

## Sentence Fragments

To understand sentence fragments, we must first know the definition of a complete sentence.

### Complete Sentences

#### *S*ubjects

A sentence must have a *subject*. The subject, or character of the sentence, is commonly a noun that is near the beginning of the sentence, and it performs the action of the verb.

Shallow-bottomed *boats* easily navigate the dangerous coral reefs of the Caribbean.

That strange *man* is a CEO of a Fortune 500 company.

The subject can also be a *gerund phrase*, an {-ing} verb acting as a noun.

*Driving* could be considered an American pastime.

#### *P*redicates

A sentence must also have a *main verb*. The main verb constitutes the central action in the sentence. There may be many verbs in a sentence, but only one is considered a main verb.

The vase *shattered* into a thousand pieces.

The house *crumbled* because the contractor built a poor foundation.

Gerunds ( {-ing} verbs that act as nouns), participles ( {-ing} and {-ed} verbs that act as adjectives), and infinitives (verbs that begin with “to”) cannot be used as the main verb in a sentence.

He, being [participle] part of the middle class, could not *imagine* how difficult it is to survive [infinitive] on minimum-wage earnings [gerund].

Predicates that are contained within dependent clauses cannot be used as the main verb in a sentence. Subordinating conjunctions (e.g., if, since, because, though) and relative pronouns (e.g., who, which, that) will often signal that a clause is dependent, rather than independent.

Before [subordinating conjunction] the circus came to town, my life *was* little more than a bore.

The dean, who [relative pronoun] was appointed a year earlier, immediately *implemented* sweeping reforms.

## Common Errors

The following are common errors that create sentence fragments. Strategies are also provided for

1. Though e-waste is a major contributor to the pollution of groundwater.
2. The airline pilot, realizing that there was not enough fuel to reach JFK International Airport.
3. Deciding whether or not to buy a new car, which would put me in debt for another ten years.
4. A puppy being a huge reali