

Sentence Fragments

A sentence fragment is a group of words that does not express a complete thought; it has an essential sentence part missing (subject, verb, or object). Two common types of sentence fragments are phrase fragments and subordinate clause fragments.

Phrase fragments

A phrase is a group of words acting as a single part of speech and not containing a verb and its subject. When a phrase is allowed to stand alone, it is referred to as a fragment.

There are several types of phrases commonly made into fragments:

Phrase	Example
Infinitive phrase	To increase speed
Absolute phrase	It being Sunday
Participial phrase	Hoping for a job
Gerund phrase	Finding a needle in a haystack
Appositive phrase	Slim and none
Prepositional phrase	After much discussion

Subordinate, or dependent clause fragments

The subordinate clause is often introduced by a relative pronoun (who, whom, whose, which, that, what) or a subordinating conjunction (if, when, while, although, because, et al). If a clause beginning with one of these words is allowed to stand alone, the result is an incomplete thought.

Common Subordinating Conjunctions

after	as though	provided that	unless
although	because	since	until
as	before	so that	when
as if	if	than	whenever
as long as	in order that	though	where
			whereas
			wherever
			whether
			while

Here are three steps you can take to prevent sentence fragments:

1. Look to see that the sentence has a subject and a verb.
2. Look at how the group of words functions. If it functions as a noun or a modifier, rather than a complete thought, it is a fragment.
3. Look to see if the sentence begins with a relative pronoun or a subordinating conjunction. If so, is it a complete thought?

By keeping these tips in mind, you ought to be able to prevent yourself from writing sentence fragments.

There are two ways that you can repair sentence fragments:

1. Pull the fragment into the nearby sentence from which it has become detached.
2. Turn the fragment into a new sentence.

Exception: Fragments may be used for special purposes:

For Emphasis

To Answer A Question

As A Transition

Exclamations

In Advertising