ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Writing complete sentences

Difficulty level: Easy

English, Literacy, and Communication

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Overview of the concept

This is how you write a full thought, with a subject and a verb, like in an email or an essay, instead of a fragment that leaves your reader guessing. A complete sentence has someone or something doing something, and it can stand on its own. A fragment is only part of a thought, and the reader has to guess what is missing. Writing complete sentences means every thought you put down is finished, so your reader never has to fill in the gaps.



Rule

Writing complete sentences: a complete sentence has a subject and a verb and says a complete thought.

A group of words missing any one of these is not complete.

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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Is this complete? 'The dog barked.'

SOLUTION

Check for a subject: dog. Yes.

Check for a verb that makes a complete thought: barked. Yes.

So yes, it is a complete sentence.

EXAMPLE 2

Q Is this complete? 'Running down the street.'

SOLUTION

Check for a subject: none is given.

Check for a complete thought: no, it leaves the reader waiting.

So no, it is not complete. Fixed: She was running down the street.

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Practice questions

1 Is this complete? 'Birds sing.'

A Yes, complete

B No, fragment

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2 Is this complete? 'After lunch.'

A Yes, complete

B No, fragment

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3 Is this complete? 'We ate lunch.'

A Yes, complete

B No, fragment

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4 Is this complete? 'The tall tree.'

A Yes, complete

B No, fragment

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5 Is this complete? 'She smiled.'

A Yes, complete

B No, fragment

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6 Is this complete? 'Because it rained.'

A Yes, complete

B No, fragment

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7 Is this complete? 'The children played.'

A Yes, complete

B No, fragment

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8 Is this complete? 'Under the table.'

A Yes, complete

B No, fragment

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9 Is this complete? 'He opened the door.'

A Yes, complete

B No, fragment

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10

Is this complete? 'When the bell rang.'

A Yes, complete

B No, fragment

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ANSWER KEY

1. Yes, complete

2. No, fragment

3. Yes, complete

4. No, fragment

5. Yes, complete

6. No, fragment

7. Yes, complete

8. No, fragment

9. Yes, complete

10. No, fragment

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