

A Teacher's Guide to Sentence Fragments

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Definition: A *sentence fragment* is an incomplete sentence which is missing either a subject or a verb.

In order for a sentence to be complete it must consist of an independent unit with at least a subject and a verb.

Hint: If the sentence can be rephrased into a yes or no question then it is a complete sentence.

Example:

Word Group Yes or No Question Fragment?

Reading *Grapes of Wrath*. Was reading *Grapes of Wrath*? Yes

The book *Grapes of Wrath*
was enjoyable to read.

Was the book *Grapes of Wrath*
enjoyable to read? No

Playing in the pool was fun.

Sunning myself at the beach.

Hint: In order for a sentence to be complete it must contain both a subject and a verb.

Example:

S V V

The orange juice was poured into a strainer.

S V

The chemical is a strong acid.

Identify if the sentence below is complete or incomplete. If it is an incomplete sentence, discuss what was changed to make the sentence correct.

All of the athletes should be made aware of the rules in the handbook.

The chemical, a strong acid.

The boy's sunburn caused him excruciating pain whenever someone touched it.

Whenever someone touched the boy's sunburn.

My thoughts on how a student's paper will improve:

Sentence Fragments in a student's paper can make it hard to understand what the student's reasoning or thought is.

By getting rid of sentence fragments a student's paper will sound more intelligent and will be more professional.

Discuss other methods of teaching to help students avoid sentence fragments.