MPC English & Study Skills Center

Identifying and Correcting Fragments

A **fragment** is a word group that cannot stand alone as complete sentence. Fragments can occur when a sentence has a missing subject or verb, or when a phrase or clause is used as if it were a complete sentence. Here are three different types of fragments.

Renamer Fragment

A renamer fragment usually follows a complete sentence. Warning: Read each word group carefully to identify the fragment. Sometimes, your mind will automatically correct the renamer fragment, connecting it to the word group before it.

For example:

While gardening, Vince dug up a plant that had taken over the yard. An English ivy.

Notice the renamer fragment hangs on at the end of the first word group. If you read the whole thing quickly, your eye may not notice that a period separates the end of one word group and the beginning of another.

When you read each word group separately, it's easier to pick out the fragment.

While gardening, Vince dug up a plant that had taken over the yard. (complete sentence)

An English ivy. (fragment—word group does not contain a verb)

Warning! When correcting renamer fragments, watch the punctuation. Remember to add a comma.

Corrected sentence:

While gardening, Vince dug up a plant that had taken over the yard, an English ivy.

Don't forget the comma!

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-ing Fragment

An **-ing fragment** also usually appears next to a complete sentence. Remember to treat each word group separately.

Beware! Not all –ing words automatically make a word group incomplete.

For example:

Antoinette goes to the gym every day. Exercising is important for good health.

Antoinette goes to the gym every day. Exercising for an hour.

Which—ing word group is a fragment? Use the "I Realize" tip to identify the fragment. Does the word group make sense as a sentence when "I realize" is added at the beginning?

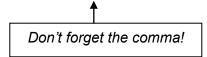
(I realize) Exercising is important for good health. (complete sentence)

(I realize) Exercising for an hour. (fragment)

Remember to use a comma when correcting –ing fragments.

Corrected sentence:

Antoinette goes to the gym every day, exercising for an hour.



Adverb Fragment

An adverb fragment includes a word (such as because, if, when, whenever, although, which) that makes a word group unable to stand alone.

For example:

Marchand plays the violin. (complete sentence)

Because Marchand plays the violin. (adverb fragment)

Warning! When correcting adverb fragments, watch the punctuation. Remember to add a comma when it is required.

