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Contributors:Purdue OWL.

Summary:

Provides an overview and examples of sentence fragments.

Sentence Fragments

Fragments are incomplete sentences. Usually, fragments are pieces of sentences that have become disconnected from the main clause. 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.

Below are some examples with the fragments shown in red. Punctuation and/or words added to make corrections are highlighted in **blue**. Notice that the fragment is frequently a dependent clause or long phrase that follows the main clause.

- **Fragment:**Purdue offers many majors in engineering. Such as electrical, chemical, and industrial engineering.
Possible Revision: Purdue offers many majors in engineering, such as electrical, chemical, and industrial engineering.
- **Fragment:** Coach Dietz exemplified this behavior by walking off the field in the middle of a game. Leaving her team at a time when we needed her.
Possible Revision: Coach Dietz exemplified this behavior by walking off the field in the middle of a game, leaving her team at a time when we needed her.
- **Fragment:** I need to find a new roommate. Because the one I have now isn't working out too well.
Possible Revision: I need to find a new roommate **because** the one I have now isn't working out too well.
- **Fragment:** The current city policy on housing is incomplete as it stands. Which is why we believe the proposed amendments should be passed.
Possible Revision: **Because** the current city policy on housing is incomplete as it stands, we believe the proposed amendments should be passed.

You may have noticed that newspaper and magazine journalists often use a dependent clause as a separate sentence when it follows clearly from the preceding main clause, as in the last example above. This is a conventional **journalistic** practice, often used for emphasis. For **academic** writing and other more formal writing situations, however, you should avoid such journalistic fragment sentences.

Some fragments are not clearly pieces of sentences that have been left unattached to the main clause; they are written as main clauses but lack a subject or main verb.

No main verb

- **Fragment:** A story with deep thoughts and emotions.
Possible Revisions:
 - *Direct object:* She told a story with deep thoughts and emotions.
 - *Appositive:* Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper," a story with deep thoughts and emotions, has impressed critics for decades.
- **Fragment:** Toys of all kinds thrown everywhere.
Possible Revisions:
 - *Complete verb:* Toys of all kinds were thrown everywhere.
 - *Direct object:* They found toys of all kinds thrown everywhere.
- **Fragment:** A record of accomplishment beginning when you were first hired.
Possible Revisions:
 - *Direct object:* I've noticed a record of accomplishment beginning when you were first hired
 - *Main verb:* A record of accomplishment began when you were first hired.

No Subject

- **Fragment:** With the ultimate effect of all advertising is to sell the product.
Possible Revisions:
 - *Remove preposition:* The ultimate effect of all advertising is to sell the product.
- **Fragment:** By paying too much attention to polls can make a political leader unwilling to propose innovative policies.
Possible Revisions:
 - *Remove preposition:* Paying too much attention to polls can make a political leader unwilling to propose innovative policies.
- **Fragment:** For doing freelance work for a competitor got Phil fired.
Possible Revisions:
 - *Remove preposition:* Doing freelance work for a competitor got Phil fired.
 - *Rearrange:* Phil got fired for doing freelance work for a competitor.

These last three examples of fragments with no subjects are also known as mixed constructions, that is, sentences constructed out of mixed parts. They start one way (often with a long prepositional phrase) but end with a regular predicate. Usually the object of the preposition (often a gerund, as in the last two examples) is intended as the subject of the sentence, so removing the preposition at the beginning is usually the easiest way to edit such errors.



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1.2: Comma Splices

Comma Fault

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Last edited by **Allen Brizee** on August 7, 2009 .

Summary:

This page deals with comma splices.

Comma Splices

Comma splices are similar to run-on sentences because they also incorrectly connect independent clauses. A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses are connected with only a comma. As with a run-on sentence, there are a few different ways to correct a comma splice. Consider the following sentence and the revised versions that follow it.

Comma Splice: My family bakes together nearly every night, we then get to enjoy everything we make together.

- Correction 1: My family bakes together nearly every night. We then get to enjoy everything we make together.

The comma splice has been corrected by breaking the sentence into two separate sentences.

- Correction 2: My family bakes together nearly every night, and we then get to enjoy everything we make together.

The comma splice has been corrected by adding a coordinating conjunction and a comma.

- Correction 3: After my family bakes together nearly every night, we get to enjoy everything we make together.

The comma splice has been corrected by adding a subordinating conjunction and a comma.

Comma Splice Exercise

The following sentences are comma splices. For each sentence, suggest two possible revisions.

- I didn't like the movie, it was way too long.
- She and Jerry are getting married in the fall, they didn't want a summer wedding.
- My favorite bands are all really loud, playing loud music is good for stress relief.

Click [here](#) for exercise answers.

26 RECOGNIZING SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

Section 10, *Essentials of English*

In the space to the right state whether each of the following expressions is a sentence or a sentence fragment.

EXAMPLE:

When the capital moved to Leningrad.

fragment

1. While he was serving his residency at Eastern General Hospital.
2. He refused.
3. To be a member of an archeological expedition to Guatemala.
4. Who discovered insulin for the control of diabetes.
5. Who discovered insulin for the control of diabetes?
6. A conflict of interests that smoldered for decades and blazed into the Civil War.
7. Inasmuch as his experience on the bench has been limited to magistrates' courts.
8. Because corporations that spend thousands of dollars for computers want compact and speedy machines.
9. An engineering feat marred by the fact that eighteen construction workers lost their lives.
10. It requires total dedication to become a biochemist.
11. Even before Henry Hudson sailed the *Half Moon* up the river in search of a northwest passage.
12. As long as the government continues to subsidize farmers for limiting certain crops.

27 IDENTIFYING AND CORRECTING SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

Section 10, *Essentials of English*

In the space to the right state whether each of the following expressions is a sentence or a sentence fragment. Change the sentence fragments to sentences by removing the subordinating word with parentheses and by capitalizing the first word wherever necessary.

EXAMPLE:

We filled many evenings by playing charades and cards.
^T
 (While) the orchestra was playing the overture.

_____ sentence

_____ fragment

1. That we should be allowed to travel freely abroad. _____
2. Franklin Delano Roosevelt who was elected president for four terms. _____
3. When the Bowery was a shady lane extending from the Battery to Peter Stuyvesant's farm. _____
4. The understudy was standing in the wings, ready to go on at a moment's notice. _____
5. Because management has obstinately refused to negotiate with the union. _____
6. We have examined thoroughly the qualifications of the surgeons on the panel. _____
7. Since the Volstead Act was repealed. _____
8. Although many influential Americans supported the Spanish Loyalists. _____
9. Because Prime Minister Chamberlain desired peace in our time. _____
10. The Maginot Line crumbled before the German onslaught. _____

28 IDENTIFYING AND COMPLETING SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

Section 10, *Essentials of English*

In the space to the right state whether the following expressions are sentences or sentence fragments. Complete the fragments by changing the verbals to finite verbs and adding a subject and predicate if necessary.

EXAMPLE:

Stamp collecting being an interesting and profitable hobby.

fragment

Stamp collecting is an . . .

1. The delegate from India discussing the issue before the General Assembly of the United Nations.

2. To pitch the only no-hit, no-run game of the season.

3. Carried on their shoulders by his teammates, he was thrilled beyond words.

4. The National Urban League, which was founded in 1911.

5. An outstanding poet, Robert Frost.

29 IDENTIFYING AND COMPLETING SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

Section 10, *Essentials of English*

In the space to the right state whether each of the following expressions is a sentence fragment or a sentence. In the space below complete the sentence fragment by writing an independent clause to which the fragment is properly related.

EXAMPLE:

When the mob began to gather.

fragment

... martial law was declared.

1. And has been knocked out in the third round by the superannuated Tornado Barnes.

2. While he was clerking for Jenkins and Company, he was also studying law.

3. Although it has been proved that there is a connection between cancer of the throat and smoking.

4. While he was stationed in Paris after the war.

5. Females numbering well over 50 percent of the population.

30 DETECTING COMMA FAULTS

Section 11, *Essentials of English*

Some of the sentences below are correct; some contain a comma fault. If the sentence is correct, write "C" in the space to the right. If the sentence is incorrect, circle the comma fault and write "CF" in the space to the right.

EXAMPLE:

My son would be my only assistant o I had good reason for wanting no one else.

CF

1. A sudden gust of wind blew out the candle, we had to grope our way through the cellar. _____
2. The chairman has an engagement, the meeting will have to be postponed. _____
3. He will not seek the nomination, nor will he accept a draft. _____
4. The cello played a rocking bass, and the violin embroidered a soaring melody above it. _____
5. He says that he is sixty-eight, however, the records show that he is seventy-three. _____
6. The camp is small and lacking in facilities, but the site is beautiful, and the staff is efficient. _____
7. None of the other guests could be late for meals, this was a privilege granted Frau Gantner alone. _____
8. Human behavior is complicated, consequently, we identify human elements with the most complicated areas of the brain. _____
9. Severe pain shocks office workers and others who seldom experience injuries, whereas construction workers take their injuries in stride. _____

24. A narrow mind is thought to contain little knowledge; an enlarged one, to contain a great deal.
25. Penguins are amusing and interesting birds, their natural habitat is the Antarctic.
