

Fragments

WHAT IS A FRAGMENT?

A complete sentence contains a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought. However, a sentence fragment lacks some essential element of a sentence (such as a subject or verb) or does not express a complete thought.

Types of Sentence Fragments

- Missing subject
- Missing verb
- Dependent clause

1. Missing Subject

The following is an example of a sentence fragment with **no subject**:

Incorrect: *Were going to the mall after class.*
(Who was going to the mall after class?)

Correct: *The students were going to the mall after class.*

2. Missing Verb

The following is an example of a sentence fragment with **no verb**:

Incorrect: *Unbelievably detailed maps on Google Earth.*
(What about the unbelievably detailed maps?)

Correct: *Unbelievably detailed maps **are found** on Google Earth.*

3. Dependent Clause

A sentence that contains a subject and verb but **does not express a complete thought** is also known as a **dependent clause** fragment. The following is an example of a **dependent clause** fragment:

Incorrect: *If she feels like going.*

Although there is a subject (she) and verb (feels) in this clause, it does not express a complete thought and is considered a fragment.

Correct: *If she feels like going, she will arrive later.*

Examples of Dependent Clause Fragments

1.

Incorrect: Until we arrived home.

Here the dependent clause fragment “until we arrived home” is a prepositional phrase.

Correct: We did not fall asleep until we arrived home.

Correct: Until we arrived home, we did not fall asleep.

2.

Incorrect: Jane always wears her seatbelt. Thinking it may save her life.

Here the dependent clause fragment “thinking it may save her life” is a participial phrase.

Correct: Thinking it may save her life one day, Jane always wears her seatbelt.

Correct: Jane always wears her seatbelt. She thinks one day it might save her life.

Correct: Jane thinks that one day it might save her life, so she always wears her seatbelt.

3.

Incorrect: Sebastian rushed to school after work. To take his final exam.

Here the dependent clause fragment “to take his final exam” is an infinitive phrase.

Correct: Sebastian rushed to school after work to take his final exam.

Correct: To take his final exam, Sebastian rushed to school after work.

Correct: Sebastian rushed to school after work because he needed to take his final exam.

⇒ Note: As seen in the previous examples, there are a few possible ways to correct dependent clause fragments. For more information, refer to the skills page on [Dependent Clauses](#).

Helpful Hint!

- * A very helpful and effective way to detect sentence fragments is to read your composition backwards. By starting from the end and reading to the beginning, you will be forced to look at and address each sentence individually. This way, the sentences do not relate to one another, and you can easily detect any sentence fragments!