

A Guide to Avoiding SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

Sentence fragments happen when one does not include every necessary part of a sentence's structure. By leaving out the subject or predicate of a sentence, or by not concluding thoughts, one leaves their sentence unfinished and, as a result, grammatically incorrect. Sentence fragments are sometimes allowed in creative writing as a stylistic choice but should be avoided in academic writing.

Let's look at some examples of sentences and their parts:

The woman drove to the movie theater.

The Subject

The Predicate

History books are full of interesting people!

The Subject

The Predicate

Every sentence must have a subject and a verb.

I am running for Student Council.

My friend's dogs always howl at night.

Sentence fragments will usually lack one or more of these parts.

Here are some examples of sentence fragments and ways to write them correctly:

Incorrect:

Brought them to the kitchen to prepare dinner.

Allison states in her book.

When we went to Wyoming.

Because we ran out of sandwiches.

He loved them all. Books, movies, and video games.

Correct:

Mark brought them to the kitchen to prepare dinner.

Allison states in her book that healthcare is a human right.

It was nighttime when we went to Wyoming.

We had to close the store because we ran out of sandwiches.

He loved them all: books, movies, and video games.

Tips to Help Correct Sentence Fragments

Try reading your work aloud.

Listen closely, and make sure all of the thoughts you introduced are concluded.

Try playing with punctuation.

Fragments can sometimes be fixed by combining them with a surrounding sentence, usually through the use of punctuation, like a comma, colon, or semicolon.