

Identifying Sentences and Fragments

STRATEGY: IDENTIFYING SENTENCES AND FRAGMENTS

TEACH/PRACTICE

REVIEW/RETEACH

Student Objectives

- Distinguish between sentences and fragments.
- Identify common errors that create fragments.

Materials

- Practice: Identifying Sentences and Fragments

Writing Tip

Not all sentence fragments are short. Reread long sentences as well as short ones to make sure each has both a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought.

Teach/Model

Remind students that a sentence is a group of words that tells a complete thought. A sentence fragment does not tell a complete thought and is missing the subject, the verb, or both.

- Explain how to distinguish between **sentences** and **fragments**. *Ask yourself these three questions: Does this group of words have a subject? Does it have a verb that tells what the subject does or is? Does it express a complete thought? If you answer no to any of the questions, it is a fragment.*
- Discuss errors that create fragments. *Writing carelessly or too quickly can result in work that contains fragments. You may leave out an important word, or put in a period too soon and cut off part of a sentence.*
- Write these examples on the board. Ask the three questions above and use the modeling to show how to distinguish between sentences and fragments.

Example	Model/Think Aloud
<p>Fragment: Spreading quickly through the dry forest.</p> <p>Sentence: Spreading quickly through the dry forest, the fire was beyond control.</p>	<p><i>This fragment is missing a subject. I don't know who or what is spreading. The addition of the subject, the fire, creates a sentence with a complete thought.</i></p>
<p>Fragment: The forest fire close to town.</p> <p>Sentence: The forest fire raged close to town.</p>	<p><i>This fragment is missing a verb. I don't know what the forest fire does or is. The addition of the verb, raged, creates a sentence with a complete thought.</i></p>
<p>Fragment: I watched. As it burned everything in sight.</p> <p>Sentence: I watched as it burned everything in sight.</p>	<p><i>The first period comes too soon so the second part is not a complete thought. By taking out the period and combining the parts, the sentence becomes a complete thought with a subject and a verb.</i></p>

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Identifying Sentences and Fragments *(Continued)*

▸ **Guided Practice/Apply**

Write the following on the board. Guide students to identify complete sentences, fragments missing a subject, fragments missing a verb, and fragments that don't express a complete thought.

1. When the earthquake hit. *(fragment; doesn't express a complete thought)*
2. A crack in the earth deeper than a 10-story building. *(fragment; missing a verb)*
3. Emergency workers were unable to get through the rubble. *(complete sentence)*
4. Creating an enormous tsunami. *(fragment; missing a subject)*

Assign **Practice**. Have students check their recent writing and correct any sentence fragments they find.