



Sentence Fragments (2)

Handout courtesy of Lori Williams and Sally Wallace

A sentence is a group of words that contains at least one subject and at least one verb and that expresses a complete thought. For example, "Parkland College has thousands of excellent students" is a complete sentence. The subject is **Parkland College**, and the verb is **has**. This is a complete thought. Incomplete sentences, or **sentence fragments**, are groups of words that begin with capital letters and end with periods but lack subjects, verbs, or are incomplete thoughts. Sentence fragments usually belong in the complete sentence right before or right after.

Dependent Clauses

A **dependent clause** has both a subject and a verb, but it doesn't express a complete thought. Rather, a dependent clause depends on more information; it can't stand alone. If you said, "While you were napping" to someone, your listener would wait for you to finish; you have said when something happened but not what happened. You need to join the dependent clause to an independent clause (also known as a complete sentence). For example, "While you were napping, the cat had kittens" does express a complete thought. There are certain words that signal that a dependent clause is on the way:

| | | | | | |
|------------|-----------|----------|-------|-------|------------|
| after | as though | since | when | while | as soon as |
| because | though | whenever | if | until | wherever |
| as / as if | before | till | where | once | unless |

Other Groups of Words That Hang out in the Breeze

nonono Eleanor Roosevelt was a woman. **With** a beautiful soul.

yesyesyes Eleanor Roosevelt was a woman with a beautiful soul.

nonono He's a vegetarian. **Who** gives peace a chance.

yesyesyes He's a vegetarian who gives peace a chance.

nonono I'm writing an essay. **Which** I truly love to do.

yesyesyes I'm writing an essay, which I truly love to do.

Danger Words for Fragments: especially, including, such as, for example

These words are often at the beginning of fragments because they are continuations of previous sentences. They usually provide examples of the previous thought. Here are some examples:

nonono When going camping, you need to pack your items carefully. **Such as** a first aid kit, a can opener, a cell phone, a flashlight, and lots of batteries.

yesyesyes When going camping, you need to pack your items carefully, **such as** a first aid kit, a can opener, a cell phone, a flashlight, and lots of batteries.

nonono I love the singer/songwriters of the 70's. **Especially** Carole King and James Taylor.

yesyesyes I love the singer/songwriters of the 70's, **especially** Carole King and James Taylor.