

SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

A sentence must contain at least a subject and a verb in an independent clause; any other construction is a fragment.

Common Sentence Fragments

Using a Dependent Clause as an Independent Clause

Example: Although I lost the game.

I = subject

lost = verb

Because although is a subordinating conjunction (like when, since, after, because, and others), it relies upon another idea within the sentence for its meaning. Since the second idea is missing, we have a fragment.

Example of a complete, correct sentence: Although I lost the game, I was not upset.

Leaving out the Subject

Example: See you Saturday.

See = verb

There is a hidden or implied subject and helping verb (I will), but it is not there; thus, we have a fragment.

**Note:* The sentence above is acceptable if spoken, and may often be heard among native English speakers. However, in the written form, it is not grammatically correct.

Example of a complete, correct sentence: I will see you (on) Saturday.

Leaving out the Verb or Part of the Verb

Example: The man with the blue baseball cap.

man = subject

But because there is no verb, this is a fragment.

Example: The man wearing a blue baseball cap.

man = subject

wearing = verb

But because “wearing” is only part of a verb, this is also a fragment. We need “is wearing” to make this sentence complete, or we need to add another verb entirely.

Examples of complete sentences:

- The man is wearing a blue baseball cap.
- The man wearing a blue baseball cap is sitting on the bench.

Using a Phrase which has None of the Elements of a Complete Sentence

Example: On the beach.

This is a prepositional phrase. There is no subject and no verb. Therefore, it is a fragment.

Examples of complete, correct sentences:

- On the beach, there are many sunbathers.
- The blanket is on the beach.