

Sentence Fragments

Need to know:

- An independent clause is a phrase that contains a subject and verb (forms a complete sentence).
- A dependent clause is a phrase that does NOT contain a subject and a verb (is incomplete).
- A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence. It may express a complete thought, but it cannot stand alone.

Identifying a Sentence Fragment.

You can identify a sentence fragment by asking yourself, “Does this sentence makes sense if I read it alone (apart from the paragraph)?” If the sentence doesn’t make sense alone, it’s most likely a fragment. Here are the most common types of fragments and how to fix them:

Dependent clause.

Fragment: “Even though I studied for the final exam.”

- The fragment is a dependent clause. To correct the fragment, we need to connect it to an independent clause.
 - ◆ Phrases that begin with words like *even though*, *unless*, *if*, *after*, *although*, *while*, *before*, *after*, *during*, *until*, and *when* are always dependent clauses and must be attached to an independent clause to form a complete sentence.

Solution: “Even though I studied for the final exam, I won't make a good grade in the class if I don't complete all of the assignments.”

No Subject.

Fragment: “Reading chapter after chapter in the textbook.”

- Sometimes a sentence fragment is a phrase with no subject. You can make it a sentence by attaching an independent clause, which always contains a subject.

Solution: “I tried to learn all the material for the exam by reading chapter after chapter in the textbook.”

Lists.

Fragment: “Such as Algebra, Biology, and English.”

- A sentence fragment can also be a list that has been disconnected from its introduction. Adding the rest of the sentence turns it into a complete thought.

Solution: “Seeking a degree in art, I sometimes fail to recognize the importance of classes such as Algebra, Biology, and English.”

Intentional Fragments

Fragment: Faster! Better! No money down!

- Sentence fragments are often intentional in newspaper and magazines ads. While sentence fragments are acceptable in these contexts, you should avoid using sentence fragments in research papers, business or professional reports, and job applications.

Solution: Avoid these fragments altogether.



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