



Fragments

How to Correct Incomplete Sentences



What is a fragment?

A series of words is a fragment if it does not express a complete thought.



1.
Types of Fragments

**This is a
fragments
because it
is missing
a noun.**

- **Listening to music.**
- Who is listening?

How can we fix this fragment?

- Add a subject:
Mark was listening to music.
- Combine with another sentence:
Mark enjoys reading books and listening to music.

These fragments are missing a verb.

- **The man with a heavy coat and big shoes.**

- Did what?

- **The kitchen table.**

- What about the table?

How can we fix this fragment?

- Add a verb: **The man with the heavy coat and big shoes ran past the building and into the ally.**

- Combine with another idea: **The kitchen table was covered with food.**



Subordinate clauses are fragments.

A subordinate clause may sound like sentence because it has a subject and verb.

However, it begins with a word that makes it subordinate.

Examples of Subordinate Conjunctions

After
Although
As
Because
Before
Even though
Since
While
Until
Whether
If

Fragment Examples

- After they understood the problem.
- Because it was expected.
- So that drivers would be more careful.



**Phrases
are
fragments.**

- Phrases differ from clauses because they are missing either a subject or verb.
- Example:

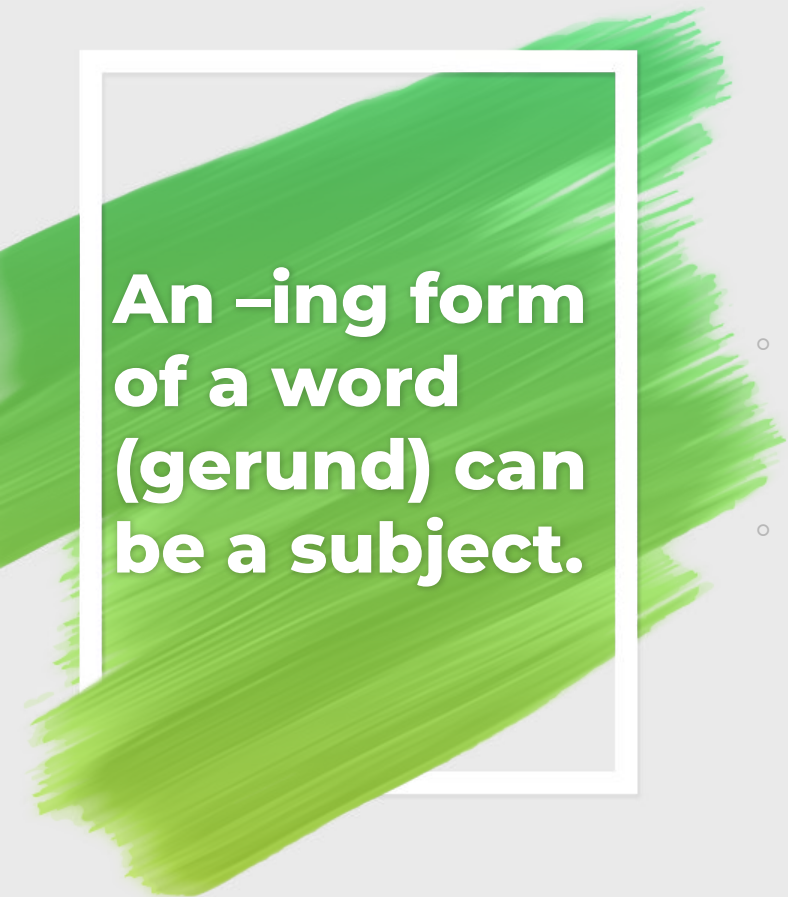
The English department is looking for a new teacher. Preferably a writing teacher.

Correction:

The English department is looking for a new teacher preferably a writing teacher.



2.
**Special Problems with
Fragments**



**An –ing form
of a word
(gerund) can
be a subject.**

**Writing is an
important skill.**

- This is a complete sentence.
- “Writing” acts as a noun in this sentence.

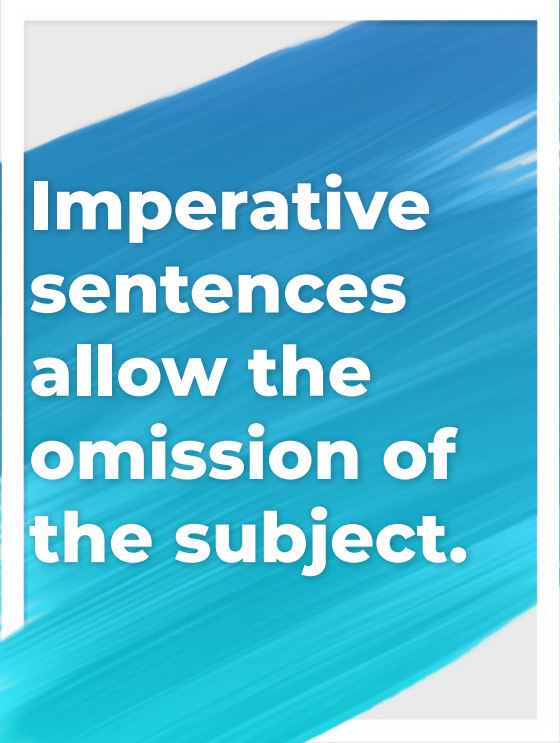
**Langston Hughes
has achieved great
success. Writing
poetry.**

- This contains a fragment.
- A fragment can occur when the –ing word is part of an incomplete verb or the subject of sentence is in the previous sentence.
- Correction: Langston Hughes has achieved great success writing poetry.

**Fragments
can begin
with an
infinitive.**

**Maya Angelou
developed a resilient
attitude. To overcome
childhood traumas.**

- Infinitive =
to + base form of the
verb
- Correction: Maya
Angelou developed a
resilient attitude to
overcome childhood
traumas.
- To correct fragments
like this, you can simply
combine the sentence
and fragment, or
additional words may
be added for clarity.
- Another Correction:
Maya Angelou
developed a resilient
attitude because she
had to overcome
childhood traumas.



**Imperative
sentences
allow the
omission of
the subject.**

- Imperative sentences are commands that have an understood subject of “you”
- Example:

Make your bed.

The subject is “you”; you are to make your bed.

Review

- What is a fragment?
- How can we fix fragments?
- What is one special problem to keep in mind?

