

## A Teacher's Guide to Sentence Fragments

### **What is a sentence fragment?**

A sentence fragment is a group of words that sound like a sentence but does not express a complete thought. In other words, a sentence fragment is a piece of information that is punctuated as a sentence but that lacks some of the characteristics of a complete sentence.

### **How can I recognize a sentence fragment?**

You can recognize sentence fragments by making sure that each group of words that is punctuated contains a grammatically complete and independent thought that can stand alone outside the context of other sentences. Also, a sentence must have a subject and a verb in order to be complete. Another test for you and/or students to do would be to turn the statement into a true or false question by adding “wasn’t it?” or “didn’t it?” at the end. Then ask yourself, “Can I answer this question?”

### **Examples:**

#### 1) No subject:

*Example* I am tired of having to remind my little sister to do things. **Tired of having to ask her to help.**

*The statement in bold does not have a subject; we do not know who is tired of having to ask her to help.*

#### 2) No verb:

*Example* On that beautiful autumn evening there were parents out walking with their children. **People playing baseball at the park.**

*Here, the statement in bold does not contain a verb. Looked at by itself, we do not know what is being said about the people playing baseball at the park.*

### **NOTES:**

## Sample: Spotting Sentence fragments

When preparing a meal, you should pay special attention to proper food handling techniques. Following these guidelines. Which can help to keep you and your family, safe and healthy. First, you should wash your hands. Before handling any food. You should also ensure that dishes, utensils and work surfaces are clean. Next, food needs to be stored in the refrigerator until it is used. In addition, all fruits and vegetables must be washed thoroughly. Because there could be chemicals or bacteria on their peel. When cooking with meat, ensure it fully cooked. Fully cooked before serving so any bacteria are killed by the heat. Finally, you serve food on clean dishes, not those which previous held raw meat or unwashed produce. This may appear to be time-consuming work. But it can save your life.