A fragment occurs when one or more of the key elements of a sentence is missing: subject, verb, or complete idea. It is also known as an incomplete sentence.

A fragment fails to be a sentence because it cannot stand by itself. It does not contain even one independent clause; therefore, the sentence is incomplete.

Examples of sentence fragments:
- Because we left the concert early.
- This pair of shoes too tight.
- Since spring came early.

One way to determine if a sentence is a fragment or complete is to put the words "I believe that" in front of that sentence or fragment. If it makes sense and is a complete thought, it is a sentence. If the thought doesn’t sound right or is incomplete, then it is a fragment.

Ways to Correct Fragments:

1. If the fragment gives information that applies to another sentence in the paragraph, join the fragment with that sentence.
   - Because we left the concert early. We missed the grand finale.
   - Because we left the concert early, we missed the grand finale.

2. Add missing elements or words, or change the form of existing words, to make a complete sentence.
   - This pair of shoes too tight.
- This pair of shoes fits too tightly.
- *Since spring came early.*
  Since spring came early, the grass grew and I had to mow.

### 3. Delete words that make the fragment a dependent clause.
- *Since spring came early.*
- Spring came early.

#### Run-on Sentences

A run-on, or *fused sentence*, incorrectly joins two independent clauses with no punctuation, and the reader doesn’t know where one thought ends and another begins:

- We left the concert early we missed the grand finale.
- Spring came early the grass grew I had to mow.

It is important to realize that even short sentences can be run-ons:

- The sun is high, put on some sunblock.

An extremely long sentence, on the other hand, might be a "run-off-at-the-mouth" sentence but otherwise structurally sound:

- Because we left the concert early we missed the grand finale and I was mad because I missed the big event when my friends wanted to leave early so they could party at the new bar in town.

Run-on sentences typically happen under the following circumstances:

#### 1. When an independent clause gives an order based on what was said in the prior independent clause:

- This next chapter has a lot of difficult information in it you should start studying right away.

**To correct this sentence, we could put a period or semicolon.**

- This next chapter has a lot of difficult information in it. You should start studying right away.
- This next chapter has a lot of difficult information in it; you should start studying right away.
2. When two independent clauses are connected by a transitional expression (conjunctive adverb) such as however, moreover, or nevertheless.
   - Mr. Nguyen has sent his four children to Ivy League colleges, however, he has sacrificed his health working day and night in that dusty bakery.

Where that first comma appears, we could have used either a period or a semicolon.

- Mr. Nguyen has sent his four children to Ivy League colleges. However, he has sacrificed his health working day and night in that dusty bakery.
- Mr. Nguyen has sent his four children to Ivy League colleges; however, he has sacrificed his health working day and night in that dusty bakery.

3. When the second of two independent clauses contains a pronoun that connects it to the first independent clause.
   - This computer doesn't make sense to me it came without a manual.

Although these two clauses are brief, and the ideas are closely related, this is a run-on sentence. We need a period.

- This computer doesn't make sense to me. It came without a manual.

Ways to Correct Run-ons:

Original run-ons:

- We left the concert early we missed the grand finale.
- Spring came early the grass grew I had to mow.

1. Make two or three separate sentences by using a period.
   - We left the concert early. We missed the grand finale.
   - Spring came early. The grass grew. I had to mow.

2. Use a coordinating conjunction—FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)—and a comma if needed.
   - We left the concert early, so we missed the grand finale.
   - Spring came early, the grass grew, and I had to mow.

3. Use a subordinating conjunction (because, although, unless, when, if, since...) and/or restructure the sentence.
   - Because we left the concert early, we missed the grand finale.
• The grass grew, and I had to mow since spring came early.

4. Use a semicolon and conjunctive adverb—THINTIC (therefore, however, indeed, nevertheless, in fact, consequently).
   • Spring came early; therefore, I had to mow the grass because it grew quickly.
   • This pair of shoes fit tightly; consequently, my feet hurt.

5. Place periods at the end of obvious complete clauses and other correct punctuation where short sentences need to be combined.
   • Because we left the concert early we missed the grand finale and I was mad because I missed the big event when my friends wanted to leave early so they could party at the new bar in town.
   • Because we left the concert early, we missed the grand finale. Therefore, I was angry that I missed the big event because my friends wanted to leave early. They wanted to leave so they could party at the new bar in town.