If your instructor tells you that you have a problem with sentence fragments, that means that you are not writing in complete sentences. A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence incorrectly punctuated with a period.

A sentence must contain a subject and a verb.

- “Books teach.” This contains both a subject and a verb. It is a sentence.
- “In the morning, the birds.” This is missing a verb. It is a sentence fragment.

Be careful of subordinate clauses. Subordinate clauses contain both a subject and a verb but begin with subordinating conjunctions such as after, although, because, before, if, though, unless, until, when, where, who, which, or that. These words signal that the clauses are subordinate to a main clause. Subordinate clauses do not make sense on their own.

- In the sentence “Because I go to school, I get financial aid,” “Because I go to school” is the subordinate clause. If a subordinate clause ends in a period, it is a sentence fragment: “Because I go to school.”
- Connect subordinate clauses to the main clauses they support with a comma. Do not separate them with a period.

If a word group does not have a noun (unless it is a command, when “you” is implied as the subject) or a verb, it is a fragment. If a word group is a subordinate clause that is not attached to a main clause, it is also a fragment.

There are three main ways to correct sentence fragments.

- Add the missing noun. For example, the fragment “Runs through the street” can become “He runs through the street.”
- Add the missing verb. For example, the fragment “The cat in the garden” can become “The cat in the garden naps.”
- Connect a subordinate clause to a main clause. For example, the fragment “After the rain stopped” can become “After the rain stopped, the sun came out.”
The following three word groups are sentence fragments. Correct the fragments by making them into complete sentences.

1. After our teacher dismissed class today.
Correction: ____________________________

2. The gorillas at the zoo.
Correction: ____________________________

3. Ran to the bus stop.
Correction: ____________________________

Your instructor or tutor has indicated run-on sentences in your writing. Write down some of the sentences below and correct them.

Sentence: ____________________________
Correction: ____________________________

Sentence: ____________________________
Correction: ____________________________

Sentence: ____________________________
Correction: ____________________________