Sentences -- Complete and Incomplete

A **sentence fragment** fails to be a sentence because it cannot stand by itself. It does not contain even one independent clause.

This one has prepositional phrases but no subject-verb relationship in an independent clause:

> *In Japan, during the last war and just before the armistice.*

This one has a verbal phrase but no subject:

> *Working far into the night in an effort to salvage her little boat.*

This one has a subject but no verb:

> *Some of the students working in Professor Espinoza's laboratory last semester.*
>
> (An *-ing* verb without an auxiliary cannot be the verb. Add *were* to fix this fragment.)

This one has a subject, *he*, and two verbs, *had* and *was*, but it cannot stand by itself because the subordinator *even though* makes the first part a dependent clause:

> *Even though he had the better arguments and was by far the more powerful speaker.*

[Sometimes fragments can be powerful, but use them only for effect and not very often.]

> *Usually, you wait months to receive orders from our shipping department.* <u>*Not anymore*</u>.

There are two main ways to fix fragments:
1. Make them into complete sentences by adding a subject or a verb
2. Attach the fragment to an independent clause

A **run-on sentence** has at least two parts, either one of which can stand by itself (two independent clauses), but the two parts are smooshed together or connected by only a comma.

> *I don't know how to operate this camera it didn't come with a manual.*
> *The sun is dangerous, put on some sunblock.*

There are five main ways to fix run-ons:

1. Use a comma to connect two independent clauses, using a comma and a conjunction *(the FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)*

   *The sun can be dangerous**, so** put on some sunscreen.*

2. Use a period and start a new sentence.

   *The sun can be dangerous. **P**ut on some sunscreen.*

3. When the two parts are closely related, you can use a semicolon or a semicolon plus a conjunction like *however, nevertheless, consequently*

   *The sun can be dangerous**; consequently,** you should put on some sunscreen.*

4. Turn one independent clause into a dependent clause by using a subordinator like *although, because, since, after, if, when, which, while*

   ***Because** the sun can be dangerous, put on sunscreen.*

5. Completely rewrite the sentence, using phrases, modifiers, verbal phrases, or infinitives

   *Put on sunscreen **to protect yourself from the dangerous sun**.*