



The Write Stuff

Grabbling with Grammar & Sentence Fragments

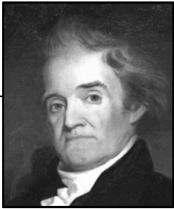
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Sentence Fragments

SENTENCE FRAGMENTS ARE GROUPS OF WORDS (PHRASES OR DEPENDENT CLAUSES) THAT MASQUERADE AS SENTENCES.

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Masquerading?!?!

mas·quer·ade
/ˌmɑskəˈrɑd/ ◀

verb
gerund or present participle: *masquerading*

pretend to be someone one is not.
"a journalist masquerading as a man in distress"
synonyms: pretend to be, pose as, pass oneself off as, impersonate, disguise oneself as
"a woman masquerading as a man"


- be disguised or passed off as something else.
"the idle gossip that masquerades as news in some local papers"

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A Fragment Illustrated

"Because the rental truck accidentally knocked down the power pole."


► The dependent clause above obviously is a fragment. The thought is incomplete.



They can kiss their rental deposit goodbye!

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The Origin of the Sentence Fragment



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Hey, don't—

THE FIRST SENTENCE FRAGMENT

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Hiding in Plain Sight...


- ▶ Becky overslept and missed her Old Testament final exam. Having stayed up until 2 AM studying with her friends.
- ▶ In context, however, fragments make sense and blend in with the surrounding sentences.



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Corrected

- ▶ **To correct** the fragment, move it to the previous sentence before or immediately following the word it describes.
- ▶ Becky, having stayed up until 2 AM studying with her friends, overslept and missed her Old Testament final exam.



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Common places that hide Sentence Fragments



10

1. Dependent Clauses standing alone


- ▶ **Incorrect:** The umpire refused to reverse his decision. Although the replay showed the umpire was completely out of position to make the call.
- ▶ **Correct:** The umpire refused to reverse his decision, although the replay showed the umpire was completely out of position to make the call.



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2. Participial phrases (ing)

- ▶ **Incorrect:** Joe was unable to get a managerial position. Having dropped out of school in the ninth grade.
- ▶ **Correct:** Having dropped out of school in the ninth grade, Joe was unable to get a managerial position.



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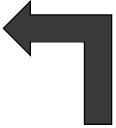
3. Noun Fragments (clauses)

Did someone say "Clauses?!?!"



3. Noun Fragments (clauses) 13


▶ **Incorrect:** Sam is honest and courageous. A man **who will stand up for the truth despite danger to himself.**



A group of words that begins with a noun that repeats and emphasizes a noun in the previous sentence--The noun in the fragment is often followed by **a clause beginning with who, which, or that.**


3. Noun Fragments (clauses) 14

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Relative Pronouns: Who, which, that 15



3. Noun Fragments (clauses) 16

▶ **Incorrect:** Sam is honest and courageous. A man who will stand up for the truth despite danger to himself.

▶ **Correct:** Sam is honest and courageous, a man who will stand up for the truth despite danger to himself.

