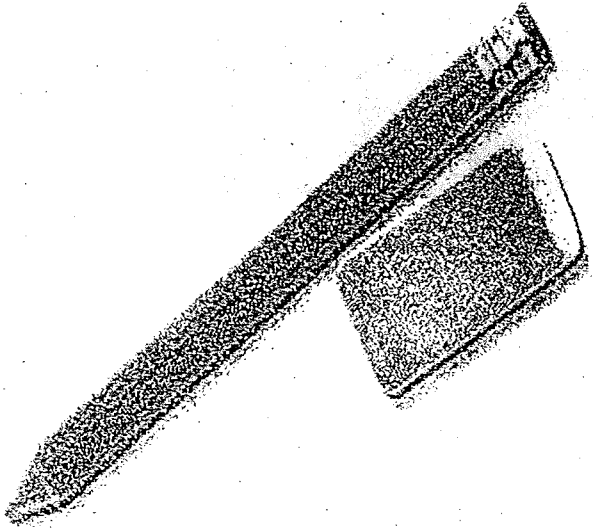


Sentence Fragments

The third most frequently made mistake in English is using sentence fragments instead of complete sentences.



What is a sentence fragment?

- A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence.
- A sentence fragment is a phrase or clause that has been punctuated as if it were a sentence.

Sometimes it is quite acceptable to use sentence fragments.

You can use them intentionally, for effect or for emphasis.



Sentence fragments are unacceptable

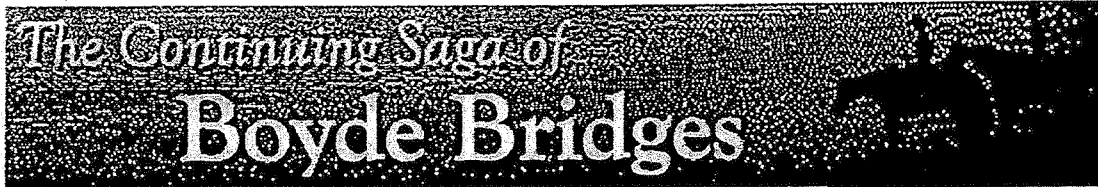
- if they appear in your writing **unintentionally**, or
- if you use them in formal writing.

Who decides if your sentence fragments are intentional or unintentional?

The reader does, based on how much skill, knowledge, and control is evident in your writing.

An important piece of advice:

- Use sentence fragments carefully and sparingly, especially in formal writing.



EXERCISES

Underline and correct the fragments

Level One

This is a story of a young man by the name of Boyde Bridges. Who lived in New Zealand one hundred and forty years ago.

Boyde sailed to New Zealand from England in 1858. To seek his fortune.

His wealthy father had given him a large sum of money. To buy a farm so that he could live the comfortable and prosperous life. Of the English landed gentry in a far-off land.

But life in the colonies was very hard and rough. And Bridges was young and inexperienced.

He quickly fell in with the wrong company. And before long, most of his money was gone.

Level Two

Bridges had made one friend, though. A man called Bill Jones, who worked as an apprentice blacksmith. Bill was an honest, hard-working

fellow. Quite different in character from Boyde. Nevertheless, the two became friends.

When gold was discovered in Central Otago. Bridges lured Jones away from his job with the blacksmith. And the two of them hastily rode off to the gold fields at Macraes to stake a claim.

It was on their way back to their claim after a trip to the settlement of Dunback for supplies. That a fateful event occurred. A sudden flash of lightning caused Bill's horse to rear up unexpectedly. And Bill was tossed to the rocky ground. The impact killing him instantly.

After a cold and miserable night high up on the barren, windswept Macraes plateau. Alone save the corpse of his dead friend. Boyde Bridges takes up the story

Level Three

It was a miserable night. That seemed to last an eternity. At last, looking eastward, I noticed a faint rose glow on the horizon. And I knew that the new day was about to dawn.

'For this relief much thanks, 'tis bitter cold and I am sick at heart.'

A violent shiver ran through me. The words of the Bard, springing unbidden from my memory. Brought with them, memories of the sunlit school days of my childhood in the gentle countryside of Mother England.

The harsh reality of the present clashed against these happy memories of the past for. Like Hamlet, I had a ghost to confront. What was I to do. Leave Bill's body to the elements and the hawks. Or somehow find a way to take him back to Dunback?

I struggled stiffly to my feet. The movement rousing my horse still tethered to a nearby rock. She whinnied and tossed her head. Her call was answered. Bill's horse. It had come back.

Now there was no choice. I had to take my friend back to civilization. For a decent Christian burial.

Level Four

I approached the nervous animal quietly. But the trailing reins had tangled on a rocky outcrop. And it was unable to flee. I led it back to where I had camped. Tethered it securely and contemplated the grisly task of loading Bill's body on to its back.

Bill was taller than me by half a head. And much heavier. I could not lift him. To get him on to the horse. I would have to force the animal to lie down long enough. To allow me to drape the corpse face down across the saddle.

Twice, it clambered to its feet abruptly. Sending sprawling, both the live man and the dead.

Finally though, as the morning sun burnished the distant snow clad peaks with fire. The job was done and we were ready for the grim journey to Dunback.

Sentence Types

There are four basic kinds of sentences in English: **simple**, **compound**, **complex**, and **compound-complex** sentences.

Simple Sentence

A **simple sentence** has a subject and a verb and expresses one complete thought.

- The alarm sounded.
- A jet soared through the darkening sky.
- Shorts and T-shirts sway on the clothesline.
- The children splashed and squealed in the swimming pool.
- Every weekend, Gary, Sam, and Rita go to the movies, eat at a Chinese restaurant, and dance at a club.

Compound Sentence

A **compound sentence** is made up of two or more complete thoughts.

-Rose wants chili for dinner, **but** she forgot to buy beans.

In the above example, the simple sentence has been connected by using a comma plus the joining word *but*. There are seven such joining words. Those words are known as *coordinating conjunctions*. (Fan Boys)

Joining Words (coordinating conjunctions)

And	(in addition)
But	(contrast, opposition)
So	(as a result)
For	(because)
Yet	(can host, opposition)
Or	(to show alternative, choice)
Nor	(to indicate a second negative statement)

Complex Sentence

A complex sentence includes one independent statement and at least one dependent statement, which cannot stand-alone.

Examples:

- Although** nearby trees were blown down, our house escaped the tornado.
- As** the kidnapper made demands on the phone, police surrounded the building.
- Paula will not sell her home in the country **even if** she gets a job in the city.

Dependent Words

After	although	as	were	because	before
even	if	even though	if	when	while
because	since	whenever	before	though	

Complex -Compound Sentence

The compound-complex sentence is a combination of compound and complex sentence types. Like the compound sentence, it includes two independent statements. Like the complex sentence, it contains at least one dependant statement.

Example:

- When** the children's parents were out of town, the babysitter had parties, **and** the children watched TV until midnight.
- Although** I like animals very much, I am away from home a great deal, **so** I do not own a pet.
- I love my grandparents, **but** I can't see them often **because** they live in Italy.

THE COMPOUND SENTENCE

A compound sentence is made up of two or more simple sentences. The two complete statements in a compound sentence are usually connected by a comma plus a coordinating word **FANBOYS** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so). When joining two statements together with a **COORDINATING WORD**, you must make sure that each statement on each side of the **COORDINATING WORD** is a complete statement. That is: each side must contain a subject, verb, and a complete thought.

ACTIVITY

Combine the following pairs of simple statements. Use a comma and a logical joining word (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).

1. My cold grew worse.

I decided to see the doctor.

2. My uncle always ignores me.

My aunt gives me kisses and presents.

3. We played softball in the afternoon.

We went to a movie in the evening.

4. My Language Arts tutor is just the most wonderful person.
She always makes me feel better.

5. Police raided the club.
Joie and Nancy got away in time.

6. Officer Sandra tried to stop them.
They jumped into a black get away car.

7. Jeannine was arrested for having too much fun.
Judge Henry let her go when she promised not to have fun
again.

COMPLEX SENTENCES

Complex sentences consist of one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses.

Subordinate conjunctions begin subordinate clauses (dependent clauses): They rose when he entered the room.

Some Subordinate Conjunctions: after, although, as, as if, because, since, though, when, whenever, while, if, so that, which, what, until, where, whereas, wherever, whether, before, how, in order that, provided (that), unless, who

If the dependent clause comes before the independent clause, it is set off with a comma.

Example: Although it was raining, we went shopping
DC

If the dependent clause comes after the independent clause, no commas are needed.

Example: I will complete the exercise whenever I find time.
DC

Relative Pronouns function like subordinate conjunctions (they begin dependent clauses): who, whom, which, that, whosoever, whomsoever, whose, what.

WRITING PRACTICE

1. Write a complex sentence with one dependent clause beginning it.
Example: When he left the party, she began to cry.
2. Write a complex sentence with one dependent clause ending it.
Example: Tom studied basic arithmetic before he took calculus.
3. Write a complex sentence with two dependent clauses.
Example: Because he was an excellent student, George received a scholarship although he didn't need the money.

Now write three complex sentences following the above patterns on another piece of paper.

Review your sentences with a teacher or tutor.

COMPLEX SENTENCES: Part 2

Using Subordinate Conjunctions: Write sentences imitating the form of the examples.

1. Although Tom was a fine mechanical engineer, he had a complete lack of interest in his job.
2. If Liz doesn't do her homework, she will probably fail the class.
3. Michelle didn't come today because she had a doctor's appointment.