, we were surprised to find that  
     
our supply of gasoline were dangerously low.
2. Wearing a sparkling dress, the elephants were led into the circus ring  
     
by a beautiful young woman.
3. English and mathematics are the most valuable subjects taught  
     
in school, and it will be of great use to you in the future.
4. Full of high spirits, the family set off on its annual camping trip  
     
into a remote area of British Columbia.
5. The wage settlement which labor and management finally agreed to  
     
was thought to be acceptable. Though not to everyone.
6. During her first week at college, Susan had to buy her textbooks,  
     
meet her professors, and trying hard not to miss any classes.
7. While on a trip across Canada, the traveller will pass through  
     
many different types of landscape.
8. His friend offered to write the biology exam for him, wisely he was  
     
smart enough not to accept the offer.

9. Although November is usually a rainy month in western Canada,  
but it can have the occasional sunny day.
10. He went downtown with the intention of buying a bicycle for his son  
with those new wide handlebars.

## PRACTICE EXERCISE 2

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete as instructed in Practice Exercise 1. (Correct answers are found on page 67.)

1. A photographer must decide what to take a picture of, how to compose  
the picture, and then selecting the focus and exposure.
2. At that gas station, if you buy a full tank of gas, you get a free car wash.  
Which is great.
3. When Donald bought a full tank of gas, and got the free car  
wash, he only made one mistake, he forgot to roll up the window  
and got soaked.
4. Biking several kilometres a day, or walking several kilometres, will  
help to get you in excellent physical condition.
5. The Canucks hockey team didn't win many games last season  
and often they were very boring.
6. Although most students at university dress quite informally, but  
some of them still wear expensive clothes.

7. Many scientists believe that one of the biggest problems faced  
         
by Canadians today are the result of acid rain.
8. We were very impressed by the number of trees that grew along  
         
Vancouver's streets after our first drive through the city.
9. Too much cannot be said about the importance of developing  
         
good study habits while you are a college or a university student.
10. Looking out the window in the early morning, the world was  
         
covered in a thick and sparkling frost.

**PRACTICE EXERCISE 3**

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete as instructed in Practice Exercise 1. (Correct answers are found on page 69.)

1. Because I was anxious to see her, I arrived at the restaurant  
         
where we were to have dinner an hour early.
2. Although the food in Canada is very different from the kind of food  
         
I am used to, but now I am getting to like it.
3. Because her plane arrived early, none of her family was at the airport  
         
to meet her, and so she felt very disappointed.
4. A good rule in life is that people should not be judged  
         
by his or her looks.

5. Having spent the last two weeks in bed, my doctor said that I  
 was suffering from a bad bout of the flu.
6. If skiing conditions are to be ideal, there should be a clear sky, lots of  
 powder snow, and not having to wait in a long line at the chair lift.
7. Some people are convinced in their own minds that a number  
of strange things happen whenever there is a full moon.
8. In the centre of the city there are a large football stadium.
9. Brian has always been interested in selling, and that is why he wants  
to become one in a large company.
10. The automobile is, relatively speaking, a recent invention, but  
 now millions of people have cars in all parts of the world.

#### PRACTICE EXERCISE 4

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete as instructed in Practice Exercise 1. (Correct answers are found on page 71.)

1. Although Pete paid a lot of money for his new snowboard,  
but he says it was really worth it.
2. The fire inspector did not know what had started the fire in the  
 community's only arena, he suspected that it might have been  
the work of an arsonist.



3. The way life is lived in Canada is quite different from the way  
life is lived in either Europe or Asia.
4. Having a faulty exhaust system, Rupert has always had trouble  
getting his car through Air Care.
5. Recent statistics shows that more people from other provinces  
are moving to British Columbia than to any other Canadian province.
6. Across the street from our house, there are three large chestnut trees that,  
when they are in leaf, have the shape of a huge elephant.
7. If you're lucky enough to own a jeep, you can use them to go skiing,  
camping, or driving along dusty back roads.
8. In my opinion, the government should be working to increase  
the availability of low income housing, to create jobs, and lowering the  
deficit.
9. Tony decided that he would stay in the library until six o'clock,  
have dinner, and then go home. Which was wise.
10. I was really lucky to get a beautiful photograph of the sun setting  
over Lake Okanagan with Bob's camera.