



ZAPPING
the Grammar Bugaboos:
Top FIVE HIT PARADE

Writing Center
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"Faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life" (NIV, Titus 1.2).

The Grammar Bugaboo TOP FIVE HIT PARADE



■ Fragments

■ Run-On Sentences



■ Apostrophes

■ Commas



■ Commonly Confused Words



TOP FIVE HIT PARADE

#1: FRAGMENTS

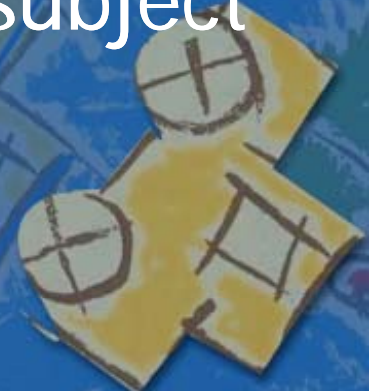


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Fragments

- A fragment is an incomplete sentence.
- A fragment is usually missing a subject or a verb or both.
- A fragment does not express a complete thought.





Example of a Fragment



Fragment: Describing the salt and light.

Problem: A subject is missing. Who is doing the describing?



Revision: Jesus was describing the salt and light.





Example of a Fragment

Fragment: Light of the world as Christians.



Problem: Who was doing what about the light of the world as Christians?



Revision: Jesus teaches us Christians are the light of the world.





Example of a Fragment

Fragment: Jesus teaches us. To be salt and light.



Problem: "To be salt and light" is a fragment.



Revision: Jesus teaches us to be salt and light.



Now You Try It!

Fragment or Complete Sentence?

- Abiding in the vine.
- Jesus is the vine.
- We will bear fruit.
- When we abide in Jesus.
- Cannot bear fruit alone.

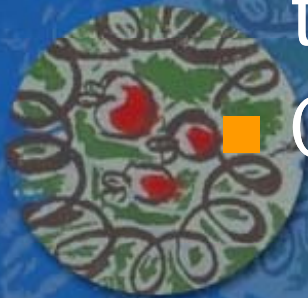




Answers



- Abiding in the vine.
(fragment – missing a subject)
- Jesus is the vine. (complete)
- We will bear fruit. (complete)
- When we abide in Jesus. (fragment –
“when” is a subordinating conjunction
that begins a dependent clause)
- Cannot bear fruit alone.
(fragment – missing a subject)



TOP FIVE HIT PARADE

#2: RUN-ON SENTENCES





Run-on Sentences

Definition: A run-on sentence consists of two complete sentences, each with a real subject and main verb.

There are two kinds of run-on sentences:

1. Comma-Splices
2. Fused Sentences





Comma Splice

Definition: A comma splice consists of two complete sentences (independent clauses) connected (spliced) by a comma.

Example: I rode my bike, it was sunny yesterday.



Revision: I rode my bike. It was sunny yesterday.





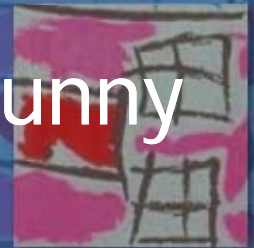
Fused Sentence

Definition: A fused sentence consists of two sentences (independent clauses) fused together without punctuation.

Example: I rode my bike it was sunny yesterday.



Revision: I rode my bike. It was sunny yesterday.





Now You Try It!

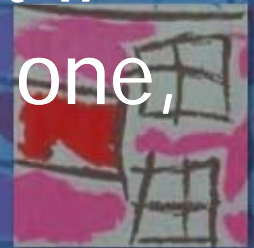
- Comma splice or fused sentence?



1. God is triune, He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.



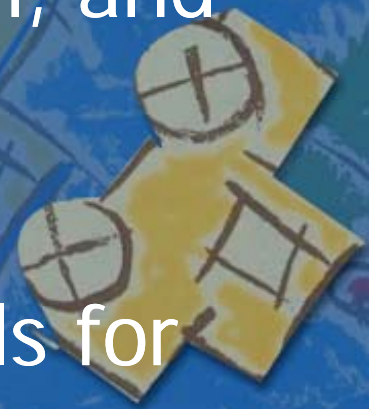
2. We are vessels for the Holy Spirit if Jesus lives in you, then you are one, too.





Answers

1. Comma Splice. Revision: God is triune. He is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
2. Fused Sentence: We are vessels for the Holy Spirit. If Jesus lives in you, then you are one, too.





Run-on or Not?

- Identify whether the following are run-one sentences (identify which kind, if so) or not.



While I was riding my bike, I saw birds.



I saw birds, I was riding my bike.

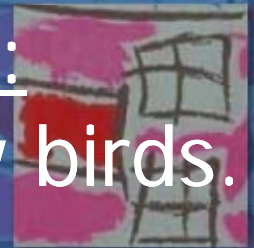




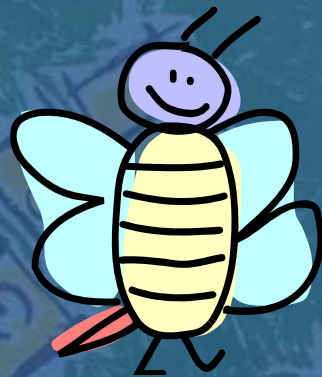
Answers

(Not a run-on.) While I was riding my bike, I saw birds.

(Comma Splice) I saw birds, I was riding my bike. Revision: I saw birds. I was riding my bike. Another Revision: While I was riding my bike, I saw birds.



TOP FIVE HIT PARADE #3: APOSTROPHES





Apostrophes

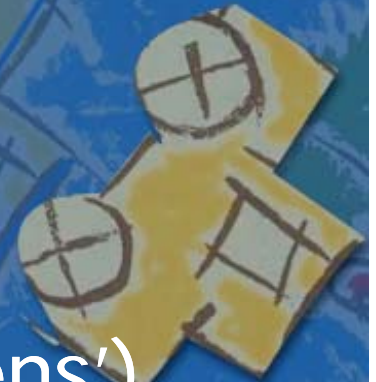
- Use an apostrophe to show possession.
Example: my father's house
- Use an apostrophe to create a contraction.
Example: she + is = she's





Apostrophe Bugaboos

- its vs. it's (NEVER its')
its = something belongs to it
it's = it is
- children's is correct (NOT childrens')
- Jesus's and Jesus' are both acceptable





Now You Try It!

- Are the following examples correct or incorrect uses of apostrophes?

1. It's raining.
2. the children's house
3. The tree lost its leaves.
4. The cross is heavy because its solid brass.





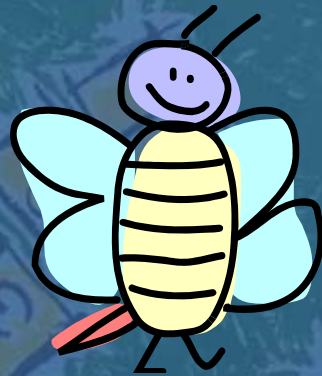
Answers

1. It's raining. (correct)
2. the children's house (correct)
3. The tree lost its leaves. (correct)
4. The cross is heavy because its solid brass. (incorrect – should be it's)



TOP FIVE HIT PARADE

#4: COMMAS





Commas

- Use a comma to set off an introductory adverbial clause.

When Elijah prayed again, the rain fell.





Commas

- Use a comma before a conjunction (and, or, not) separating two clauses.

“You shall grieve, but your grief will turn to joy” (KJ, John 16.20).





Commas

- Use commas to separate items in a list.

Example: The woman brought her Bible, bread, fish, and salt.



Example: You enjoying riding your bicycle, swimming at the beach, and studying for class.





Commas

- Use commas to set off nonrestrictive material. Nonrestrictive means that if the material were removed, then the basic meaning of the sentence wouldn't change much.





Nonrestrictive vs. Restrictive

- Nonrestrictive: In San Juan Capistrano, where the swallows return each year, sunshine is year-round.
- Restrictive: Rough drafts which are written in pencil are difficult to read.





Commas on Parade

- Where are commas extraneous?
- Where are commas necessary?



When the day of Pentecost came the people, were gathered together in one place. Tongues of fire separated and came to rest, on each of them. People were filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke in tongues.



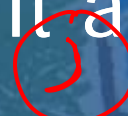


Revision



Comma Setting off
an introductory
adverbial
phrase

When the day of Pentecost came the
people ~~no comma~~ were gathered together in one
place. Tongues of fire separated and
came to rest ~~no comma~~ on each of them. People
were filled with the Holy Spirit and they
spoke in tongues.



comma before
Contraction
Separating
independent
clauses



TOP FIVE HIT
PARADE

#5: COMMONLY
CONFUSED
WORDS



Commonly Confused Words



Beware of mixing up the following pronouns and other words.

1. their vs. there vs. they're



2. it's vs. its



3. where vs. were vs. we're





Their vs. There

- "Their" is used to indicate possession.
- "There" is used to indicate a place.
- "They're" is the contraction for "they are."

The children are looking for their books.

Their books are over there.



They're going to read the books.





It's vs. Its

- As seen in "Apostrophe Bugaboos" . . .

"It's" = it is, but "its" shows possession.

Example: It's sunny today. 



Example: The book lost its page. 



Where vs. Were vs. We're

- "Where" indicates a place.

Example: Where are you going?

- "Were" is a form of the verb "to be."

Example: We were once children.

- "We're" = we are



Example: We're now young adults.





Now You Try It!

- Circle the correct word.



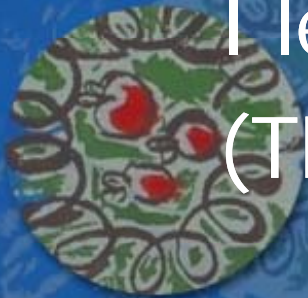
(Where/were) are the cookies?

(Its/it's) a great occasion.

(We're/were) going to the opera.

I left my books over (their/there).

(Their/they're) going to the symphony.



Answers



(Where/were) are the cookies?

(Its/it's) a great occasion.

(We're/were) going to the opera.

I left my books over (their/there).

(Their/they're) going to the symphony.



The Writing Center



For more help with zapping Grammar Bugaboos, contact the Writing Center.

- Where: Heath 214
- When: Monday through Friday
- What else: Thanks for your interest in our resources!

"Faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life" (NIV, Titus 1.2).

