

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.

PART I: SENTENCE STRUCTURE

INSTRUCTIONS: Most of the ten items found below contain an error in sentence structure, such as a misplaced modifier, a run-on sentence, a faulty subject, and a faulty parallel construction. Each item has four underlined portions. One of these portions may contain an error. Darken the circle beneath the underlined portion of the item that contains an error. If the item is correct, darken the circle that appears to the right of the item.

Example:

Behind a tall grey fence and a row of cedar trees, there was open fields leading down to the Fraser River.

The error is contained in the phrase "there was open fields," in which the verb "was" should be "were" in order to agree with the plural noun "fields." You would, therefore, darken the circle under "there was open fields."

Example:

Behind a tall grey fence and a row of cedar trees, there were open fields leading down to the Fraser River.

The sentence is correct. You would, therefore, darken the circle containing the .

1. Getting a part-time job would be beneficial to you. this would be especially true if the work were interesting and your co-workers were friendly.
2. After being dependent for centuries on boats, horses, or trains, human beings have now become dependent on the automobile.
3. The road in front of the house was blocked off when the power poles were being moved by the hydro crews because they had become a traffic hazard.
4. Because my friend has never been to a hockey game, before we go, I will tell him how the game is played. And some of the rules.

Practice Test 1

5. Didn't you think that the new professor was extremely late in posting the notes for the students covered in class? ©
6. To become a good driver, you have to be alert to what other drivers are likely to do. Accidents don't have to happen. ©
7. When you go with your friends to the tennis court, you can either get involved in a game or just watching them play. ©
8. The week before graduation, Paul saw that a list of job opportunities were posted on the notice board in the career services office. ©
9. Although some of my colleagues think that this course is so difficult that they may not even pass it, but I haven't had any difficulty understanding the material. ©
10. Having not had enough time for breakfast, my hurried walk to school was very tiring. ©
1. Our organization helps teenagers succeed in life by teaching them communication skills, by being supportive of their choices, and by constant encouragement. ©
2. Even though your teachers may sometimes be critical of your work, what they tell you are always for your own good. ©
3. Living in densely populated areas, the crime rate has risen to such an extent that taking walks after dark is extremely risky. ©
4. The many things I have planned for the coming months make me feel very excited when I think about it. ©

Practice Test 2

5. Because the library was so noisy this afternoon, I packed up my books with a headache and went home early. ©
6. My father is willing to discuss with me the things that I do not understand about political and economic matters. ©
7. The noise from construction at a nearby building made it difficult for the lecturer to make himself heard. Which was annoying. ©
8. Although I have seen Béla Tarr's latest movie countless times, but I never get tired of it. ©
9. Good living habits will help you look better, feel happier, and live longer. ©
10. Golf has recently become one of the most popular sports in North America. It is played by millions of enthusiasts. ©
1. The artist attempted to sell a rather unaccomplished painting to a returning customer without any luck. ©
2. One of my favorite activities is alpine skiing, but it really bothers me that in my province there isn't a ski resort specially developed for them. ©
3. A number of trees in my neighborhood were blown down in last night's windstorm. we lost two maples in our backyard. ©
4. There are two ways to succeed in life without having to work: winning the lottery and to inherit a considerable amount of money. ©

5. Before registering for the next semester, your program advisor should confirm that the courses you have selected meet the requirements for your degree. ©
6. The traffic in downtown Victoria was so slow this morning that we thought we would not get to the airport in time for our flight. ©
7. Many discussions on radio or television bring together people who have completely opposite opinions. And which get nowhere. ©
8. At the end of every summer, he returns to the small town in Ontario where he was born and where his parents are still living. ©
9. We recently moved to Vancouver, and I must say that everyone in this wonderful city have been very helpful and friendly. ©
- 10 I didn't have much time to spend in the library yesterday I was lucky to find very quickly the information that I needed. ©
1. Due to the availability and accessibility of digital technology, computer literacy has gained a firm position in society. ©
2. Undoubtedly, Tamara's work experience and impressive academic background, make her the ideal candidate for this position. ©
3. There is still some people who seem to believe that they can get a post-secondary diploma or degree without working hard enough. ©
4. Even after having studied all night, many concepts tested on the final exam were unfamiliar because they had not been covered in the textbook. ©

Practice Test 4

5. There were several letters that he had postponed writing. he told himself that he would write them on Sunday afternoon. ©
6. Despite the fact that it was a holiday weekend, the lineups at the ferry terminal were not especially long. ©
7. My father was hoping that, on his day off, the weather would be sunny, but clouds kept covering it. ©
8. The well-known wolfhound owners Jim and Jane Bagshaw will discuss in detail the importance of wolfhounds as guest speakers. ©
9. When you phoned me, I was sitting at home enjoying my favorite television program and wished that I didn't have a chemistry exam on the following day. ©
10. Most of Jane's friends say that she has a wonderful, but rather strange, sense of humor. In my opinion, true. ©