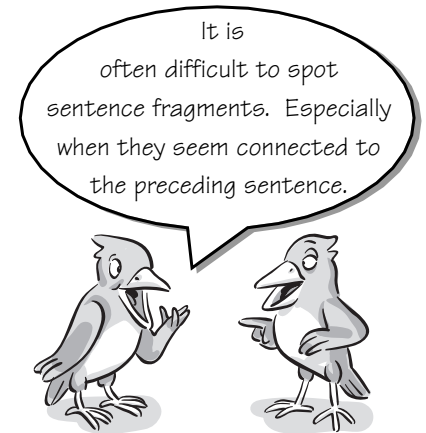


Unit 3: Sentence Fragments

Units 3, 4, and 5 provide strategies for and practice with identifying complete sentences and fixing the most common sentence problems: fragments and run-ons. Unit 3 focuses on identifying and correcting sentence fragments.

Definition: *Sentence fragments* are incomplete thoughts that have been punctuated as if they were sentences.

Example: A sentence like this one, for example.



Teaching Tips

- ★ Students often find it difficult to recognize fragments and thus to eliminate them from their writing. Why? They are assailed with fragments every day—when they think, when they converse, when they write dialogue, and even when they read.

Expert writers use fragments to fit their style and the occasion. If students are to use fragments effectively in their writing, then first they need to be able to distinguish between fragments and complete thoughts.

- ★ The example above illustrates the most common fragment error: An incomplete thought that is really an extension of a preceding thought is punctuated as if it were a separate sentence. These mistakes often occur in explanations and examples.

The easiest way to correct this kind of error is simply to attach the offending fragment to the sentence before it by removing the preceding period, adding a comma (if necessary), and changing the uppercase letter to lowercase. Alternatively, you can turn the fragment into a sentence by adding a subject or other needed words.

Sentence with fragment: I always admired Gandhi. The great Indian leader.

Correction: I always admired Gandhi, the great Indian leader.

Alternative: I always admired Gandhi. He was a great Indian leader.

- ★ Students also can be reassured that fragments in quoted dialogue are perfectly correct since we so often leave out words when we speak.

Mini-Lesson

Since students experience the most trouble identifying sentence fragments when the fragments are combined with a related thought, exercises should include the complete thoughts that set up and mask the fragments as well as the fragments themselves.

To get your students used to proofreading for fragments, write some of the common patterns on the board—complete thoughts followed by fragments that are examples, explanations, and other related phrases—and then ask for ideas about how to correct each one. Some students will want to add words to make the fragment a separate sentence while most will probably want to attach it to the preceding thought. Go through the appropriate punctuation changes. In some cases no punctuation may be needed, in some a comma will need to be inserted in place of the period, and for lists or examples you may need a dash or colon.

Here are a few examples and possible corrections:

Example: These are the contenders. Martha, Maya, and Frances.

Correction: These are the contenders: Martha, Maya, and Frances.

Example: He was lost in his own world. Dreaming of daring deeds in distant lands.

Correction: He was lost in his own world, dreaming of daring deeds in distant lands.

Example: We'll get lunch. After we do our shopping.

Correction: We'll get lunch after we do our shopping.

Example: You will enjoy the performance. But not for long!

Correction: You will enjoy the performance—but not for long!

Answers

Page 17, Message in a Grid

Fragments: 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12. **Answer:** Russia

Page 18, Maze

Answer Key: The correct path goes through: **1.** My aunt has a bright red umbrella. **2.** A strong wind broke my umbrella. **3.** Umbrellas have a long, interesting history. **4.** Will it rain tonight? **5.** My umbrella didn't keep my feet dry! **6.** A few lightning bolts are sixty miles long. **7.** I love to hear rain on the roof. **8.** Didn't you wear your boots? **9.** I always lose my umbrellas. **10.** Do you know what to do in a thunderstorm? **11.** The weather is often hard to predict.

Bonus: **1.** Umbrellas used as sunshades are called *parasols*. **2.** The Romans used *parasols*.

Name _____

Date _____

Message in a Grid

What is the largest country in the world? _____

Directions: Find the answer to this question in the grid below by correctly identifying the sentence fragments in the following exercise. Circle the number of any example that is a fragment. Then, circle the letter in the grid that matches. The first fragment has been identified for you.

1. Jacqueline loved her dog.
- ② A Great Dane named Raina who was almost a perfect pet.
3. Raina was playful, loving, gentle, smart, and obedient (usually).
4. She did, however, have one or two bad habits.
5. Like getting too excited sometimes when Jacqueline took her for a walk on her leash.
6. Which made Jacqueline think that she was holding back a horse rather than a dog.
7. You see, Raina weighed over 140 pounds.
8. And was almost four feet tall and very powerful.
9. Making her very hard to restrain if she saw another dog, a squirrel, or some other small animal.
10. What did Jacqueline do in such a situation?
11. She spoke to Raina in a serious, commanding voice.
12. And then looked for a tree, a park bench, or something else very solid that she could hold on to for dear life!



3	2	7	4	12	10	6	11	9	5	1	8
B	R	E	A	U	Z	S	M	S	I	L	A

Name _____

Date _____

Maze

Directions: Trace a path from start to finish that passes through 11 complete sentences. Avoid sentence fragments, for they act as blocks!

START

Umbrellas used as sunshades are called parasols.

My aunt has a bright red umbrella.

A strong wind broke my umbrella.

Bending it inside out in one big gust.

Umbrellas have a long, interesting history.

The Romans used parasols.

Not much good in a hurricane.

Three people under one umbrella.

A mixture of rain, sleet, and very wet snow.

Lightning often striking tall buildings.

Didn't you wear your boots?

I love to hear rain on the roof.

Rain not stopping the football game.

Most lightning staying within clouds.

A few lightning bolts are sixty miles long.

My umbrella didn't keep my feet dry!

Umbrella, from the Latin *umbra*, meaning shade.

END

Will it rain tonight?

★ **Bonus:** Can you find two more complete sentences that are not on the correct path to the end?
