## 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?
$\mathrm{S} \quad \mathrm{V}$
The train comes to a stop.
(SENTENCE)

> V only $\underline{\underline{\text { Made }}} \quad \begin{aligned} & \text { a loud noise. } \\ & \\ & \\ & \text { (FRAGMENT) }\end{aligned}$
2. Does the sentence have a verb?

|  | $\mathbf{S}$ | $\mathbf{V}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| A new | shopping center | opened. |
|  |  |  |

S only
Department stores, record shops and shoe stores
of every description.
(FRAGMENT)
3. Is the verb complete, or is it only part of a two or three word verb?

|  | complete | incomplete |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| S | $\mathbf{V}$ | $\mathbf{S}$ | $\mathbf{V}$ |  |
| Bricks | $\underline{\text { are flying }}$ | everywhere. | $\underline{\text { Kites }}$ | $\underline{\text { flying }}$ | everywhere.

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?

| $\mathbf{S}$ | $\mathbf{V}$ | $\mathbf{S}$ | $\mathbf{V}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\underline{\text { You }}$ | $\underline{\text { do }}$ | the dishes. | $\underline{\text { You }}$ |
| hurry. |  |  |  |

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


## 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.
囚 Jim studying English. (A verb ending in -ing needs a helping verb.)
$\square$ 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.
$\square$ 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.
