

Sentence Fragments

What is a sentence fragment?

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)

Solutions for fixing sentence fragments:

The best solution to fixing a sentence fragment is to determine what variable is missing in the sentence and then adding 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?**, then insert the verb and finish the question. The answer you get is the complete subject" (Hacker 810).

For example:

"A large green bowl sits on top of the table."

To find the subject in the above sentence using Diana Hacker's method, ask:

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.

For more information:

<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/punct/fragmentcauses.html>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/620/01/>