**Fragments**

Remember that a sentence must have three things: 1) a SUBJECT, 2) a VERB, and 3) a COMPLETE THOUGHT.If the group of words does not have all three, it is a ***FRAGMENT****.* The word “fragment” means “a broken piece,” and a sentence fragment is a piece of a sentence that is written as though it were a complete sentence: A fragment begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, question mark, or exclamation mark, but does not express a complete thought.

**A. The following are fragments because they don’t have subjects:**

Almost missed the bus to Cabrillo. (*Who* “almost missed the bus”?)

Doesn’t work anymore. (*Who* or *What* “does not work anymore”?)

To make these complete sentences, we need to rewrite them so each has a subject:

My **sister** almost missed the bus to Cabrillo.

Her **alarm clock** doesn’t work anymore.

**B. The following are fragments because they don’t have verbs:**

Mrs. Wong, while on the phone. (What did Mrs. Wong *do?)*

The portable phone. (What *about* the phone?)

To make these fragments complete sentences, we need to rewrite them so each has a verb:

Mrs. Wong, while on the phone, **checked** her appointment book.

The portable phone **is** convenient.

**C. The following are fragments because, while they have a subject and a verb, they don’t express complete thoughts:**

Whenever Sally eats chocolate. (What happens when Sally eats chocolate?)

Because my car broke down. (What happened because the car broke down?)

To make these fragments complete sentences, we have to rewrite each one so that it completes the thought:

Whenever Sally eats chocolate, **she breaks out in a rash.**

**I was late for work** because my car broke down**.**

**D. Sometimes fragments occur because the verb is incomplete. Some verb forms cannot be used alone: they must have helping verbs with them. In the following examples, the verbs “worrying” and “frozen” are not complete verbs by themselves; they both need helping verbs:**

Mr. Thomas worrying about his son. Mr. Thomas **was** worrying about his son.

The lake frozen in the middle. The lake **is** frozen in the middle**.**

**E. Often fragments occur because the writer uses a period too soon. In that case, the information is divided into two “sentences” that should be kept together as one sentence. The following fragments can be corrected by removing the period (in some cases you will need to use a comma in place of a period) and changing capital letters to lower-case ones:**

Gunpowder was invented by the Chinese. **Who used it for fireworks.**

Gunpowder was invented by the Chinese**, who** used it for fireworks.

The young man apologized. **Realizing his mistake.**

Realizing his mistake**, the** young man apologized.

**Practice I:** In the following sentences, highlight all verbs and underline the subjects for each verb. Draw an arrow connecting the verb to its subject(s). If you can’t draw an arrow in your software program, just write out how they are connected underneath the sentence. Note: some sentences have more than one subject and/or verb.

1. Carmen rides the bus to school.

2. Brittany and her brothers work every day after school.

3. Clarissa does not like Morley's new plaid pants.

4. In a big city, life is frantic and makes people irritable.

5. Kim Lee, a good student, has learned a lot of English.

6. Next week there will be a rainstorm, so we can’t hold our garage sale.

**Practice II:** In the following paragraph, highlight all verbs and underline the subject for each verb.

Juanita Morales runs a successful neighborhood theater on a very small budget. She asks the community and her family for help. Performances take place in a small store that belongs to the city, so Juanita pays no rent. Tatiana, one of her friends, works in a copy center and prints all the programs free. Juanita’s aunts and her mother help sell tickets. Her cousins and her sister make many of the costumes. Her uncle, who is an architect, builds the sets for the plays. The theater is very popular. There are performances every weekend: plays, poetry readings, and concerts. Each ticket costs only two dollars. The two dollars goes to the performers. Juanita and her friends have lined up programs for the next three months. Many people in the neighborhood feel that the theater increases community.

**Practice III:** Rewrite the following fragments so they are complete by adding the subject/verb or by completing the existing verb phrase.

1. Always asking me to run errands for him.

2. Jack crazy about Sophia.

3. The substitute teacher’s wheezing old car.

4. Who always knows what he wants.

5. Lupe, who lives next door.

Practice IV: Correct the fragments by rewriting the following passage in the space below.

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