

Fixing Fragments

A fragment is not a sentence because it does not communicate a complete thought. In a sentence fragment, a subject, a predicate, or both are missing.

Fragment: Became a national park in 1919. (A subject is needed.)

The Grand Canyon became a national park in 1919.

Fragment: Sure-footed burros walk down paths in the canyon. (A predicate is needed.)

Sure-footed burros walk down paths in the canyon.

Fragment: Through the canyon. (A subject and a predicate are needed.)

People raft through the canyon.

Try It!

Rewrite each of the following fragments as a complete sentence. (Some of the examples are complete sentences.)

1. More than 270 miles long, 15 miles wide, and 5,000 feet deep.

2. The Colorado River carved out the Grand Canyon.

3. At the bottom of the canyon.

4. The river has been cutting the rock for six million years.

5. Filled with high ridges and deep valleys.

6. The rock formation known as "The Alligator" amazes people.

7. John Wesley Powell, the first geologist to explore the area.

8. Traveled through the canyon in a small boat.

9. The dangerous journey was completed in 1869.

Rewriting Rambling Sentences

Rambling sentences are those that seem to go on and on. Their parts are connected by coordinating conjunctions. While not grammatically incorrect, these sentences are hard to read. As a rule, if your sentence has more than two coordinating conjunctions, try to divide it into shorter sentences.

Rambling: The man in line in front of us had two little children, and he was

having trouble keeping them quiet so Raul started doing some of

his magic tricks and the children didn't make a sound until their

dad got their tickets.

Better: The man in line in front of us had two little children. He was having

trouble keeping them quiet, so Raul started doing some of his

magic tricks. The children didn't make a sound until their dad got

their tickets.