

## Sentence Fragments

A fragment is less than a complete sentence. Once you are comfortable identifying the three elements that must be present in a correct sentence (actor, action, ability to stand alone), identifying fragments becomes relatively easy; a fragment lacks one or more of the three elements. In fact, a fragment will always lack the ability to stand alone. The following are examples of fragments:

- The girl sitting in back
- Yesterday, while I was at the store
- The one with the red polka dots

The trick is to "hear" the group of words you are calling a sentence to see if they express a complete thought. Hear yourself turning to the person next to you and saying, "The girl in the back."

The person next to you replies, "What about her?" You haven't expressed a complete thought. The same is true of the other two examples.

If you have trouble with fragments, try reading your work out loud. (If you're concerned that people will question your sanity, do this in a location where there is no one else around.) Read one alleged sentence at a time. With practice, you will start to identify those groups of words that are less than a sentence.

### Links to Additional Information

- "[Fragments](#)," from Big Dog's Grammar