

Fragments

A fragment is an incomplete piece -- a fragment -- of a sentence.

To test for a fragment, see if it can stand alone and still mean something. If it cannot, it is a fragment.

- a) I like ice cream. Especially chocolate.
- b) We all ran inside. Because it was bitterly cold.
- c) Some people are amazingly inconsiderate. My roommate, for example.

Fragments are often found in fiction or magazine articles, because they are punchy and they capture the way people speak. However, for academic purposes, do not use them.

Fixing fragments:

- attach the fragment to the sentence it belongs to
- attach the fragment with a comma, dash or colon, if appropriate
- turn the fragment into a new sentence by creating a subject and verb

I like ice cream -- especially chocolate.

We all ran inside because it was bitterly cold.

Some people are amazingly inconsiderate. My roommate is one of them.

Practice. Identify the fragments in this paragraph and fix them.

Driving through the landscape of southern Utah at dusk was a little frightening. It was very dark. No cars on the road. Just a long white line ahead of me, under my lights. I had wanted to drive down the dirt road that led to the Valley of the Gods, where I heard there were some beautiful rock formations, but suddenly I didn't dare. Someone had told me that this was the part of the desert where the shape shifters lived. Shape shifters are said to be native Americans who have the power to change their shape. Not always for good purposes. So, I kept going. Even though I was tempted to stop. Now I am sorry. Because I will probably never get another chance to go back there.

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