

Editing for the Four Most Serious Errors

Focusing on these four different errors can make an immediate improvement in student writing:

1. Fragments
2. Run-ons
3. Comma Splices
4. Subject-verb Agreement

To understand these errors, first it is important to understand the basic construction of a sentence, also known as an **independent clause**.

A complete sentence in formal English has a subject and a verb, and it expresses a complete thought.

A **subject** is the word or words that a sentence is about. Subjects can be nouns or pronouns.

A **verb** is the word that tells what the subject is doing in the sentence. There are three kinds of verbs: action verbs, linking verbs, and helping verbs.

A word group that contains a subject and a verb but not a complete thought is called a **dependent clause**.