



Key ELA Grammar Topics – Run-Ons/Fragments

SHSAT Level Practice

1. Read this sentence.

The citizens of Flint, Michigan still do not have access to clean water except from bottled supplies it seems unethical to continue overseas wars while not coming to the aid of Americans here at home.

How should this sentence be corrected?

- A. The citizens of Flint, Michigan still do not have access to clean water. Except from bottled supplies it seems unethical to continue overseas wars while not coming to the aid of Americans here at home.
- B. The citizens of Flint, Michigan still do not have access to clean water except from bottled supplies, it seems unethical to continue overseas wars while not coming to the aid of Americans here at home.
- C. The citizens of Flint, Michigan still do not have access to clean water except from bottled supplies and it seems unethical to continue overseas wars while not coming to the aid of Americans here at home.
- D. The citizens of Flint, Michigan still do not have access to clean water except from bottled supplies; it seems unethical to continue overseas wars while not coming to the aid of Americans here at home.

2. Read this sentence.

Because the foul was in the final seconds of the basketball game.

How can the sentence above be corrected?

- A. Since the foul was in the final seconds of the basketball game.
- B. The Knicks lost, because the foul was in the final seconds of the basketball game.
- C. The foul was in the final seconds of the basketball game.
- D. Because the foul was in the final seconds of the basket ball game, the Knicks.

3. Read this sentence.

Our mood often reflects the weather, it is dull on a rainy day and upbeat on bright, sunny days when people are playing outdoor games.

How should this sentence be corrected?

- A. Add a comma after "day"
- B. Replace the 1st comma with a semicolon
- C. Insert a comma before "when"
- D. Remove the 2nd comma

4. Read this sentence.

Wandering from his original mission, Moses vowed he would never falter again, he broke that vow when his people got lost for 40 years in the desert despite the fact that their destination was a city only 300 miles away along the coast.

How should this sentence be corrected?

- A. Change the 1st comma to a semicolon
- B. Add a comma before "when"
- C. Add "however" after the 2nd comma
- D. Add "but" after the 2nd comma

5. Read this sentence.

Daniel is not having a good day today and he wants to go home early.

How should this sentence be corrected?

- A. Insert a period after "today"
- B. Replace "and" with a comma
- C. Add a comma after "today"
- D. Replace "and" with a colon

6. Read this sentence.

David picked up speed all the way, when he went running until he could run no further.

How should this sentence be corrected?

- A. Replace the comma with a semicolon
- B. Remove the comma
- C. Insert a comma before "until"
- D. No change is required



Answer Key

1.(D)

The citizens of Flint, Michigan still do not have access to clean water except from bottled supplies; it seems unethical to continue overseas wars while not coming to the aid of Americans here at home.

The semicolon is one way to combine independent clauses. A period or a comma and coordinating conjunction (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) are two other methods. Options B and C attempt to use only a comma (a comma splice) and a coordinating conjunction without the comma. Both are incorrect. Option A does not identify the correct independent clauses.

2.(C)

The foul was in the final seconds of the basketball game.

The original sentence is a fragment. Fragments do not complete a thought on their own and most fragments begin with:

a) a cause/effect preposition like *since* or *because* (e.g. because the foul was in the final seconds)

b) an *-ing* verb or gerund (e.g. running to the park)

c) *who, what, where, when, why* (e.g. when he came home)

Options A and D are also sentence fragments. Option B is a complete thought, but it is incorrect punctuation; the subordinate or dependent clause that begins with *because* does not require a comma after the independent clause. Only option C forms a complete thought with a subject noun and predicate.

3.(B)

Replace the 1st comma with a semicolon

Two independent clauses "Our mood often reflects the weather" and "it is dull on a rainy day..." cannot be connected by a comma. That is a comma splice. A semicolon is suitable to combine independent clauses as in option B. Other options include a period, a comma and coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS), or even a subordinating conjunction. There is no need for a comma before "and" (option A) because "upbeat on bright, sunny days" is a dependent clause - comma coordinating conjunctions only apply to combinations of two independent clauses. Option C is incorrect because "when" is also a dependent clause following an independent clause. Option D, the comma between two adjectives, is required. If the adjectives can be reversed and the word "and" placed in between, then a comma is required. The bright and sunny day makes sense as well as the sunny, bright day, so the two adjectives pass the test for inclusion of a comma in this case.

4.(D)

Add "but" after the 2nd comma

Option A, the 1st comma, is required to offset the dependent clause at the start of the sentence. The dependent clause beginning with the word "when" following the independent clause does not need to be separated by a comma (option B). Option C, the transition word "however" is not a coordinating conjunction, so it cannot be used with a comma to connect independent clauses. A semicolon plus "however" would be required. Option D, the coordinating conjunction "but" combined with the comma, properly combines the two independent clauses.

5.(C)

Add a comma after "today"

This sentence contains two independent clauses that can stand by themselves as sentences. A period is one way to separate independent clauses, but it is not sufficient (option A) unless the word "and" is also removed. Option B replaces one bad method of combining independent clauses with another; a comma splice. Both a comma and a coordinating conjunction like "and" must be used to combine independent clauses. A colon is a different punctuation entirely not used to combine clauses.

.

6.(B)

Remove the comma

The clause that begins with "when" does not form a complete thought, so it is dependent. No semicolon is needed (option A) because the sentence does not combine two independent clauses. Given that the dependent clause follows the independent clause, no comma is required (option B).