

Sentence Fragments

A **sentence fragment** is an incomplete piece of a sentence. It lacks one or more elements required for a *complete thought*: namely, a **SUBJECT** or **VERB**.

Types of fragment mistakes:

> Omitting a subject or a verb

Example: Fragment NO

The apartment building with the mural on the side. (This has a subject and its modifiers—

missing a verb).

Corrected version: YES

The apartment building, with the mural on the side, burned down.

Mistaking a prepositional or verb phrase for a sentence

Example: Fragments NO

a. Will soon be sleeping. (verb phrase—missing a subject)

b. Inside the house. (prepositional phrase—missing a subject and verb)

Corrected versions: YES

a. The baby will soon be sleeping.

b. The missing bracelet was found inside the house.

➤ Mistaking a dependent clause for a sentence (dependent clause: a group of words that needs another word or set of words to be a complete thought)

Example: Fragment NC

After the candidates arrive. (subject and verb are present, but this group of words is dependent on a main clause to express a complete thought its job is to explain or describe a main clause)

Corrected version: YES

After the candidates arrive, the mayoral debate will begin.

Kelly, William J. and Deborah L. Lawton. Odyssey: A Guide to Better Writing. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998.



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