A SENTENCE CHECKLIST

1. A sentence must contain at least one subject-verb unit:

   Willie Stargell whacked a home run.

To find the subject-verb unit, locate the verb. An easy way to do this is by changing the sentence time:

   Tomorrow, Willie Stargell will whack a home run.

Because *whacked* had to be changed to *will whack* when the time was changed, the verb is *whacked*.

Then connect the subject to the verb ask: Who whacked?

   Willie Stargell whacked.

2. The verb cannot be an –ing word alone. For example, *the crowd screaming* is not a sentence.

   You must connect the –ing word to a helping verb, or a verb that helps the main verb by extending it’s meaning or by adding details as to how time is portrayed in the sentence.

   The crowd was screaming. OR The crowd is screaming.

   Or connect the phrase containing the –ing word to a sentence with another verb.

   Screaming, the crowd watched the home run.

3. A subject-verb unit introduced by a subordinator (when, because, if, since, etc.) is not a sentence, but a dependent clause (a clause that cannot stand on its own as a sentence):

   When Stargell whacked a home run, the crowd went wild.

   This sentence has two clauses, one dependent and one independent.

   When Stargell whacked a home run – dependent
   the crowd went wild – independent

   Because “the crowd went wild” has one correct subject-verb unit, it can stand on it’s own as a sentence, which makes it an independent clause.

   “When Stargell whacked a home run” is a dependent clause because it starts with a subordinator, making it a dependent clause.

4. *Who, which, whose, or whom* cannot be the subject of a sentence unless the sentence is a question. A subject-verb unit introduced by these words is not a sentence, but a dependent
clause.

Not a sentence:
which made the crowd go wild

Connect this dependent clause to its related independent clause:

Willie Stargell whacked a home run, which made the crowd go wild.