**Correcting fragments**

A **fragment** is part of a sentence that is punctuated as if it were a full sentence.

**Fragments occur when**

* a dependent clause is not attached to an independent clause
* a sentence is missing a verb or a subject

**A clause = subject + verb**

* A clause is DEPENDENT if it cannot stand alone. If a clause begins with a subordinating conjunction or relative pronoun such as after, although, because, if, since, when, which, that, or who, it is dependent.
* A clause is INDEPENDENT if it makes sense by itself. Sentences must always contain at least one independent clause.

**The following sentence has both an independent and dependent clause: I run every day with Mary and Paul, who are two of the nicest people in town.**

* I run every day with Mary and Paul makes sense by itself. It is an independent clause and could be punctuated as a sentence.
* However, who are two of the nicest people in town cannot stand alone. It is a dependent clause (note that it begins with the relative pronoun who). If it began with a capital letter and ended with a period, it would be a fragment.

**The -ing form of a word cannot act as the verb in an independent clause unless it has a helping verb before it. Here's an example: The sun was setting, light streaking across the evening sky.**

* The sun was setting is an independent clause and could be punctuated as a sentence. The subject is sun and the verb is was setting (note the helping verb was).
* However, light streaking across the evening sky cannot stand on its own because there is no adequate verb (note that streaking has no helping verb). If this part of the sentence were not attached to the independent clause above, it would be a fragment.

**How to correct a fragment**

* Give the subject an adequate verb. Give the verb a subject.
* Combine the fragment with the sentence before or after it.
* Change a word or two in the fragment and make it into a sentence.

**Which of the following are fragments? How can they be corrected?**

1. I love to eat fattening foods. Like double-cheese pizzas and DQ blizzards.
2. Which was the best the government was able to do at that time.
3. Steering his bike with one hand and eating ice cream with the other.
4. Finally, in the very last scene of the play. The king weeps.
5. Unfortunately, adoption does not always work out. Especially when adoptive parents are unrealistic about the challenges they will face.
6. Because our dumps are overflowing, we need to recycle.

**Possible corrections**

1. I love to eat fattening foods like double-cheese pizzas and DQ blizzards.
2. It was the best the government was able to do at that time.
3. The boy was steering his bike with one hand and eating ice cream with the other.
4. Finally, in the very last scene of the play, the king weeps.
5. Unfortunately, adoption does not always work out, especially when adoptive parents are unrealistic about the challenges they will face.
6. Because our dumps are overflowing, we need to recycle.