

PHRASES AS FRAGMENTS

A phrase is a group of words that does not contain a verb and its subject. Therefore, a phrase cannot be a complete sentence by itself. It can only be part of a sentence. A prepositional phrase (preposition + noun) is usually easy to spot.

FRAGMENTS	<u>In their driveway.</u> Stands a brand new station wagon.
SENTENCE	In their driveway stands a brand new station wagon.

A verbal phrase may be harder to spot as a fragment, especially verbals that end in *-ing*. No word ending in *-ing* can be a verb by itself unless it is a one-syllable word like *sing, ring, or bring*. If an *-ing* word is preceded by *is, are,* or some other form of *be*, the two words together are a verb.

PARTICIPLE	looking, running	COMPLETE VERB	is looking, was running
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Do not mistake an infinitive phrase (to + verb) for a sentence.

INCORRECT	My suit is at the dry cleaner's. <u>To be pressed.</u>
CORRECT	My suit is at the dry cleaner's to be pressed.

An appositive phrase may seem like a sentence, but it always lacks a verb.

APPOSITIVE FRAGMENT	Her new dress, <u>beautiful Irish linen.</u>
SENTENCE	Her new dress was made of beautiful Irish linen.

Completing Fragments. Rewrite each group of words to form a complete sentence.

1. Running down the street. _____

2. I know the best thing to do. To present our case before the governor. _____

3. We went to the hardware store. To buy some nails. _____

4. Sally found her necklace. In the desk drawer. _____

5. Our dog, a ten-year-old cocker spaniel. _____

6. John, cutting the grass in the front yard. _____

7. Reading quietly. Mother didn't hear us come in. _____

8. That book on how to grow plants indoors. _____

Note: Answers may vary.

1. Running down the street. They were running down the street.
2. I know the best thing to do. To present our case before the governor. I know the best thing to do is to present our case before the governor.
3. We went to the hardware store. To buy some nails. We went to the hardware store to buy some nails.
4. Sally found her necklace. In the desk drawer. Sally found her necklace in the desk drawer.
5. Our dog, a ten-year-old cocker spaniel. Our dog is a ten-year-old cocker spaniel.
6. John, cutting the grass in the front yard. John is cutting the grass in the front yard.
7. Reading quietly. Mother didn't hear us come in. Reading quietly, mother didn't hear us come in.
8. That book on how to grow plants indoors. I'd like that book on how to grow plants indoors.