

## Fragment

A fragment is a piece of a sentence.

A group of words may appear to be a sentence, but if one of the following elements is missing, the result is a fragment.

- a. The subject is missing: is setting the trap
- b. The verb is missing: the hunter in the woods
- c. Both the subject and the verb are missing: in the woods
- d. The subject and verb are present, but the group of words does not express a complete thought: The hunter set

### HOW DO YOU CORRECT A FRAGMENT?

1. Add the missing part or parts. Fragment: across the lake to be added: subject and verb  
Complete sentence: I swam across the lake. The prepositional phrase across the lake is a fragment because a prepositional phrase cannot function as the subject or the verb in a sentence. Furthermore, the words across the lake do not express a complete thought. 2. Join the fragment to the sentence where it belongs. If you look at the context in which a fragment occurs, you will often find that the complete thought is already present. The writer did not recognize that the fragment belonged to the sentence that came just before or to the sentence that immediately followed. Therefore, another way to correct a fragment is to join the fragment to the sentence that precedes it or to the sentence that immediately follows it. Which sentence you choose depends on where the information in the fragment belongs. Study the example below. Incorrect: In the middle of the night, I swam. Across the lake. The water was cool and inviting. Correct: In the middle of the night, I swam across the lake. The water was cool and inviting. Fragments can exist in a writer's work for a number of reasons. A writer may become careless for a moment or may not fully understand how all the parts of a sentence work. If the writer does not have a clear idea of what he or she is trying to say, fragments and other errors are more likely to occur. Sometimes another try at expressing the same idea may produce a better result.

Correcting Fragments by Adding the Missing Parts Make each of the following fragments into a complete sentence by adding the missing part or parts.

1. Returned to the sea (add a subject)
2. A bird on the oak branch (add a verb)
3. Between the island and the mainland (add a subject and a verb)