WRITING COMPLETE SENTENCES

Complete sentences include main characters that perform specific actions. Main characters are subjects, and specific actions are verbs. Many sentence fragments do not contain subjects or verbs.

HOW TO CORRECT FRAGMENTS

1. Find the subject and verb – Ask yourself, “Who is the main character in this sentence? What action are they performing?” You have found a fragment if the sentence does not contain one of these elements.
2. Add the missing element – You can add a subject or a verb to the fragmented sentence, creating a complete thought. This can resolve the fragment; however, you should still verify that the sentence stands grammatically.
3. Look for words that require explanation – These words can include coordinating conjunctions like “and,” “but,” or “for;” transition words such as “then” or “next;” and subordinating conjunctions such as “because,” “during,” or “while.” You have identified a fragment when you see these words without explanations.
4. Explain loose ends – Clarify your coordinating conjunctions, transition words, and subordinating conjunctions. (See “Sentence Variety Guide” for more information.) Your reader should understand what occurs and how or why it occurs.

TWO TYPES OF FRAGMENTS

Fragment: Began writing the paper.

- Find the subject and the verb: Began writing the paper.
  - “Began writing” acts as the verb, but the sentence does not have a subject.
- Add the missing element: Subject
  - Ask yourself, “Who began writing?” Your answer is your subject.

Complete Sentence: Nikki began writing the paper.

Fragment: While Nikki wrote.

- Look for words that require explanation: While Nikki wrote.
  - “While” requires explanation, but this sentence fragment does not give an explanation.
- Explain loose end: Subordinating Conjunction
  - Ask yourself, “What occurred while Nikki wrote?”

Complete Sentence: While Nikki wrote, the kids cooked dinner.