

More GJ Examples

I call this song “I Made a Run-on,” but you will know it as Queen’s “We Are the Champions”:

I read my sentence, and it didn’t sound tight.

I heard two thoughts that were not connected right.

I needed an “and” or maybe “because”

Or a period or semicolon to fill the strong pause (strong pause,
strong pause, strong pause ...).

I made a run-on, my bad.

My reader had to re-read, how sad.

Comma “therefore,” comma “however,”

Comma and “this” and comma and “it”

Could signal run-ons.

This student compilation, called “Fragmented” (to the tune of “Despacito”—unknown to this author), was created by Justin Taylor:

Fraag-mented.

I have a bad habit of making fragments.

Instead of crafting a complete sentence.

Gotta make sure it has a main clause. (Oh yeah)

Yeah. A sentence is a group of words that expresses

A complete thought, or even a question.

So if you have a subordinate sentence, it's Fraag-mented.

How do you fix one that's fraagmented?

Gotta combine it with a main clause by adding

Statement creating words until it's completed.

Fraag-mented.

Make sure your sentences are not fragmented.

Read them out loud to make sure they flow well.

Add the words that are missing

Or rewrite one that's fraag-mented.

Note: After Taylor posted this song to a discussion forum in my online class, a peer (Diandra Johnson) replied as follows: "That's awesome, Taylor. I turned the song on to sing along! I used to have this problem in my writing so that is why I like your song so much. This class has definitely helped me correct those issues, and your song will help me remember. Take care bro!" This enthusiastic connection represents what I see repeatedly during in-class exercises, too, so in terms of assessment, Grammar Jam offers the ancillary effect of promoting a community of learners in a safe (fun) environment. Taylor's song clearly shows his understanding of fragments and his tactics for spotting and fixing them—the ingredients of a successful song.

Here's my most recent attempt, which I call "Bad, Bad"—sung to Nancy Sinatra's "Bang, Bang":

I begin a sentence with "There are"

Repeat "It is" in every bar

Use "of" and "to" and "in" and "on"

My sentences are never done.

Chorus: Weak verbs, like "are" and "is"
Vague words, like "it" and "this"
Clutter, like "was" and "were"
Bad, Bad—I shoot my sentence down.

I start with "This" too many times,

Use "is" and "are" in every line
Prepositions everywhere,
Repeated words, I don't seem to care.

Chorus again

My subjects ramble on then end
With weak to-be verbs that do not send
An image to my reader's mind
To make my point simple to find.

Chorus

Note: This song's especially fun to sing in class because students like to join in with the chorus.