Types of Sentences and Their Errors

A. <u>Types of sentences</u>

Sentences come in **four** varieties, depending on the number and type of clauses they contain.

1. **A simple sentence** contains one independent clause. The most common construction is subject-verb-object. **Ex**. Politicians dodge issues.

* We can add modifiers—single words or phrases or a combination of both—but regardless of the number of words, the sentence remains simple if it contains a single, independent clause:
Ex. National politicians often dodge controversial issues during reelection campaigns.

2. **A Compound Sentence** has two or more independent clauses, each containing a subject and a predicate and each expressing a complete thought. The two complete clauses, equal or nearly equal in importance, are linked (coordinated) by a conjunction **(FANBOYS)** and a comma, semicolon, or colon. Some **Examples:**

- The issues may be divisive, but talking about them is crucial to a healthy society.
- The issues are divisive; talking about them is crucial to a healthy society.
- The issues are divisive, but one thing is clear: Talking about them is crucial to a healthy society.

3. **A Complex Sentence** contains one independent (main) clause and at least one dependent (subordinate) clause. The subordinate clause depends on the main clause for both meaning and grammatical completion. Some **Examples:**

-When politicians avoid tough issues, voters tend to stay home.
-Voters are apathetic because politicians are spineless.

* There are many types of subordinating conjunctions that help establish a meaning between the independent and dependent clause

Cause and Effect: because, due to, as a result of, if
Sequence: after, before, during, while
Time and Place: when, whenever, since, where, until, as long as
Relative pronouns (who, whom, whose) can also be subordinated to the main clause.

4. **A compound–complex sentence** contains at least two main clauses and one dependent clause.
Ex. After the politician went on record against the issue, the media called her "principled," and campaign contributions poured in.

B. **Common Errors**

1. A **fragment** is a dependent clause used as an independent one. It often starts with a subordinating conjunction, and it is incomplete even with a subject and verb present.
Incorrect: Although they were award-winning movie producers.
+To correct it, use subordination, and add an independent clause
Correct: Although they were award-winning movie producers, they did not win the prize

2. A **run-on** is a sentence that joins two independent clauses without any punctuation and conjunction. A **comma splice** is a sentence that joins two independent clauses with only a comma.
Incorrect: The concert was sold out for a week, the promoters did not add a second date.
+To correct either, use coordination, a semi colon, separate the sentences, or make it complex.
Correct:
The concert was sold out for a week**.** The promoters did not add a second date.
The concert was sold out for week**;** the promoters did not add a second date.
The concert was sold out for a week, **but** the promoters did not add a second date.
Although the concert was sold out for a week, the promoters did not add a second date.

3. An **oversubordinated sentence** is a string of dependent clauses, or one excessively long dependent clause, placed before the main sentence.
Incorrect: After losing her job and having her car repossessed, although she was not a risk-taker and despite the fact that she purchased only a single ticket, Lizzie Hager won the $200 million Powerball jackpot.
+Shortening and combining the introductory ideas, giving them a sentence of their own or separating the sentence into several ones are ways to address oversubordinated sentences.
Correct: Lizzie Hager won the $200 million Powerball jackpot despite purchasing only a single ticket. It came at the right moment since she lost her job and had her car repossessed.

4. A **dead constructed** sentence is an expletive, such as "there is" and "it is", which merely take up space, performing no function in the sentence.

Incorrect: There is a concern about runaway inflation in the textbook market.

+Strengthen the sentence by using an action verb.
Correct: Consumers are concerned about runaway inflation in the textbook market.