

Sentence Repair Detective: Grammar and Punctuation Cases

6 sentence repair cases, each with a worked answer.

CASE FILE

Evidence	Rule	Repair
the dog [run] home	Present tense: the dog runs	The dog runs home.
[we] met at noon	Capital to start	We met at noon.

HOW TO USE

1. Read the case file and mark the evidence.
2. Use the clues to cross out revision choices.
3. Name the rule and write the repair.
4. Try the new sentence at the bottom of the page.

6 activities • 3 answer pages • From the 48-activity collection

11 US Letter pages • Print at 100% / Actual Size

Original Bobotemp educational printable • Fictional names, places and prices

READ THIS BEFORE YOUR FIRST CASE

The Detective's Toolkit

Every case gives you marked text, four revision choices (A to D) and numbered clues. Use these marks and the four-step routine on every case.

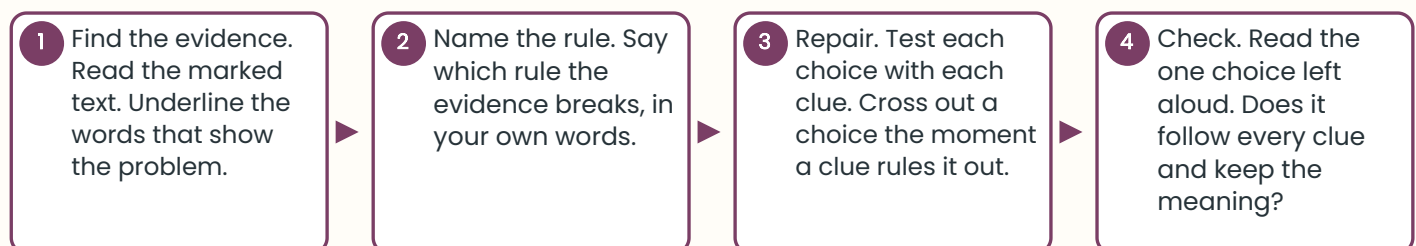
Marks you will see in the cases

Mark	What it tells you	Practice example (not from a case)
[]	Look closely at the bracketed words. They may be the wrong word or form, need a capital letter, or be a fragment.	We met [maya] at the [park].
^	Something is missing here, such as a comma, an end mark or a word.	Pack a hat ^ a map ^ and a snack.
//	One complete thought ends and another begins here, with nothing joining them.	The bell rang // we lined up.

Marks you make

Mark	Use it to	Practice example (not from a case)
Underline	show the evidence: a time word, the subject, or the words that were spoken	Yesterday Ben walks to school. (underline Yesterday)
Circle	show the error you will repair	Ben walks (circle walks)
Three lines under a letter	make a small letter a capital	monday (three lines under the m)
Line through a choice	rule out a choice, then write the clue number on its Out line	C crossed out, Out: Clue 2

The four-step routine



TRY IT

Each case ends with a new sentence to repair on your own. Use the same rule, and name the rule you used.

Name _____ Date _____

Case of the Lowercase Library

LEVEL 1



Read the marked text. Use each clue to cross out revision choices until one remains.

Detective Rosa's visit log has capital-letter problems. Which revision fixes every one?

CASE FILE: MARK IT UP

Marked text: [on] [tuesday], [detective rosa] visited [pine street library].

Evidence: bracketed words may need a capital letter.

Clue 1: The first word of a sentence is capitalized.

Clue 2: Days of the week are capitalized.

Clue 3: A title used with a name, the name itself, and the name of a specific place are all capitalized.

REVISION CHOICES: CROSS OUT

A Out: Clue ___

On Tuesday, detective rosa visited Pine Street Library.

B Out: Clue ___

On Tuesday, Detective Rosa visited Pine Street Library.

C Out: Clue ___

On tuesday, Detective Rosa visited pine street library.

D Out: Clue ___

on Tuesday, Detective Rosa visited Pine Street Library.

1. List every word that needs a capital letter.

2. Write which choices each clue crosses out.

3. Explain why 'Pine Street Library' needs capitals.

TRY IT • Repair this sentence and explain each capitalization rule you used: last friday, coach lee drove to river road park.

Name _____ Date _____

Case of the Packed Kit

LEVEL 1



Count the items in the list. Use the clues to choose the correctly punctuated sentence.

Milo's packing list runs together. Which revision uses commas correctly? This pack uses a comma before 'and' in a list of three or more.

CASE FILE: MARK IT UP

Marked text: Milo packed a flashlight ^ a notebook ^ and a magnifying glass.

Editing mark: ^ shows where a comma may be missing.

Words after the verb 'packed': a flashlight a notebook and a magnifying glass

Clue 1: In a list of three items, commas separate each item, including before 'and' in this pack's style.

Clue 2: Do not put a comma between the verb and the first item.

REVISION CHOICES: CROSS OUT**A** Out: Clue ___

Milo packed a flashlight
a notebook and a
magnifying glass.

B Out: Clue ___

Milo packed a flashlight
a notebook, and a
magnifying glass.

C Out: Clue ___

Milo packed, a flashlight,
a notebook, and a
magnifying glass.

D Out: Clue ___

Milo packed a flashlight,
a notebook, and a
magnifying glass.

1. Number the items in the list.

2. Write which choices each clue crosses out.

3. Explain where the commas go and why.

TRY IT • Repair this sentence and explain your commas: We saw owls bats and raccoons at the nature center.

Name _____ Date _____

Case of the Flickering Lights

LEVEL 2



Find the two complete thoughts. Use the clues to choose a correct way to join them.

Two sentences crashed together in this report. Which revision joins them correctly?

CASE FILE: MARK IT UP

Marked text: The lights flickered // the dog barked loudly.

Editing mark: // shows where one complete thought ends and another begins.

Clue 1: Two complete thoughts cannot run together with no punctuation or joining word.

Clue 2: A comma alone cannot join two complete thoughts.

Clue 3: When a comma and a joining word connect two complete thoughts, the comma goes before the joining word.

REVISION CHOICES: CROSS OUT

A Out: Clue ____

The lights flickered
the dog barked
loudly.

B Out: Clue ____

The lights flickered,
the dog barked
loudly.

C Out: Clue ____

The lights flickered,
and the dog barked
loudly.

D Out: Clue ____

The lights flickered
and, the dog barked
loudly.

1. Underline each complete thought in the marked text.

2. Write which choices each clue crosses out.

3. Explain why choice B is still an error.

TRY IT • Repair this run-on and explain your choice: The wind howled the shutters banged.

Name _____ Date _____

Case of the Clue Cards

LEVEL 2



Cover up the other person's name and read the sentence with only the pronoun. Use the clues to decide.

Which pronoun correctly completes 'Mr. Hale gave the clue cards to Jada and ___'?

CASE FILE: MARK IT UP

Marked text: Mr. Hale gave the clue cards to Jada and [I].

Cover-up test: Mr. Hale gave the clue cards to ____.

Clue 1: After 'to', do not use subject forms such as 'I' or 'we'.

Clue 2: For this exercise, use the ordinary object form 'me'.

REVISION CHOICES: CROSS OUT

A Out: Clue ___

Mr. Hale gave the clue cards to Jada and I.

B Out: Clue ___

Mr. Hale gave the clue cards to Jada and we.

C Out: Clue ___

Mr. Hale gave the clue cards to Jada and myself.

D Out: Clue ___

Mr. Hale gave the clue cards to Jada and me.

1. Read each choice aloud with 'Jada and' covered up.

2. Write which choices each clue crosses out.

3. Explain why 'I' is wrong in this sentence.

TRY IT • Repair this sentence and use the cover-up test to explain: Ana and me solved the riddle.

Name _____ Date _____

Case of the Slippery Bridge

LEVEL 3



Decide how the two ideas are related. Then use the clues to choose the joining word and punctuation.

This sentence is a comma splice. Which revision fixes it and shows the right relationship between the ideas?

CASE FILE: MARK IT UP

Marked text: The bridge was slippery [,] Ava crossed it slowly.

Case note: Ava went slowly because of the slippery bridge.

Joining words: because = cause; although = surprise or contrast

Clue 1: A comma alone cannot join two complete thoughts.

Clue 2: The joining word must show the real relationship, which here is cause and effect.

Clue 3: The comma goes after the opening part, not inside the main part.

REVISION CHOICES: CROSS OUT

A Out: Clue ____

The bridge was slippery, Ava crossed it slowly.

B Out: Clue ____

Although the bridge was slippery, Ava crossed it slowly.

C Out: Clue ____

Because the bridge was slippery, Ava crossed it slowly.

D Out: Clue ____

Because the bridge was slippery Ava crossed, it slowly.

1. Name the relationship between the two ideas.

2. Write which choices each clue crosses out.

3. Explain why 'although' changes the meaning.

TRY IT • Fix this comma splice with a joining word that shows contrast, and explain your choice: The map was torn, Eli could still read it.

Name _____ Date _____

Case of the Museum Blackout

LEVEL 3



This paragraph has a fragment and a run-on. Use the clues to find the version that fixes both without creating a new error.

Which revision repairs every sentence-boundary error in the museum report?

CASE FILE: MARK IT UP

Case paragraph: The museum closed early. [Because the power went out.] Guards checked every room // they found the missing painting behind a curtain.

Editing marks: [] = possible fragment;
// = two complete thoughts touching

Clue 1: Every sentence must be a complete thought, with no fragments.

Clue 2: Two complete thoughts cannot run together with no punctuation.

Clue 3: A comma alone cannot join two complete thoughts.

REVISION CHOICES: CROSS OUT

A Out: Clue ___

The museum closed early because the power went out. Guards checked every room, and they found the missing painting behind a curtain.

B Out: Clue ___

The museum closed early. Because the power went out. Guards checked every room, and they found the missing painting behind a curtain.

C Out: Clue ___

The museum closed early because the power went out. Guards checked every room they found the missing painting behind a curtain.

D Out: Clue ___

The museum closed early because the power went out. Guards checked every room, they found the missing painting behind a curtain.

1. Label the fragment and the run-on in the case paragraph.

2. Write which choices each clue crosses out.

3. Explain why fixing one error is not enough to solve the case.

TRY IT • Repair both errors and explain each fix: The bus was late. Since the road was icy. We waited inside we played a word game.

1. Case of the Lowercase Library

LEVEL 1

B: On Tuesday, Detective Rosa visited Pine Street Library.

WORKED REASONING • Clue 1 crosses out D because 'on' starts the sentence. Clue 2 crosses out C because 'tuesday' is lowercase. Clue 3 crosses out A because 'detective rosa' is a title and name. Only B is left, and it capitalizes the first word, the day, the title and name, and the specific place.

WATCH FOR • Some students capitalize only the first word of a sentence. Others think 'detective' never gets a capital letter. A title is capitalized when it comes right before a person's name.

TRANSFER • Last Friday, Coach Lee drove to River Road Park. The rules used are: capitalize the first word, the day of the week, a title with a name, and the name of a specific place.

5. Case of the Packed Kit

LEVEL 1

D: Milo packed a flashlight, a notebook, and a magnifying glass.

WORKED REASONING • There are three items. Clue 1 crosses out A, which has no commas, and B, which is missing the comma after 'flashlight'. Clue 2 crosses out C, which wrongly puts a comma after 'packed'. D is left.

WATCH FOR • Students sometimes put a comma before every noun, even right after the verb. Commas go between items, not between the verb and the list.

TRANSFER • We saw owls, bats, and raccoons at the nature center. The three animals are separated by commas, and no comma goes after 'saw'.

9. Case of the Flickering Lights

LEVEL 2

C: The lights flickered, and the dog barked loudly.

WORKED REASONING • Clue 1 crosses out A, a run-on with nothing between the thoughts. Clue 2 crosses out B, which uses only a comma. That error is called a comma splice. Clue 3 crosses out D, which puts the comma after 'and'. C is left.

WATCH FOR • Students may think adding any comma fixes a run-on. A comma by itself is too weak to hold two complete sentences together. It needs a joining word such as 'and', 'but', or 'so', or the thoughts can be split into two sentences.

TRANSFER • The wind howled, and the shutters banged. Writing two sentences, 'The wind howled. The shutters banged.', also works. Either way, the two complete thoughts are correctly separated.

13. Case of the Clue Cards

LEVEL 2

D: Mr. Hale gave the clue cards to Jada and me.

WORKED REASONING • Clue 1 crosses out A and B, because 'I' and 'we' are subject forms. Clue 2 crosses out C: this exercise uses the ordinary object form 'me', not 'myself'. D is left. 'Me' is correct because it is the object of the preposition 'to'.

WATCH FOR • Students are often told that 'Jada and I' always sounds more polite or correct. 'I' is for the subject who does the action. 'Me' is for the person who receives it or comes after a word like 'to'.

TRANSFER • Ana and I solved the riddle. With 'Ana and' covered up, 'me solved the riddle' is wrong, while 'I solved the riddle' is correct, because the pronoun is part of the subject.

17. Case of the Slippery Bridge

LEVEL 3

C: Because the bridge was slippery, Ava crossed it slowly.

WORKED REASONING • Clue 1 crosses out A, the original comma splice. Clue 2 crosses out B, because 'although' signals a surprise, but going slowly on a slippery bridge is an expected effect. Clue 3 crosses out D, whose comma splits 'crossed' from 'it slowly'. C is left.

WATCH FOR • Students may treat joining words as interchangeable. Each one carries meaning. 'Because' shows cause, while 'although' shows contrast.

TRANSFER • Although the map was torn, Eli could still read it. Being able to read a torn map is a surprise, so 'although' fits, and the comma follows the opening part. 'The map was torn, but Eli could still read it.' (or 'yet') is also correct.

24. Case of the Museum Blackout

LEVEL 3

A: The museum closed early because the power went out. Guards checked every room, and they found the missing painting behind a curtain.

WORKED REASONING • Clue 1 crosses out B, which keeps the fragment 'Because the power went out.' Clue 2 crosses out C, which keeps the run-on. Clue 3 crosses out D, which turns the run-on into a comma splice. A is left. It attaches the 'because' part to the sentence before it and joins the two guard sentences with a comma and 'and'.

WATCH FOR • Students may fix one error and stop, or swap a run-on for a comma splice. Each sentence boundary has to be checked, and a repair must not create a new error.

TRANSFER • The bus was late since the road was icy. We waited inside, and we played a word game. The 'since' fragment is attached to the sentence before it. The run-on is joined with a comma and 'and'. Other correct repairs, such as splitting the run-on into two sentences, also work.