

## 1 Here's the Idea

▲ A sentence fragment is a part of a sentence that is punctuated as if it were a complete sentence.

To figure out whether a word group is a fragment, ask the following questions. If the answer to any of the questions is no, the word group is a sentence fragment.

- Does the word group have a subject?
- Does it have a verb?
- Does it express a complete thought?

The first word group below is a fragment because it doesn't have a subject or express a complete thought.

**Fragment:** **Hired a student to work in the office.**

**Sentence:** **The principal hired a student to work in the office.**

## Subordinate Clauses as Fragments

A subordinate (dependent) clause contains a subject and a verb. By itself, however, a subordinate clause is a fragment because it does not express a complete thought.

**More and more students have found technology-related jobs. Although traditional after-school jobs are still popular.**

SUBORDINATE-CLAUSE FRAGMENT

### Here's How Fixing Subordinate-Clause Fragments

Here are two ways to fix a subordinate-clause fragment.

- Combine the subordinate clause with the preceding or following sentence.

**More and more students have found technology-related jobs. Although traditional after-school jobs are still popular.**

- Write the missing part of the sentence.

**Although traditional after-school jobs are still popular, computers have created new job opportunities for teens.**



Sometimes you can correct a subordinate-clause fragment by simply deleting the subordinating conjunction.

—When we interviewed a group of students about their jobs.

## Phrases as Fragments

A phrase is a group of words that functions as a part of speech, such as an adjective or a noun. A phrase by itself is a sentence fragment because it does not have a subject or a verb and does not express a complete thought. The paragraph below shows three kinds of phrase fragments.

### STUDENT MODEL

Some students enjoy working for others. However, there are plenty of opportunities for students. To create their own jobs. Maybe you are an outgoing person. With good computer skills. You could teach less-experienced people how to use computers or the Internet. If you like kids, you might want to be a baby sitter. Get experience first by volunteering. At a daycare center. Having worked with children.

INFINITIVE PHRASE

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

PARTICIPIAL PHRASE

You can correct a phrase fragment by combining it with the sentence before or after it or by writing the missing subject or verb.



### Fixing Phrase Fragments

Type of Phrase	Correction
Infinitive phrase	However, there are plenty of opportunities for students, <del>To</del> create their own jobs.
Prepositional phrase	Maybe you are an outgoing person, <del>With</del> good computer skills. Get experience first by volunteering. <del>At</del> a daycare center.
Participial phrase	Having worked with children, <del>you</del> will have an advantage over less-experienced sitters.

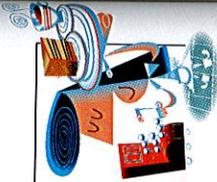
## Other Kinds of Fragments

### Compound Predicate

Sometimes a fragment occurs when a writer inserts end punctuation between the parts of a compound predicate. Fix this fragment by combining it with the sentence before it.

**Fragment:** Nicole works at the cash register. **And waits tables.**

**Sentence:** Nicole works at the cash register **and waits tables.**



### Items in a Series

A series of words or phrases cannot stand alone as a sentence. Combine the series with the sentence to which it belongs.

**Fragment:** Martin has three main responsibilities at the restaurant. **Clearing tables, setting tables, and filling water glasses.**

**Sentence:** Martin has three main responsibilities at the restaurant: **clearing tables, setting tables, and filling water glasses.**



Because sentence fragments occur naturally in conversation, writers use fragments to make dialogue more realistic.

### LITERARY MODEL

"I may have a job, Ma," she said.

"That's nice," Mrs. Wilson said. **"Baby-sitting?"**

**"On the stage,"** Elise said.

—John Cheever, "The Opportunity"

## 2 Why It Matters in Writing

You may write fragments when you take notes. If you use your notes to write a formal letter or a report, however, you should turn the fragments into complete sentences.

*job notes*  
photographer's assistant  
must have office experience  
knowledge of equipment

... I am applying for the job of photographer's assistant. I was an office assistant at my mother's travel agency last summer, and I have experience using photo equipment . . .

## 1 Here's the Idea

▶ **A run-on sentence is two or more sentences written as though they were one sentence.**

A run-on is created when sentences are run together with no punctuation between them, or run together with only a comma between them (called a **comma splice**). The easiest way to fix a run-on is to separate the sentences with a period and a capital letter.

**A gopher runs errands for others. Gophers should be energetic.**

### Here's How Fixing Run-Ons

Here are four more techniques you can use to fix a run-on.

- Add a comma and a conjunction.

**Many professionals are too busy to do errands themselves, they need someone who can help them.**

- If the two sentences are closely related, add a semicolon.

**Some gophers are required to have a driver's license, most gophers ride bicycles.**

- Add a semicolon, a conjunctive adverb, and a comma if needed.

**Gophers may be paid for the gasoline they use; however, they should negotiate the payment before accepting each job.**

- Make one of the clauses subordinate by adding a subordinating conjunction.

**Whey Bike-riding gophers ride fast, they can become dangerous to pedestrians.**



When checking for run-ons, don't look only for long sentences. Run-ons can be short.

**That's my bike, it has a flat tire.**



## 2 Why It Matters in Writing

Run-ons are confusing and frustrating. Readers can't tell where one idea ends and the next one begins.

**Louisa ran errands for her boss all day now she is exhausted.**