Common Errors: Comma Splices and Fused Sentences

- A comma splice is when 2 independent clauses are improperly joined with only a comma.
  Ex: My dog was not feeling well, I took her to the vet.
- A fused sentence is when 2 independent clauses are improperly joined with no punctuation.
  Ex: My dog was not feeling well I took her to the vet.

Both comma splices and fused sentences can be fixed in one of four ways:

1. Join the 2 independent clauses with a comma + a coordinating conjunction (Comma rule #1)
   Ex: My dog was not feeling well, so I took her to the vet.
2. Join the 2 independent clauses with a semi-colon (Semi-Colon rule #1)
   Ex: My dog was not feeling well; I took her to the vet.
3. Make the 2 independent clauses 2 separate sentences.
   Ex: My dog was not feeling well. I took her to the vet.
4. Change the wording so that you no longer have 2 independent clauses.
   Ex: Since my dog was not feeling well, I took her to the vet.

Common Errors: Subject-Pronoun Disagreement

- If the subject of the sentence is singular, pronouns referring back to that subject in the sentence should also be singular.
- Likewise, if the subject of the sentence is plural, pronouns referring back to that subject in the sentence should be plural.

Ex: Each person should bring their books to class. (INCORRECT) “Each person” is singular, while “their” is plural.

The corrected versions would be:

Ex: Each person should bring his or her book to class.
Ex: Students should bring their books to class.

Common Errors: Fragments

- A fragment is a group of words that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. It cannot stand alone because it is missing a subject, missing a verb, missing BOTH a subject and a verb, or does not make sense on its own.

Commonly Confused Words

Affect and Effect—“Affect” is a verb; “effect” is a noun.

It’s and Its—“It’s” is the contraction of “it” and “is”; “its” (without the apostrophe) is the possessive form of it.

Their, There, and They’re—“Their” is the possessive form of “they”; “there” is an adverb denoting place (Ex: The book is over there.); “they’re” is the contraction of “they” and “are.”