

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 (these explanations are adapted from The Commonsense Guide to Grammar and Usage by Beason and Lester):

Renamer Fragments: This type is known as a **Renamer Fragment** because it **renames or explains** the last noun in the sentence before it:

- My first class is my favorite class. Math 90.
- 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.

- I was really excited. Because I got an A on my first quiz.
- 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 a verb in the *-ing* form.

- I saw my tutor several times before the last quiz. Focusing on strategies for test taking.
- I practice these strategies. Studying for my math quiz.

How do I fix a fragment error? When you find a fragment error, you have 2 ways to fix it:

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

- I was really excited because I got an A on my first quiz.
- Because I got an A on my first quiz, I was really excited.
- 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.

- 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 read it aloud. Usually you will be able to “hear” that the fragment is not a complete thought because you are waiting for more information, so it is not a complete sentence.

- *I realize* studying for my math quiz . . .?
- *I realize* because I got an A on my first quiz. . .?

Sentence Practice: Please Underline and repair the following fragments errors:

1. Going to a community college is much more economical than a university. Which is why I chose to attend EdCC.
2. It's important to plan your class schedule before registration actually begins. Because the classes can fill up fast.
3. On EdCC'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 EdCC. I plan to get a job in the area.

Paragraph Practice: Find and fix the fragments in the exercise below. To fix a fragment, you can 1.) Attach it to the previous sentence or the following sentence, 2.) Add a subject if it needs a subject, or 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 2 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 and to test your knowledge, go to:

- Capital Community College Guide to Grammar and Writing
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/fragments.htm>
- The Online Writing Lab at Purdue University
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/620/01/>