

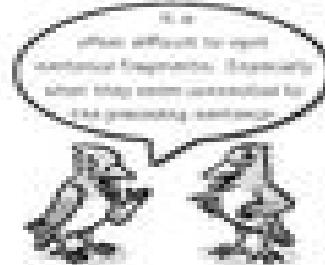


## Unit 3: Sentence Fragments

Units 3, 4, and 5 provide strategies for and practice with identifying incomplete sentences and fixing them into complete sentences. Fragments and clauses (Unit 3) focus 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 Tip

- Students often find it difficult to recognize fragments and then to determine where from there writing. Why? They are associated with fragments every day—when they think, when they converse, when they write dialogue, and even when they read.
  - Expert writers use fragments for the style and the substance. If students can learn to use fragments effectively in their writing, then that 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 results in an extension of a preceding thought or punctuated as if it were a complete sentence. These mistakes often occur in explanations and examples.
- The easiest way to correct this kind of error is simply to attach the following fragment to the sentence (either by introducing the preceding period, adding a comma [if necessary], and changing the dependent clause to independent). 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.
- Revision:** I always admired Gandhi. He was a great Indian leader.
- Students often fail to remember that fragments in quoted dialogue are partially control words and are often punctuation symbols rather than periods.

### Mini-Lesson

Since students experience the need to begin identifying sentence fragments when the fragments are combined with a related thought, reminders should include the complete thoughts that will not end until the fragments are dealt with by the fragments themselves.

