

Grammar Worksheets: Sentence Fragments

<http://www.grammar-worksheets.com>

Definition: A sentence fragment is a piece of a sentence. A piece is not whole or complete. In a formal sense, a sentence fragment is a group of words that is punctuated as a sentence but that cannot stand alone as a sentence. Here's an example:

Sentence Fragment: The paper on the desk.

This is an easy one. The paper on the desk. What about the paper on the desk? This group of words starts with a capital letter and ends in a period. It is punctuated as a sentence, but it is not a sentence. This group of words is missing a verb or a verb phrase.

Complete Sentence: The paper on the desk fell to the floor.

How Do You Fix a Sentence Fragment?

- Add a verb or a verb phrase.

FRAGMENT: For example, the cows grazing on the hillside.

COMPLETE SENTENCE: The countryside seemed at peace. Take, for example, the cows grazing on the hillside. OR: The cows were grazing on the hillside. OR: We saw the cows grazing on the hillside. (There are usually many ways to correct a sentence fragment.)

- Attach the sentence fragment to the sentence before it or after it.

FRAGMENT: Rivers cut deep canyons in the landscape. Weaving their way hundreds of miles through forests and mountains until they reach the ocean.

COMPLETE SENTENCE: Rivers cut deep canyons in the landscape, weaving their way hundreds of miles through forests and mountains until they reach the ocean.

- Use a conjunctive adverb (however, therefore) instead of a subordinating conjunction (although, because, since).

FRAGMENT: Jason never thought he could play baseball. Although, he eventually worked hard and started for his high school team.

COMPLETE SENTENCE: Jason never thought he could play baseball. However, he eventually worked hard and started for his high school team.

- Attach a clause with a relative pronoun (who, whom, that, which, whose) to the sentence it belongs to.

FRAGMENT: Mom always asked me to walk the dog. Who never had to go out anyway.

COMPLETE SENTENCE: Mom always asked me to walk the dog, who never had to go out anyway.

- Attach a verb phrase that is punctuated as a sentence (the fragment) to the sentence it belongs to.

FRAGMENT: The psychologist met with his clients in a relaxing environment. And encouraged them to meditate after the session.

COMPLETE SENTENCE: James counselled his clients in a relaxing environment and encouraged them to meditate after the session.

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Exercises: Each item below contains a sentence fragment. Fix it in the space provided.

1. Salt-water fish can be very colorful. For example, Parrot Fish.

2. Merwin passed the exam. Although, he got the last five questions wrong.

3. Robert has met his long-lost daughter. Who had been searching for him over twenty years.

4. Because the cities on the west coast of Florida receive cool breezes and warm water from the Gulf of Mexico.

5. Jenny never finished high school. Despite the fact that her parents were supportive and allowed her to stay at home after her arrest.

6. The conductor finished with a flourish. Waving his baton and gesticulating wildly with his free hand.

7. The house survived the tornado. Which clearly demonstrated that the building and zoning codes were sufficiently strict.
