

Diagnosing Sentence Fragments

A sentence consists of an independent unit with at least a subject and a verb.

Fragments are incomplete sentences. Usually, fragments are pieces of sentences that have become disconnected from the main clause, often a dependent clause or long phrase that follows the main clause.

Solutions

One of the easiest ways to correct them is to remove the period between the fragment and the main clause. Other kinds of punctuation may be needed for the newly combined sentence.

I need to find a new roommate.
Because the one I have now isn't
working out too well.

I need to find a new roommate
because the one I have now isn't
working out too well.

By paying too much
attention to polls can make
a political leader unwilling to
propose innovative policies.

Remove preposition: Paying too
much attention to polls can make
a political leader unwilling to
propose innovative policies.

Act as an editor, marking a C if the sentences in the group are all complete and an F if any of the sentences in the group is a fragment. Could you tell these writers why the fragments are incomplete sentences? Finally, rewrite a solution that eliminates the fragments.

_____ 1. Then I attended Morris Junior High. A junior high that was a bad experience.

_____ 2. The scene was filled with beauty. Such as the sun sending its brilliant rays to the earth and the leaves of various shades of red, yellow, and brown moving slowly in the wind.

_____ 3. He talked for fifty minutes without taking his eyes off his notes. Like other teachers in that department, he did not encourage students' questions.

_____ 4. Within each group, a wide range of features to choose from. It was difficult to distinguish between them.

_____ 5. A few of the less serious fellows would go into a bar for a steak dinner and a few glasses of beer. After this meal, they were ready for anything.

Answers to the sentence fragments exercises.

F 1. Then I attended Morris Junior High. A junior high that was a bad experience. (*dependent clause*)

F 2. The scene was filled with beauty. Such as the sun sending its brilliant rays to the earth and the leaves of various shades of red, yellow, and brown moving slowly in the wind. (*dependent clause*)

C 3. He talked for fifty minutes without taking his eyes off his notes. Like other teachers in that department, he did not encourage students' questions.

F 4. Within each group, a wide range of features to choose from. It was difficult to distinguish between them. (*no main verb*)

C 5. A few of the less serious fellows would go into a bar for a steak dinner and a few glasses of beer. After this meal, they were ready for anything.