SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

A fragment is a piece of something. A sentence fragment is *a phrase or clause that is incorrectly treated* as a complete sentence. It may be missing a subject, a verb, or both.

EXAMPLE: If she always wears sneakers.

This is a fragment because the thought is incomplete. A correct sentence would read: If she always wears sneakers, I will notice her.

EXAMPLE: Spoke with no malice intended.

This is another fragment, but the mistake is more obvious: there is no subject. Remember a sentence must have a subject and a verb. Without a subject and/or verb, there is no sentence. To correct the sentence, put in a subject: She spoke with no malice intended.

CHECKLIST FOR FINDING FRAGMENTS

To spot fragments, ask yourself the questions below.

1. Does the sentence have a subject?

S V The train <u>comes</u> to a stop.

(SENTENCE)

2. Does the sentence have a verb?

	S	\mathbf{V}	S only
A new	shopping center	opened.	Department stores, record shops and shoe stores of every description.

(SENTENCE)

3. Is the verb complete, or is it only part of a two or three word verb?

complete				incomplete			
S	$\bar{\mathbf{V}}$		S	\mathbf{V}^{-}			
Bricks	<u>are flying</u>	everywhere.	<u>Kites</u>	flying	everywhere.		
	(SENTENCI	E)	(FRAGMENT)				

REMINDER: Infinitives (the "to" form of a verb [to run, to speak, etc.] do **NOT** qualify as main verbs.

4. Is the subject understood as in a command?

S	V		S	V
You	<u>do</u>	the dishes.	You	<u>hurry</u> .
(5	SEN	FENCE)	(SEN	TENCE)

5. Is there a word group that depends upon another sentence for its meaning?

	S	V			S	V		S	\mathbf{V}	
Because	he	was	late.	Because	he	was	late,	he	could not take	his test.
(FRAGMENT)				(SENTENCE)						

(FRAGMENT)

Made a loud noise.

V only

(FRAGMENT)

WAYS TO CORRECT A SENTENCE FRAGMENT

• Add a Missing Verb

Every sentence **MUST** have a conjugated verb (a verb that changes form to show tense, person, number, voice, and mood). If a conjugated verb is missing from a group of related words, the intended thought is incomplete or fragmented. The missing verb must be added to make the words convey a complete thought.

Fragment caused by **use of infinitive** (to run, to go, to do, etc.) without a conjugated verb

✓ *Jim to program a computer*. (The infinitive CAN NOT function as a conjugated verb.)
✓ *Jim wants to program a computer*. (*Wants* is the main verb.)

Fragment caused by using an incomplete verb.

Jim studying English. (A verb ending in –ing needs a helping verb.)

Jim is studying English. (*Is* is the helping verb. *Is studying* is the complete verb.)

• Add a Subject

Every sentence **MUST** have a subject. If the subject is missing from a group of related words, the intended thought is incomplete or fragmented. The missing subject must be added to make the words convey a complete thought.

Fragment caused by **missing subject**.

Reads books in the library.

Mary reads books in the library. (*Mary* is the subject.)

Fragments may be corrected by adding the contents of the fragment to the sentence that comes just before or just after the fragment.

EXAMPLE:

SENTENCE

- 1a. Some fathers stay at home.
- 2a. Some mothers continue to work.

FRAGMENT

- 1b. Because they want to raise their kids.
- 2b. Since they make good money.

CORRECTIONS:

- 1. Some fathers stay at home because they want to raise their kids.
- 2. Some mothers continue to work since they make good money.

EXERCISES: Correct the following fragments using one of the methods described above.

- 1. Following after him.
- 2. Because he is in charge.
- 3. Which is good.
- 4. And going there after.
- 5. Wherever he left it.