



## Help With: Fragments & Run-Ons

A **fragment sentence** is a sentence that does not have a complete thought or action—a sentence that does not ‘do’ anything: ☒ *The dog in the grass.* A sentence is not necessarily valid even if it has a verb: ☒ *The dog lying in the grass.* Let’s make the sentence complete: ☑ *The dog lying in the grass is tired,* or ☑ *There is a dog lying in the grass.*

Don’t confuse fragment sentences with **minor sentences**: *No way. The more the merrier.* These are not full sentences and are usually not in academic writing but are fine in speech or informal writing.

A **run-on sentence** is where two sentences are connected with no punctuation: ☒ *The fog was thick he could not find his way home.* Split the two sentences with a period, semicolon, or a conjunction (*and, but, or*).

### Suggestions

- Do not use a comma to link sentences; use a period, a semicolon, or split the sentences.
- A sentence beginning with *when* usually indicates a dependent clause—it needs another clause in order to be a full sentence.
- It’s an easy mistake to have a let a very long sentence with no controlling verb fool you; it’s still a fragment.

Some of these sentences are correct, and others are fragment or run-ons. Can you find the problems?

1. Although he had been an often decorated soldier during the war and had fought many battles for the losing cause of liberalism in parliament.
2. This is going to be the most difficult exam of your college career, you had better start studying for it.
3. Coach Barnes really wants this job with Notre Dame University he is very excited about returning to the college he graduated from.
4. Right after the Christmas holidays and during those three weeks before class begins in January.
5. She ran.
6. Perplexed by the rising rates of inflation and alarmed by the decline in major construction projects.
7. When Professor Pepin realized that the paper he had written on modern asthma treatments was going to be published by the medical journal.
8. If we’re ever going to get out of here in time, we’re going to have to re-write all these papers, set up the desks, clean the chalkboards, stack those books in the corner, and notify security about the broken window, the thermostat that Brenda messed up, and the desk that was stolen before we even got here.