# GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS
## Sentence Fragments

A sentence fragment is a word group that is incorrectly punctuated as if it were a complete sentence, beginning with an initial capital letter and ending with a period or other end punctuation. To be complete, a sentence must contain a subject, a predicate or complete verb, and function as an independent clause. A sentence fragment lacks one or more of these elements; as a result, it cannot stand alone or function as a sentence.

The subject of a sentence is the "who" or "what" the sentence is about. The word(s) that name the topic of the sentence is called the simple subject and must be a noun or pronoun. The complete subject is the simple subject plus its modifiers; the predicate or complete verb says something about the subject. An independent clause includes a subject and a predicate and can stand alone as a complete sentence.

## IDENTIFYING AND CORRECTING SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

In general, sentence fragments can be corrected by rewriting the fragment as a complete sentence or connecting the fragment to an independent clause.

- **Correcting a Sentence Fragment with a Missing Subject**

Except for a command with an implied or understood subject, a word group punctuated as a sentence without a subject is a sentence fragment.

> Example:  Michelle came into the room. Closed the door.

> How to: Include an appropriate subject to form an independent clause.

> **Correction**: Michelle came into the room. **She** closed the door.

> How to: Turn the fragment into an "-ing" participle phrase attached to the independent clause.

> **Correction**: Michelle came into the room, **closing** the door behind her.

Note: With a command, or imperative sentence, the subject ("you") is implied and therefore omitted; for example, "Don't leave the room!" is the equivalent of "[You] Don't leave the room!"

- **Correcting a Sentence Fragment with a Missing or Incomplete Verb**

In order for a sentence to be complete, it must contain a complete verb in an independent clause. A word group punctuated as a sentence without a complete verb is a sentence fragment.

> Example: The assembly person in our district.

> How to: Include a predicate or complete verb to form an independent clause.

> **Correction**: The assembly person in our district **works** diligently.

> Example: The statue standing in the rotunda of the building.

> How to: Add a helping verb to form a predicate or complete verb.

> **Correction**: The statue **is standing** in the rotunda of the building.

Note: A finite verb is capable of making an assertion without the aid of a helping verb; in addition, it changes form to show the difference in present, past, and future tense. However, a verbal cannot function as the main verb of a clause. Verbals such as "working" and "to work" do not change to show tense and are not finite verbs.

> Example: The statue located on the second floor of the museum.

> How to: Add a helping verb to form a predicate or complete verb.

> **Correction**: The statue **is located** on the second floor of the museum.

Note: Since the statue cannot locate itself, the verb form must be passive, indicating someone other than the subject of the sentence (the statue) placed it on the second floor of the museum. Passive voice is formed by using a helping verb (am, is, are, was, were) plus the past participle ("-d" or "-ed"); however, some verbs are irregular and take the "-t" or "-n" form.

> Example: She caught by the authorities.

> How to: Add a helping verb to form a predicate or complete verb.

> **Correction**: She **was caught** by the authorities.

- **Correcting a Dependent Clause Fragment**

A main or independent clause can stand alone as a complete sentence. However, a dependent or subordinate clause—because it begins with a subordinating conjunction or relative pronoun—

needs to be attached to an independent clause.

>Example: After Maria bought the biology book.

>How to: Attach the dependent clause to an independent clause.

>**Correction**: After Maria bought the biology book**, she began studying for her exam.**

In the above example, the subordinating conjunction "after" indicates a time relationship between the two clauses.

>How to: Delete the subordinating conjunction.

>**Correction**: Maria bought the biology book.

## TYPES OF DEPENDENT OR SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

A dependent or subordinate clause contains a subject and a predicate but cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. Using subordination, a dependent clause can be attached to an independent clause to provide information about the relationship between the two clauses. There are three types of dependent clauses according to their use in a particular sentence: adverb, adjective, and noun clauses.

- **Adverb clauses** modify verbs, adjectives, or adverbs in an independent clause. They usually tell **how, why, when, where, under what conditions,** or **with what result**, and they always begin with a subordinating conjunction.

  Example: **After the final performance of the season**, the company celebrated with their families.

  In the above example, the dependent clause ("After the final performance of the season,") is attached to the independent clause ("the company celebrated with their families.") and forms a complete sentence: "company" is the subject and "celebrated" is the verb.

  Example: The play was extended **because it earned favorable reviews from the critics**.

  Example: **Even though I needed to take a break,** I continued to study for the exam.

Note that in the examples above, when the dependent or subordinate clause precedes the independent clause, a comma is used to connect the two clauses; however, when the dependent clause comes after the independent clause, no comma is used.

Common subordinating conjunctions used to form dependent or subordinate clauses include the following:

> **time**: after, as long as, as soon as, before, once, till, until, when, whenever, while
> **place**: where, wherever
> **comparison**: as, as if, as though, than
> **contrast**: although, even though, though, whereas, while
> **cause**: as, because, since
> **condition**: even if, if, provided that, unless
> **purpose**: in order that, so that; and result: so . . . that, such . . . that

- **Adjective clauses** modify nouns and pronouns, providing necessary or helpful information. These clauses usually begin with a relative pronoun, such as **who**, **whom**, **whose**, **which**, and **that**.

  Example: Diana is the girl **who always gets to class early**.

  In the above example, the subject of the sentence is "Diana" and the dependent clause ("who always gets to class early") modifies the word "girl."

  Example: The area of study **that is most interesting to me** is marine biology.

  Example: I finally read the book you recommended, **which I found very rewarding.**

- **Noun clauses** function as subjects, objects, and complements in sentences. They usually begin with either **that** or **what** or with **when, why, who, whom, whoever**, or **how**.

  Example: It is very likely **that she will win the election**.

  Example: **What the lecturer said** pleased the audience.

  Example: **Whoever answers the question first** will be the winner.

Note that if the word group begins with **when, why, who, whom, whoever**, or **how** and introduces a question, it can stand alone as an independent clause and functions as a complete sentence.

  Example: **When** will they announce the results of the survey?