

# FRAGMENTS

There are basically two kinds of fragments:

1. A complete sentence with a subordinating conjunction in front of it.
2. A word group without a subject or verb.

Let's take at a complete sentence with a subordinating conjunction in front of it.

Here is a list of common conjunctions:

after	as if	if	while
although	because	since	until
as	before	when	

Take a look at this complete sentence:

I will pass GSD 101.

The subject is *I* and the verb is *will pass*.

Now look at the sentence with a subordinating conjunction in front of it:

After I pass GSD 101  
Because I will pass GSD 101  
Before I pass GSD 101  
Until I pass GSD 101

All of these conjunctions make the reader think that you are going to say something further. You can correct these examples by adding another idea:

After I pass GSD 101, I will be very happy.

As you can see, "I will be very happy" is a sentence with the subject *I* and the verb *will be*. The conjunction "after" joins the two sentences together. Now add a sentence to the following examples to make them complete.

Because I will pass GSD 101, \_\_\_\_\_.

Before I pass GSD 101, \_\_\_\_\_.

Until I pass GSD 101, \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ until I pass GSD 101.

(Note that the "until" phrase can go at the beginning or at the end of the sentence.)

Try an example with *before* at the end of the sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_ before I pass GSD 101.

Make up a sentence of your own using *because* at the beginning of the sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_.

Now revise your sentence and put *because* at the end of the sentence.

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The second kind of fragment often lacks a subject or a verb. Here are some examples.

A. Words with *-ing* at the end are not verbs unless they are preceded by another verb such as *is*, *was*, *were*, *has*, or *been*. Many fragments are created by using an *-ing* word as the verb without a helping verb.

Example: Cold white light glaring from the ceiling. FRAGMENT  
Cold white light was glaring from the ceiling. CORRECT  
Cold white light glaring from the ceiling bothers my eyes. CORRECT.

John being able to write a good paper. FRAGMENT  
John is able to write a good paper. CORRECT

Correct these fragments:

Mary trying to write a long paper.

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Mary's paper being too long.

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B. Word groups which begin with question words (what, how, which) are usually fragments if they are not questions.

Fragment Example: Unlike most games, in tennis you are completely running back and forth on one court. Which is not very large compared with a basketball court. It is based on singles or couples. Which makes the game more exciting.

Correct: Unlike most games, in tennis you are constantly running back and forth on one court, which is not very large compared with a basketball court. It is based on singles or couples, which makes the game more exciting. (Or: Basing the game on singles or couples makes the game more exciting.)

Make up a sentence using the word *what*. Make sure it isn't a fragment. If it is a question, then make it into a non-question sentence.

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(Note: Sentences that begin with a question word do exist, but they are rare. Here is an example: What the committee will decide is beyond me.)

C. Be sure to proofread sentences that begin with "for example " or "such as."

One of the reasons for crime is overcrowding. Such as in the poor run-down neighborhoods like the west and south side of Chicago.

One of the major reasons for crime is overcrowding, such as in the poor run-down neighborhoods like the west and south side of Chicago.

Correct this fragment: Abstract theory must be put into practical use. For example, teaching the baby how to talk, crawl, and walk.

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Now correct the same fragment another way. Make two complete sentences.

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D. When words such as *that*, *which*, and *who* appear in the middle of a sentence, be sure you have completed the idea of the sentence.

FRAGMENT: The man who is sitting over there. (What about him?)

CORRECT: The man who is sitting over there is reading a book.

FRAGMENT: The idea that I meant to say. (What about it?)

CORRECT: The idea that I meant to say was not in my first draft.

Finish these examples.

The woman who sits beside me in class\_\_\_\_\_.

My uncle whom I see every Friday\_\_\_\_\_.

Make up a sentence of your own with a who, whom, that, or which.

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Correct the following examples, where they are wrong.

1. This kind of personality has its good and bad aspects. The good aspect being that this person gets a great deal of work done.
2. Sometimes when we talk of sports, we talk of competitiveness. One human being pitted against another.
3. Harold didn't know the problem yesterday. He is being told right now.
4. Knowing that these substances affect the course of health has led to widespread abuses of them. Many people lacking a full understanding of how vitamins work, ignoring the other equally important nutrients.
5. Dr. Clara Thompson has stated that treatment for neurotic tendencies exists. Treatment which has been very successful.
6. I like the benefits I get from tennis. The exercise and pride I get. Being able to play.
7. Imagine those people who make and sell our cars. Out of jobs and not too many fields with the background they need. Men that have been building cars all their lives and have no other trade.
8. You will always find good help at the Writing Center. Because the tutors know what they are doing. ,
9. He's right.
10. Walking down a long narrow hallway in the middle of a haunted castle with bats flying around in every direction.

## FRAGMENT EXERCISES

In the space provided, write C if a word group is a complete sentence; write FRAG if it is a fragment.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I was nineteen on the night I died.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. In the Fall of 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I had a severe case of the swine flu.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. And had spent the first four days of my illness in bed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Running a temperature between 101 and 107 degrees.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Only getting up to take care of life's necessities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. On Wednesday, the seventh day of my illness, rain from early morning on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The wind howled outside, the house was chilly and damp, and my fever seemed higher than ever.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. In the early evening, I took my pillow and blanket into the living room.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Because I was sick of bed and decided I'd lie on the sofa and watch television.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I watched M\*A\*S\*H and read a Playgirl magazine.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Then I must have fallen asleep.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. When I was suddenly conscious again.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I was in the middle of total blackness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. And total silence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. I was absolutely petrified.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Because I was positive that I had died.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Then, somewhere in the darkness ahead of me, I recognized a small, dissolving spot of light.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I slowly realized that it was coming from the television set.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. And that there had been a power failure.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I awoke this morning with a start.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. With the buzzing of a mosquito in my right ear.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Also a swelling on my leg that was just starting to itch.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I knew that I wouldn't be able to go back to sleep until I killed that mosquito.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I got up, turned on the lights in the room, and closed the windows.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. To keep any more insects from getting in while the lights were on.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I then dug through the fishing rods, old shoes, and other junk in my closet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Looking for the flyswatter that I knew was there.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. It was a hot night, but I felt a slight chill.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Also a sense of anticipation and excitement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. At five o'clock in the morning while all the rest of the universe slept.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The mosquito and I fought a little war.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I suddenly saw it buzz by my left leg, and I moved quickly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Stepping back and swatting at it in midair.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I didn't know whether or not to hit it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. So I returned to bed and waited under the light with my flyswatter in hand.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I kept moving my right hand over my head and behind my neck.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. To keep the mosquito from attacking me from behind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Twenty minutes went by, and suddenly there it was on my right arm.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Swinging at the mosquito with my left palm, killing it and smearing my arm with blood.