ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Sentence fragments

Difficulty level: Intermediate

English, Literacy, and Communication

This document was made by AI and there may be mistakes. If a question or answer looks wrong, use the Flag a mistake button to let Brett know so he can fix it.

Overview of the concept

This is how you spot a group of words that looks like a sentence but leaves the reader hanging, so your writing always says a complete thought. A student who writes Because it was raining as a whole sentence has left the reader waiting for what happened next. A job applicant whose cover letter is full of fragments looks careless, even when the ideas are good. Knowing sentence fragments tells you how to check that every sentence you write has a subject and a verb and says something complete.



Rule

Sentence fragments: a sentence must have a subject and a verb and say a complete thought.

A group of words missing any one of these is a fragment, not a sentence.

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Is this a fragment? 'Running down the street.'

SOLUTION

Check for a subject and a verb that make a complete thought: there is no subject doing the running.

It is a phrase, not a sentence.

Yes, it is a fragment. Fixed: She was running down the street.

EXAMPLE 2

Q Is this a fragment? 'The dog barked.'

SOLUTION

Check for a subject and a verb: 'dog' and 'barked'.

Together they make a complete thought.

No, it is a complete sentence.

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

Practice questions

1

A note says: After the rain stopped. Is this a fragment?

- A Yes, fragment
- B No, complete

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

2

A note says: Birds sing in the morning. Is this a fragment?

- A No, complete
- B Yes, fragment

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

3

A note says: The tall tree in the garden. Which fix makes it a complete sentence?

- **A** The tall tree in the garden lost its leaves.
- **B** The tall tree in the garden with green leaves.
- **C** In the garden the tall tree.
- **D** Tall tree garden.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

4

Which of these is missing a verb?

- **A** The dog barked.
- **B** The tall tree.
- **C** Birds sing.
- **D** She smiled.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

5 Two notes say almost the same thing. Which one is a fragment?

- **A** (a) Because he was tired.
- **B** (b) He went to bed because he was tired.
- **C** Both are fragments
- **D** Neither is a fragment

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

6 Which of these is missing a subject?

- **A** Ran to the park.
- **B** He ran to the park.
- **C** The dog barked.
- **D** She smiled.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

7 A note says: Under the table. Which fix makes it a complete sentence?

- A Under the table in the kitchen.
- B The cat hid under the table.
- C Under table the cat.
- D The cat under.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

8 A note says: Because it was raining. What is missing?

- A A complete thought, what happened next
- B A subject
- C A verb
- D A capital letter

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

9

A note says: When the bell rang. Which fix makes it a complete sentence?

A When the bell rang, we lined up.

B When the bell rang loudly.

C The bell when rang.

D We lined up when.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

10

Which of these is a complete sentence?

A After the rain stopped.

B Running down the street.

C He opened the door.

D Under the table.

Understand It with Pulse | Flag a mistake

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.

ANSWER KEY

1. Yes, fragment

2. No, complete

3. The tall tree in the garden lost its leaves.

4. The tall tree.

5. (a) Because he was tired.

6. Ran to the park.

7. The cat hid under the table.

8. A complete thought, what happened next

9. When the bell rang, we lined up.

10. He opened the door.

© 2026 Brett Robbins. All Rights Reserved.