

## Incomplete sentences

Sentence fragments are a common mistake. A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence. It could be a prepositional phrase. Or it could be a dependent clause.

An English sentence must have a subject and a verb of its own. Study the sentences given below.

Mike took out his pen.

He started writing.

As you can see, both sentences given above have a subject and a verb of their own. They also make complete sense.

A sentence can have any number of clauses but it must have at least one main or independent clause.

A dependent or subordinate clause, too, will have a subject and a verb of its own. However, a dependent clause cannot stand on its own. It needs to be attached to an independent clause.

It is easy to determine whether a clause is a dependent clause or an independent clause.

A dependent clause will almost always begin with a subordinating conjunction. Examples are: *if, when, whether, before, after, unless, though, although, even if, because, as, since* etc.

Study the examples given below.

'Why are you crying?' 'Because mummy hit me.'

Here the dependent clause 'Because mummy hit me' is perfectly normal in spoken English, but it is considered incorrect in writing.

When you write you have to use complete sentences.

I am crying because mummy hit me.

'Why did he lose his job?' 'Because he was never on time.'

The sentence fragment 'because he was never on time' needs to be attached to an independent clause.

He lost his job because he was never on time.

## **Incomplete sentences**

Sentence fragments are perfectly acceptable in spoken English. In fact, when you speak if you use complete sentences all the time, you will sound very unnatural. However, you must make a conscious effort to avoid fragments in writing.

Remember that all dependent clauses need to be attached to an independent clause.