

Beware of Incomplete Sentences That Seem Complete!

Complete sentences - sentences with both a subject and a verb (that isn't a subordinate clause--but more about that later)

A complete sentence requires a subject and a verb. The verb can be action or linking. So:

Bob runs to school.

Bob is the subject. *Runs* is the verb. It is an action verb.

You can also have a linking verb, or a verb that links an adjective to a noun.

Bob is fast. Bob is funny. Bob was slow. Bob seems crazy.

Above, the words *is*, *was*, and *seems* are the linking verbs. They link the ideas *fast*, *slow*, and *crazy* to a noun--Bob.

Here are some other linking verbs:

am, is, are, was, were, be, being, been, can be, may be, might be, must be, shall be, will be, could be, should be, would be, has been, have been, had been, shall have been, will have been, could have been, could have been, should have been, would have been
AND *appear, grow, seem, stay, become, look, smell, taste, feel, remain, sound, turn*

If a sentence isn't complete (if it doesn't have a subject and a verb--and isn't a subordinate clause), it is said to be a "fragment."

Examples of fragmented sentences:

1. *Bob.* (only a subject)
2. *Runs.* (only a verb)
3. *Bob, the guy from Austin.* (Still, only a subject without a verb. "the guy from Austin" is only an appositive phrase which modifies "Bob" like an adjective. You still need a verb or linking verb to make it complete. *Bob, the guy from Austin, sings in a band.* Here, "Bob" and "sings" make this a complete sentence.
4. *When Bob sings in Austin.* (The word "when" indicates that this is a subordinate clause, meaning it needs a whole sentence attached in order for it to be a full sentence. *When Bob sings in Austin, everyone stays home.*)

Here's a list of words that often begin a subordinate clause. If the sentence begins with one of these, make sure there's another complete sentence that comes after.

after, before, once, although, as, as if, as long as, as though, because, still, even, if even, though, if, if only, in order to, now that, rather than, since, so that, than, that, unless, until, when, whenever, where, whereas, wherever, while

Note that none of the clauses below are complete sentences. How can you make them complete?

1. After we attend the after school party.
2. If only I had a million dollars.
3. As though he owned the entire universe.
4. Unless we find our way to the park after football practice where we'll meet our dates.
5. Whereas Istanbul is an extremely large city with many provinces.
6. So that Ipek will have a nice time at the dance.
7. Although Ege is not into co-curricular activities.
8. Wherever you find that churlish tennis player named Maria.
9. Before you make any grand decision about where you might be attending university.
10. While I'm still a living, breathing creature on this planet.