

FIGHTING THE FRAGMENTS

A how-to guide to overcome the common error of having fragments in your writing

1

FIND THE FRAGMENT

Fragments are groups of words that lack either a verb or a subject. These are required to create a complete sentence.

Common Fragment Examples:

- Means that the author is correct.
- The correct answer.

verb = action
subject = who or what is doing the action

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FIGURE OUT WHAT IS MISSING

Is your fragment missing a verb or a subject? Think about your sentence entirely on its own. If you read it by itself, what else would you need to know to understand the sentence?

Finding a subject:

- Who is doing the action?
- Who is having an action done to them?

Finding a verb:

- What is being done?

"Means that the author is correct" is missing the subject. "The correct answer" is missing a verb.

3

ADD WHAT IS MISSING

Once you know what's missing, make sure you add it in. If you have a missing subject, make sure the verb is in agreement.

In this example, our subject "the research and documents" are plural, so we change "means" to "mean" to make the subject and verb agree.

"Means that the author is correct" isn't enough. Try this instead: The research and documents mean that the author is correct.

4

LOOKING OUT FOR TRICKIER FRAGMENTS

Some fragments are harder to spot. Sometimes it seems like they might have both a subject and verb; however, because they begin with a subordinating clause, the clause is actually a fragment.

Some examples of subordinating clauses include:

- Although
- Because
- When
- Which
- How
- Since

Try: "Since the author uses symbolism to show it, the theme of cowardice is important."

"Since the author uses symbolism to show it" isn't a full sentence. If you read it on its own, you wouldn't know the full context.