



COMMUNITY COLLEGE

OF RHODE ISLAND

Fragments

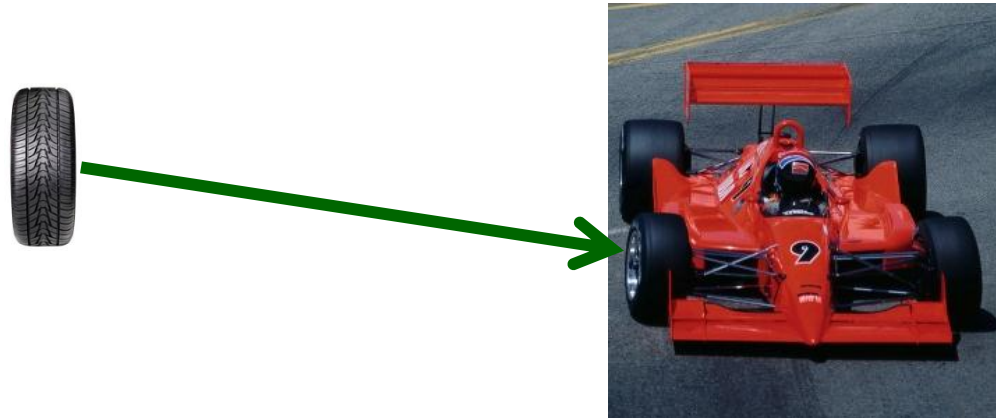
Dr. Karen Petit



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A Fragment is ?

A fragment is a part of an idea,
just like a tire is a part of a car.



Can a long sentence be a fragment?

- A fragment is not defined by its size, but rather by its structure.
- A large tire is still a tire. It does not become a car just because it is large. A large tire is still missing an engine, roof, seats, and other items.
- A fragment is missing at least one word. Even if a fragment is long, it is still an incomplete sentence.



An Example Revision

- Fixing a long fragment often means adding even more words; however, if a fragment is correctly revised, the new sentence will make more sense.
- Here is a **long fragment**:
At two o'clock in the afternoon, people the old battery and placed it near the new tires on the opposite side of the street.
- Here is a **revision of a long fragment**:
At two o'clock in the afternoon, people moved the old battery and placed it near the new tires on the opposite side of the street.



A Fragment is a Part of a Sentence

- The word “Brazil” is a fragment (an incomplete sentence).
- “Brazil” cannot stand by itself as a whole idea.
- A listener of the word “Brazil” might ask questions; then the speaker will say some more words to explain what “Brazil” means. Here are two example questions: “What do you mean by Brazil? Are you going on a trip to Brazil?”



Fragments in Dialogue

- When people speak to each other, they often use fragments, especially when they answer questions.
- Even if the word “Brazil” can be understood because it answers someone’s question, the word is still a fragment.



Informal Versus Formal

- Informal communications (such as texting, dialogue, and e-mails to friends) often have fragments in them.
- Formal written communications (such as essays, research papers, and formal reports at work), should not have fragments in them, except for parallel listed items, dialogue, titles, headings, and places where emphasis is needed.



A Correct Sentence Conveys a Complete Idea.

A grammatically correct sentence needs to convey a complete idea with:

- a subject and a verb
- an independent clause
- all words that are necessary to complete the sentence

**On my vacation,
I am going to
Brazil.**

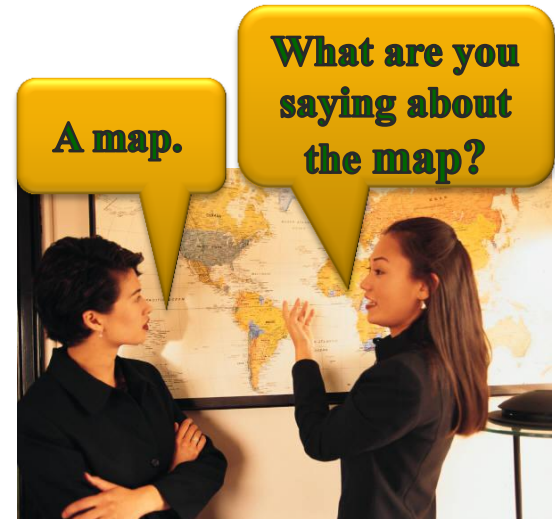


A Subject and a Verb

- Every complete sentence has both a subject and a verb.
- A subject is the who or what the sentence is about. A subject has to be either a noun or a pronoun.
- A verb describes action or a state of being. A verb can ask a question or make a statement. A sentence sometimes has both a main verb and a helping (auxiliary) verb(s).
 - **Fragment: Going to Brazil.**
 - **Revision: I am going to Brazil.**

An Independent Clause

- A correct sentence must have at least one independent clause, which will include both a subject and a verb.
- The independent clause must be able to stand by itself.
 - **Fragment: A map.**
 - **Revision: A map is on the wall.**



Both an Independent and a Dependent Clause

- A correct sentence often includes a dependent (subordinate) clause.
- A dependent clause can begin with a **relative pronoun** (*who, whom, which, that, . . .*) or with a **subordinating conjunction** (*after, although, as, because, before, even, even though, if, since, so that, though, unless, until, what, when, where, while, . . .*).
- To be correctly done, a sentence with a dependent clause must also have at least one independent clause.

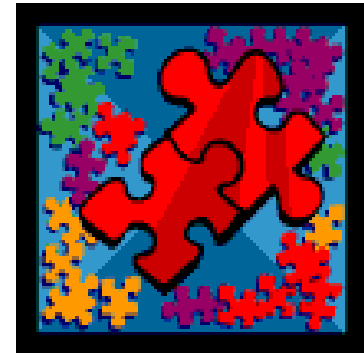


Revisions of Dependent–Clause Fragments

- A dependent-clause fragment can be revised by making it into an independent clause or by connecting it to a nearby independent clause.
- **A dependent-clause fragment:**
 - **Because the map is on the wall.** We can find all of the continents.
- **Examples of revision:**
 - **The map is on the wall.** We can find all of the continents.
 - **Because the map is on the wall, we can find all of the continents.**

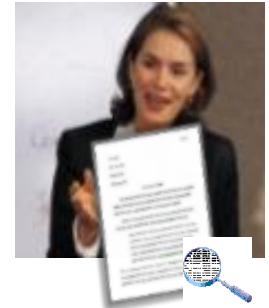
All Necessary Words

- A correct sentence is not missing any essential words.
- Like a puzzle with a piece missing, a fragment is missing a part of its meaning.
 - **Fragment:** I going Brazil.
 - **Revision:** I am going to Brazil.



To Find Fragments: Read a Paper Backwards

Incomplete ideas will be easier to spot when the last sentence is read first, the second-to-last sentence is read second,



Read 7th: Organization is important in helping people to see how different ideas are connected. **Read 6th:** In paragraphs, essays, and speeches. **Read 5th:** Organization is also needed in other areas of our lives. **Read 4th:** For example, a closet. **Read 3rd:** When we put items into a closet, most of us do not just throw all of the items into a pile. **Read 2nd:** We might hang some clothes on hangers, arrange other items on a shelf, and put some objects in a box. **Read 1st:** Arranging shoes in a row on the floor.

To Find Fragments: Analyze the Parts

Effective analysis means to look closely at the subject, verb, joining words, and other parts of a sentence to see if anything is missing.



To Find Fragments: Look at Typical Problem Areas

1. Some fragments are missing a subject, a verb, or a part of a verb.
 - **Fragment: Driving a car.**
 - **Revision: I am driving a car.**
2. Some fragments are subordinate clauses, rather than being correctly joined to an independent clause.
 - **Fragment: Because my car has good tires.**
 - **Revision: In the winter, I enjoy driving my car because it has good tires.**
3. A subject and a verb are needed when using added-detail words (*for example, in addition, such as, . . .*).
 - **Fragment: For example, all-season radial tires.**
 - **Revision: For example, all-season radial tires are good on snowy roads.**

Revision Methods

Fragment: Driving down the road.

- Attach the fragment to a nearby sentence.
 - **Revision:** Driving down the road, we had fun.
- Add in one or more words.
 - **Revision:** I am driving down the road.
- Restructure the sentence while adding in more words.
 - **Revision:** We were having fun while we were driving down the road to the Amusement Park.

More Information

The Writing Center at the Community College of Rhode Island has more online resources.



Contact Information

This presentation is the creation of

Dr. Karen Petit

Community College of Rhode Island

400 East Avenue

Warwick, RI 02886

E-mail: kmpetit@ccri.edu

Phone: 401-825-2279

