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Full stops

The newsroom rescue





Grammar at a glance

When you want to...	Form to use	Worked example
End a statement	complete thought + full stop	The bus has arrived.
Repair a fragment	noun group + finite verb	The empty bus waits.
Separate two thoughts	statement. New statement.	The bell rang. The gates opened.
Match purpose to ending	statement / direct question	It is ready. Is it ready?

SELECT A ROW TO OPEN ITS LESSON

FULL STOPS

A full stop ends a complete statement



The newsletter caption says “The bag is red” but has no ending mark. The picture supports the colour. Lily is telling a fact, so she finishes this complete statement with a full stop.

Use a full stop to show that a statement has ended and the next sentence can begin.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Leave the ending open	The bag is red	The statement has its words, but its written ending is missing.
Finish the statement	The bag is red.	A full stop follows red, the last word of this complete statement.
Stop in the middle	The bag. is red.	This splits the subject from what is said about it. Read the whole thought before placing the stop.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Who or what?	What is said?	Complete written statement
The bag	is red	The bag is red.

Should I put a full stop wherever I pause for breath?

No. Reading speed and breathing vary. Look for a complete statement; a short pause inside it does not automatically end a sentence.

YOUR TURN

Add only the missing full stop: “The lamp glows”

> **Answer • The lamp glows.**
> The completed statement ends after glows.

FULL STOPS

Complete thoughts versus fragments



A caption beneath the picture reads “The green box.” It names something but does not tell the reader what happens or what it is like. In this newsletter we need a complete statement, rather than a label.

Check the thought before adding the full stop. “The quiet garden” still needs a verb to make a statement.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Only name the thing	The green box.	This can work as a label, but it is not the complete statement our newsletter needs.
Tell what happens	Lily and Sam carry the box.	The subject and verb group make a complete statement supported by the picture.
Tell a state	The box is green.	A complete statement can describe a state; it does not need a movement action.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Label	Complete action	Complete state
The green box	Lily and Sam carry the box.	The box is green.

Does punctuation make any group of words a sentence?

No. Capital letters and full stops signal boundaries; they do not add missing grammar or meaning. Check the words as well as the marks.

YOUR TURN

For a complete report sentence, which works?

The quiet garden. / The garden is quiet.

> Answer • The garden is quiet.
> Is completes the statement about the garden.

FULL STOPS

Separate complete thoughts without chopping them up



The printer joins two colour reports: “The bag is red the box is green”. The newsroom wants two separate statements. Find the end of the first complete thought, add a full stop, and give the second a capital beginning. A comma alone is not the repair we need.

Find where one complete thought ends and the next begins. Place the full stop there and capitalise the new sentence.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Run the reports together	The bag is red the box is green.	Two complete statements have been run together without a clear boundary or connector.
Separate the reports	The bag is red. The box is green.	Each statement has its own capital beginning and full stop.
Connect instead	The bag is red and the box is green.	And can connect the ideas in one sentence. This is another grammatical choice, but today’s edit requests two statements.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

First complete thought	Boundary	Second complete thought
The bag is red	full stop + space + capital	The box is green

Can I always replace a full stop with a comma?

No. A comma alone generally cannot connect two independent statements in this report style. Keep separate sentences or use an appropriate connecting structure.

YOUR TURN

Make two statements using full stops and a capital change: “The bell rings the class begins”

> Answer • The bell rings. The class begins.
> Each thought is complete before its ending.

FULL STOPS

Edit a report and preserve the writer's purpose



The final bulletin includes a factual caption, a direct question and a calm instruction. The crew must read what each message is doing. Full stops finish statements and ordinary instructions; a direct question needs a question mark instead.

Match the ending to the message. A statement can end with a full stop. A direct question needs a question mark.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Report a fact	Lily and Sam wave.	This reports an action. A full stop finishes the statement.
Ask for information	Is the box ready?	This directly asks something. Its question mark preserves that purpose.
Give a calm instruction	Carry the box.	An ordinary instruction can end with a full stop. Its understood subject is you.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Report	Calm instruction	Direct question
Lily and Sam wave.	Carry the box.	Is the box ready?

Must a complete sentence always show its subject as a written word?

No. An instruction such as Carry the box has understood you. Do not mistake that legitimate pattern for a fragment such as The green box.

YOUR TURN

Add only the ending for this direct question: “Is the gate open”

> **Answer • Is the gate open?**
> A direct question needs its question mark.

ONE LAST CHALLENGE

Where does the news change?

A reporter wrote “the bus has arrived is everyone ready”. Turn it into a statement followed by a question.



A POSSIBLE ANSWER

The bus has arrived. Is everyone ready?

The first sentence reports news. The second asks for an answer.

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