

## Three Ways to Test for Sentence Fragments

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If you are not sure whether a group of words is a fragment, you can apply one or more of the following three tests to help you determine.

### **Test One: Ask Three Questions (the primary method)**

Ask the following three questions about the group of words.

1. Is there a subject?
2. Is there a verb?
3. Can the word group stand alone as an independent clause?

If you answered yes to all three questions, then the word group is a complete sentence. If you could not answer yes to all three, then it is a fragment.

### **Test Two: Use a Frame**

Take the word group and plug it into the following “frame.”

*They refused to believe the idea that \_\_\_\_\_.*

If the resulting sentence group of words makes sense, it is likely a sentence. If it does not make sense, it is a fragment.

### **Test Three: A Linguistic Check**

Think if the word group would be accepted as reasonably complete if made by someone who walked into the room, made the statement, and left.

If the would make sense it is probably a complete sentence. If it seems that additional information would be needed for the statement to make sense, it is likely a fragment.