



Learning Center – A free tutoring service for all RCTC and WSU undergraduate students

## **Identifying and Fixing Sentence Errors: Fragments**

Includes Exercise

Some sentences are unclear because of incorrect word choices, awkward word or phrase placement, or because words or phrases are missing. This series of handouts, and the exercises connected with them focus on sentences in which there exist errors that are mechanical in nature and which result from incorrect punctuation or a lack of punctuation, namely, **fragments, run-ons, and comma splice** sentences.

### **Definition:**

Fragment - A sentence (or independent clause) is a group of words that contain a *subject*, a *main verb*, and which *completes a thought*. A phrase that lacks one or more of these elements is called a **fragment**. There are four kinds of fragments:

1. fragments without a subject
2. fragments without a verb
3. fragments with verbs/verb phrases that are not the main verb

Examples:

- -ing form of the verb used alone
  - “to” before the verb (*infinitive*)
4. fragments that have a subject and verb, but which begin with a subordinator (these are called *dependent clauses* and are most likely the beginning or end of a *complex sentence*.)

### **Examples:**

- Walks eight blocks everyday to get to work. (Fragment – no subject. *Who* walks eight blocks everyday?)
- The snarling dog. (Fragment – no verb. What does the dog do?)
- Going to the concert on Thursday night. (Fragment – verb that is not main verb – also, no subject) or,
- To ice fish in January. (Again, fragment - verb that is not main verb – also, no subject)
- Although he earns very little. (Fragment – contains both subject and verb, but is preceded by a subordinator: *although*.)

### Exercise One

Revise each fragment by changing it into a complete sentence. You may add words either before or after the fragment. Have a writing center tutor review your answers with you.

1. Going to Silver Lake Park

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2. After I saw the price of gas

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3. Because the calculus test was so difficult

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4. To shop at Barnes and Noble

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5. Surfing the internet

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6. A large, fluffy kitten

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7. That extremely high cliff in Red Wing, Minnesota

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### Exercise Two

Reword the fragments in the paragraph below to create complete sentences. Have a writing center tutor review your answers with you.

Silver Lake Park. In Rochester, Minnesota is a year round home to hundreds of Canadian geese. Some Rochester citizens enjoy sitting along the lake. Feeding the geese. Other people think they are a nuisance. Since they make a lot of mess. Because there are so many geese in this park. Sometimes cars cannot pass along the roads. The reason geese continue to stay in Rochester. Because the water is warm. Because they are fed well.