

FINDING AND FIXING FRAGMENT ERRORS

What's a Fragment Error?

A fragment is a group of words that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence but is punctuated as a complete sentence. Usually fragments are pieces of a sentence that do not express a complete thought. The 3 main types of fragments are: renamer fragments, adverb or dependent/subordinate clause fragments, and –ing fragments. The explanations below are adapted from the book *The Commonsense Guide to Grammar and Usage* by Beason and Lester.

Renamer Fragments

This type of fragment is known as a renamer fragment because it renames or explains the last noun in the sentence before it.

Example: My first class is my favorite class. Math 87.

Example: To get help with homework, I often go to TRiO. Which helps me stay in school.

Adverb or Dependent/Subordinate Clause Fragments

These fragments explain when, where, or why something happened. They depend on another sentence in order to make sense. The fragments below explain why or when.

Example: I was really excited. Because I got an A on my first quiz.

Example: I hope I will do well on the next quiz. Although I have to cope with math anxiety.

–ing Fragments

This type of fragment begins with the verb in the –ing form.

Example: I saw a tutor several times before the last quiz. Focusing on strategies for test taking.

Example: I practice these strategies. Studying for my math quiz.

How Do You Fix a Fragment Error?

When you find a fragment error, you have two ways to fix it.

Option 1: Attach the fragment to the sentence before or after the fragment.

Example: I was really excited because I got an A on my first quiz.

Example: Because I got an A on my first quiz, I was really excited.

Example: To get help with homework, I often go to TRiO, which helps me stay in school.

Option 2: Create a new sentence by adding a subject, a verb, or both so that the sentence will express a complete thought.

Example: I focused on strategies for test taking. (Subject added)

TIPBOX

The “I realize” test for finding fragments

If you suspect a sentence is a fragment, do the *I realize* test by putting the phrase “I realize” before the suspected fragment and reading it aloud. Often you will be able to hear that the fragment is not a complete thought because you are waiting for more information.

I realize studying for my math quiz ... ?

I realize because I got an A on my first quiz ... ?

Sentence Practice

Please underline and fix the following fragment errors:

1. Going to a community college is much more economical than a university. Which is why I chose to attend Edmonds CC.
2. It’s important to plan your class schedule before registration actually begins. Because the classes can fill up fast.
3. On Edmonds CC’s main campus, you can also take some classes at a four-year school. Central Washington University.
4. Taking classes here at Edmonds. I feel like the teachers want me to learn and do well.
5. After leaving Edmonds CC. I plan to get a job in the area.

Paragraph Practice

Find and fix the fragments in the paragraph below. To fix a fragment, you can 1) Attach it to a previous sentence or a following sentence, 2) Add a subject if it needs a subject, 3) Add a main verb if it needs a verb. Make minimal changes; that is, do not completely re-write the sentences. Other than the fragments, the sentences are correct the way they are. There are 12 fragments in this exercise.

The boat ride to the island took about two hours. Our boat held a lot of tourists. About thirty people. As we were cruising. We could see dolphins in the water. They started playing with us. Coming very close to the boat. Jumping, flipping, and splashing. We raced with the dolphins. Which was exciting. Even though we lost. We reached the island's shore at sunset. Just in time for the luau. We saw a show at the Polynesian Cultural Center. Dancing and singing in traditional Polynesian costumes. We tasted many local dishes. I loved all of the foods. Especially the poi. Which is ground up taro root. When it was time to get back on the boat. I wanted to stay. Because my first trip to Hawaii was so fun. (**12 errors**)

For More Practice

The Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University has several resources—try them out!

- [Sentence Fragments](#)
(click the link above or go to owl.purdue.edu/owl, click on **General Writing**, then **Mechanics**, then select **Sentence Fragments**)
- [Sentence Fragment Exercises](#)
(click the link above or go to owl.purdue.edu/owl_exercises, click on **Sentence Structure** and select **Sentence Fragments**)