

Sentence Detectives

Sort complete thoughts from incomplete ones.

6.L.GC.2 "Syntax: Apply understanding of syntax to comprehend, analyze, condense, and combine ideas and information, enhancing clarity, style, and meaning."

NAME _____

DATE _____

COMPLETE SENTENCE

A complete sentence has a subject and a predicate. It expresses a complete thought.

Lightning flashed beyond distant hills.

FRAGMENT

A fragment is missing a subject, a predicate, or a complete thought. It cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Near a silent waterfall.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle SENTENCE or FRAGMENT for each item, then pick two items and explain how you knew.

1. The owl watched from the branch.

SENTENCE

FRAGMENT

2. My cousin practiced piano after dinner.

SENTENCE

FRAGMENT

3. Because the trail was slippery.

SENTENCE

FRAGMENT

4. The new librarian recommended a mystery novel.

SENTENCE

FRAGMENT

5. Running toward the finish line.

SENTENCE

FRAGMENT

6. Before the first bell rang.

SENTENCE

FRAGMENT

7. We packed extra water for the hike.

SENTENCE

FRAGMENT

8. Across the noisy cafeteria.

SENTENCE

FRAGMENT

2 PROVE IT Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN One of each

Write one new complete sentence and one new fragment.

SENTENCE _____

FRAGMENT _____

CHALLENGE

Choose your fragment and revise it into a complete sentence.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The owl watched from the branch.	SENTENCE	It has a subject, owl, and a predicate, watched from the branch.
2	My cousin practiced piano after dinner.	SENTENCE	It has a subject and predicate and expresses a complete thought.
3	Because the trail was slippery.	FRAGMENT	It begins with because and leaves the reader waiting for what happened.
4	The new librarian recommended a mystery novel.	SENTENCE	It has a subject and predicate and expresses a complete thought.
5	Running toward the finish line.	FRAGMENT	It does not name who or what was running.
6	Before the first bell rang.	FRAGMENT	It leaves the reader waiting for what happened before the bell rang.
7	We packed extra water for the hike.	SENTENCE	It has a subject, we, and a predicate, packed extra water for the hike.
8	Across the noisy cafeteria.	FRAGMENT	It is a phrase and does not express a complete thought.

PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **SENTENCE:** The soccer team celebrated its hard-earned win.
- **FRAGMENT:** Under the bright stage lights.

Challenge: During the heavy rain. → During the heavy rain, the campers stayed inside.

Accept varied explanations in Part 2 when students correctly identify whether each item has a subject, predicate, and complete thought. For Part 3, check that the sentence stands alone and the fragment is intentionally incomplete.