

name _____ grade _____

THE LITERARY CAVALCADE LANGUAGE ARTS

SURVIVAL GUIDE

part 1

EVERYTHING YOU NEED
TO KNOW TO WRITE
THE PERFECT SENTENCE.
PLUS, A GUIDE TO
IRREGULAR VERBS

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Here are your
first eight pages of the
Language Arts survival guide.
In each subsequent issue you
will receive two more pages.
By the end of the year you
will have a complete,
easy-to-use guide to
Language Arts skills.



Section 1—The Sentence

MAKE THIS YEAR'S LANGUAGE ARTS HOMEWORK EASIER. THIS SURVIVAL GUIDE WILL EQUIP YOU WITH THE BASICS OF WRITING AND LANGUAGE ARTS. FOLLOW THE RULES IN THIS SURVIVAL GUIDE AND WATCH YOUR GRADES SOAR.

The first element of good writing you'll need to master is the sentence. Here are the key rules to making sure your sentences are sound.

> THE SUBJECT AND PREDICATE

Your sentence should begin with the person or thing to which the action is happening or the action describes.

My sister stayed up all night working on her paper.

Her car was gun-metal silver and had a big, black stripe going across the hood.

>> The sentence should then have a verb. The verb describes what is being said about the subject.

My dog found the only pair of socks I had left.

>> The sentence should end with an object. The object receives the action of the subject and verb.

The troll demanded a toll.

> SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

A verb must agree with the subject in number (singular or plural) and in person (first, second, or third).

>> Most verbs use the same form for all but the third-person singular.



While I run, you run, we run and they run, he runs.

>> The most common exception to this rule is the verb to be. That verb changes throughout the various conjugations:

<i>I am</i>	<i>We are</i>
<i>You are</i>	<i>You are</i>
<i>He, she, it is</i>	<i>They are</i>

Terminology

The **SUBJECT** is the part of the sentence affected by the action or behavior that the sentence describes. Generally, it is the noun at the beginning of the sentence (although it is not always). To find the subject, ask yourself to what or to whom is something happening in the sentence.

The **PREDICATE** is the part of the sentence that describes what the subject does.

Some forms of verbs take on what's called an **AUXILIARY**, another word that works with the verb to give it the proper form for a given tense or usage.





>> Double check each sentence you write to make sure that the verb you are using is the appropriate form for the number and person of your subject.

>> Verbs can also change their forms depending on their tenses. This means that the form of the verb can change when it refers to something that is happening now, something that has happened in the past, or something that will happen in the future. Most verbs take on a -d or an -ed to refer to something that happened in the past, and are combined with the words will be or shall be and the ending -ing when referring to the future. For the exceptions to this rule, consult the chart of irregular verbs on page VII.

> SPLIT CONSTRUCTIONS

When your verb requires two words (i.e.: had run, was playing), do not separate the two words by putting something in between them.

>> The most common mistake is to separate your verb by putting the word “also” in the middle.

He was also trying.

>> **Avoid doing this.** Place the word also either at the beginning or end of the verb, wherever it sounds better, but do not place it in the middle.

>> **Keep multiple-word verbs together.**

Because these words function as a unit, when they are separated, more often than not, they lose their clarity.

>> **There are a few rare exceptions to this rule.** They often are easy to identify by ear. It is acceptable to split your construction when correcting your split construction makes the sentence even more awkward than it was before.

> FRAGMENTS AND RUN-ONS

Your teacher may often use words like “fragment” or “run-on” to indicate a poorly constructed sentence.

>> **A fragment is easy to identify.** Look at the sentence you have constructed and make sure that you can identify the subject, the verb, and the object (the verb and the object together make up the predicate). If all three are included in your sentence, then it is not a fragment.

>> **There are certain circumstances in which your sentence may be complete and not include an object.** If your verb describes the action of the subject and completes the thought, you do not need an object.

The Yankees won.



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Vocab.

APATHETIC – Having or showing little or no feeling, emotion, or concern

RESOLUTE – Marked by firm determination

INDIFFERENT – Marked by a lack of interest or preference one way or the other

ADVOCATE – One that pleads on behalf of another; to plead in favor of

RETICENT – Inclined to be silent or uncommunicative in speech

SUCCINCT – Marked by compact, precise expression without wasted words

WANTON – Being without check or control

VINDICTIVE – Disposed to seek revenge

UBIQUITOUS – Existing or being everywhere at the same time

AFFINITY – An attraction to or liking for something

>> A run-on sentence is generally a combination of multiple sentences that just need to be separated. The easiest way to spot a run-on sentence is to identify all the verbs. Does each verb have its own subject and object (if an object is necessary)? If they do, try to separate the parts of the sentence that contain full sets of subject, verb, and object. If each separated part can now stand on its own and is not dependent on the others to be complete, odds are you've just fixed a run-on sentence.



The two Russian astronauts landed on the space station in March, the American astronauts arrived in July.

The two Russian astronauts landed on the space station in March. The American astronauts arrived in July.

>> There are some circumstances where we can replace a comma splice (which is what grammar nerds call the first example) with a connecting word like “and.” However, this

should only be done when combining the two sentences makes your meaning clearer than letting them stand on their own.

> CLAUSES

A clause, by definition, is any phrase that contains a subject, verb, and object.

>> Dependent clauses are phrases that contain a subject and finite verb, but cannot stand alone as a sentence. Instead, they rely on another phrase to complete their meaning. Dependent clauses, when added to your sentence, can give the appearance of a run-on. But be careful; they're not.

>> Dependent clauses can modify or explain another part of the sentence.

Who he was did not matter to the police officer.

The officer wrote him a ticket when he began to protest.

The officer handed him a ticket that was for \$50.

>> Set clauses off with commas when they describe or add meaning to a noun, verb, or adjective.

Her friend, who was a decent player, scored one of the goals.

Vocab.

IMPETUOUS – Marked by impulsive passion

ZENITH – The highest, or culminating point

TERSE – Devoid of unnecessary content

EXPEDITE – To accelerate the process

PRECOCIOUS – Exhibiting mature qualities at an unusually early age

OBSCURE – Not clearly seen or easily distinguished

AVARICE – Excessive desire for wealth or gain

LITANY – A lengthy recitation or list

RIBALD – Characterized by using coarse or indecent humor

SATIATE – To satisfy fully or to excess

Terminology

A **FRAGMENT** is a sentence that is incomplete.

It does not have all the necessary components to convey a full idea. A **RUN-ON** is too long. It contains more than one idea and should be broken into multiple sentences.

INTRANSITIVE VERBS are verbs that do not require an object.

TRANSITIVE VERBS connect a subject to an object.



>> When the clause helps to define a specific noun, verb, or adjective, you do not need to use commas.

The player that scored the winning goal was the star of the team.

> PRONOUN + ANTECEDENT AGREEMENT

Pronouns must have a clear antecedent.

This is a problem that can trip up the most surefooted of writers. Pronouns, as you know, can act as substitutes or shorthand for proper nouns. After referring to George Washington three times in the first three sentences of your research paper, you'll be relieved to start calling him "he" as soon as you can.

>> As with most shortcuts however, there's a catch.

Referring to George Washington as "he" may be convenient and help your paper sound smoother than repeating our first President's name over and over again, but it's also assuming the reader will always know who "he" is referring to. If George Washington is the only singular male you have referred to, then it is clear that President Washington is the antecedent to the pronoun "he."

>> However, as soon as you

introduce another singular male, Abraham Lincoln for instance, then you have two potential "he's" floating around in your narrative and the antecedent may not be clear. Look at how confusing the pronoun "he" becomes in the sentence below when the antecedent is unclear:

Mr. Umansky taught English, Mr. Fenwick taught math, and Mr. Steinway taught biology. He was my favorite teacher.

>> Sometimes, a proper noun placed in a certain context can help distinguish it as the antecedent if the pronoun follows closely on its heels, as in the line below:

Mr. Umansky was okay, but Mr. Steinway was my favorite teacher. He always inspired me to do my best work.

We can tell in the above sentence that "he" refers to Mr. Steinway because of the context and because "he" follows directly after a reference to Mr. Steinway.

>> In most cases though, if you're unsure if your antecedent is clear, you should err on the side of caution and avoid the pronoun shortcut. The worst thing a writer can do is confuse the reader.



Section II—The Paragraph

THE PARAGRAPH IS THE BUILDING BLOCK OF WRITING. IT IS THE EXTENSION OF THE SENTENCE.

If the sentence makes a point or describes an action, the paragraph expounds on that point by illustrating it, clarifying it, or proving it. It lingers on the point that the sentence makes in order to convince the reader of it and force the reader to see the sentence's point in all of its elements. If the sentence states that the movie disappointed Mark, the paragraph will add that Mark had high expectations, that he liked the star in other films, and that he did not find this movie to be funny in the least. The paragraph in that example gives the reader a deeper understanding of why Mark was disappointed. After the paragraph expounds upon the original sentence, it then provides the reader with a logical link to the topic to be introduced in the next paragraph of the narrative.

Here are reminders to make sure that you are building proper paragraphs.

> THE TOPIC SENTENCE

Make sure each paragraph begins with a topic sentence.

>> The topic sentence is the first sentence of the paragraph, and it sums up what the paragraph is about.

Vocab.

FACETIOUS – Joking, often inappropriately, or meant to be humorous or funny, not serious

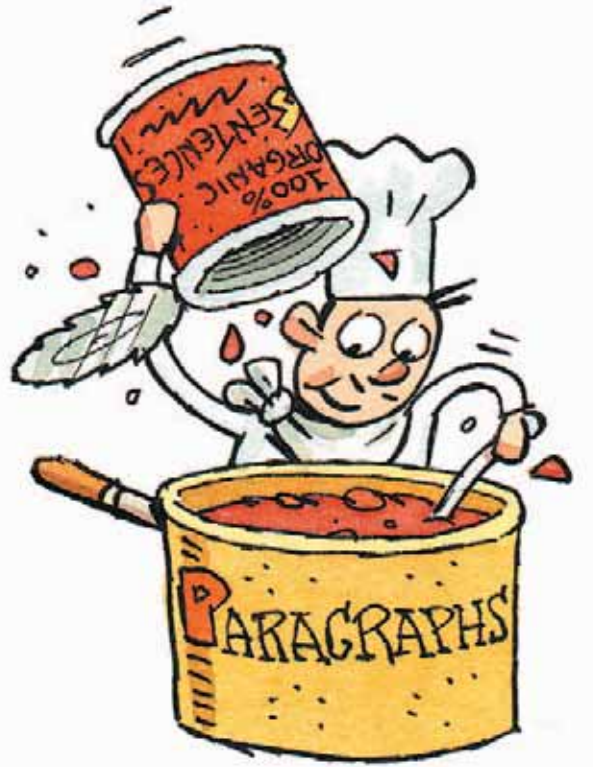
KINETIC – Active, lively or dynamic, energizing

UNCTUOUS – Fatty, oily or smug, ingratiating, and false earnestness or spirituality

XENOPHOBIC – Overly fearful of what is foreign, especially of people of foreign origin

Every sentence that follows the topic sentence should further advance or explain that topic. If one of the sentences in your paragraph does not relate to the topic sentence, then one of those

sentences is out of place. Making sure that each sentence relates to the topic sentence will help keep your paragraph unified. As explained above, the paragraph fleshes out the original thought explained in its first sentence.



The Five-Paragraph Essay

The most basic form of academic writing is the **FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY**. This is a standard format for expressing an idea and convincing the reader of your point. Like the paragraph itself, a five-paragraph essay is divided into a **BEGINNING** part that announces what the idea is (the first paragraph), **THREE PARTS IN THE MIDDLE** that provide evidence to support the main idea (the three middle paragraphs), and a **CONCLUSION** that sums up the evidence and restates the initial idea with the conclusions that have been drawn (the fifth paragraph). All good writing should mirror the format of the five-paragraph essay: introducing a point, supporting it with evidence, and drawing conclusions.

IRREGULAR VERBS

Most verbs take on a -d or -ed to form the past tense and past participle. Those that do not are known as irregular verbs. Refer to the below list of common irregular verbs to form their past tenses.

PRESENT TENSE	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
Awake	Awoke, Awaked	Awaked, Awoke, Awoken
Bear	Bore	Born
Beat	Beat	Beaten, Beat
Begin	Began	Begun
Bend	Bent	Bent
Bid	Bade	Bidden
Bind	Bound	Bound
Bite	Bit	Bitten
Blow	Blew	Blown
Break	Broke	Broken
Bring	Brought	Brought
Build	Built	Built
Buy	Bought	Bought
Catch	Caught	Caught
Choose	Chose	Chosen
Come	Came	Come
Deal	Dealt	Dealt
Do	Did	Done
Draw	Drew	Drawn
Drink	Drank	Drunk
Drive	Drove	Driven
Eat	Ate	Eaten
Fall	Fell	Fallen
Feed	Fed	Fed
Feel	Felt	Felt
Fight	Fought	Fought
Find	Found	Found
Fly	Flew	Flown
Forbid	Forbade	Forbidden
Forgive	Forgave	Forgiven
Get	Got	Gotten
Give	Gave	Given
Go	Went	Gone
Grow	Grew	Grown
Have	Had	Had
Know	Knew	Known
Lead	Led	Led
Leave	Left	Left
Lend	Lent	Lent

IRREGULAR VERBS (continued)

PRESENT TENSE	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
Lie	Lay	Lain
Make	Made	Made
Meet	Met	Met
Ride	Rode	Ridden
Ring	Rang	Rung
Rise	Rose	Risen
Run	Ran	Run
See	Saw	Seen
Seek	Sought	Sought
Sell	Sold	Sold
Shrink	Shrank	Shrunk
Sing	Sang	Sung
Sink	Sank	Sunk
Slay	Slew	Slain
Sit	Sat	Sat
Sleep	Slept	Slept
Speak	Spoke	Spoken
Spring	Sprang	Sprung
Steal	Stole	Stolen
Swear	Swore	Sworn
Swim	Swam	Swum
Take	Took	Taken
Think	Thought	Thought
Tear	Tore	Torn
Throw	Threw	Thrown
Wake	Waked, Woke	Waked, Woken, Woke

NEXT! COMING IN NOVEMBER:

**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT
PUNCTUATION AND CAPITALIZATION**