

Sentence Fragments

The general rule of writing a complete sentence in the English language is to have a subject and verb, respectively. If the phrase lacks either subject or verb, then it is a fragmented (or incomplete) sentence.

Examples of fragmented sentences:

Usually runs four or five times a day. (lacks subject)

The dog, the cat, and the mouse. (lacks verb)

The best solution to fixing a sentence fragment is to determine what variable is missing in the sentence and then add the variable accordingly.

The most common sentence fragment is the lack of a subject. But what constitutes a subject, and how can one determine if a sentence lacks one? Quite often the subject of a sentence is a noun or pronoun. However, subjects can be much more complex than this, specifically in terms of “complete subjects”. To find the complete subject according to Diana Hacker, “ask Who? or What?, insert the verb, and finish the question. The answer is the complete subject” (p. 810).

A large green bowl sits on top of the table.

Q: What sits on top of the table? **A:** A large green bowl.

If the question is unanswerable, then the writer may want to consider adding the proper subject to the sentence to avoid fragmentation.