

Eliminate incomplete sentences from your writing

We have already learned that a sentence must have a subject and a finite-verb of its own. An independent clause can make a sentence because it has a subject and a verb. Phrases, on the other hand, cannot be sentences.

A phrase is a group of words that does not have a subject or a verb. A phrase can consist of any number of words; however, most phrases are not all that long.

Students sometimes mistake phrases for sentences. Examples are given below.

I think that the new shopping mall will bring many benefits. *For example, more jobs and economic development.*

Here the group of words '*for example, more jobs and economic development*' is a phrase. It cannot make a sentence.

It should, therefore, be attached to the previous sentence.

I think that the new shopping mall will bring many benefits, for example, more jobs and economic development.

We can convert a phrase into a clause by supplying a suitable subject and verb.

Consider the example given below.

I think that the new shopping mall will bring many benefits. For example, it will create more jobs and economic development.

Another example is given below.

I support the decision to build a new theater. *To improve the economy and entertain people.* Consider the group of words '*to improve the economy and entertain people*'. Although it contains the verb 'to improve', it cannot be a clause because infinitives are non-finite verbs.

Therefore, the sentence should be rewritten as:

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To improve the economy and entertain people I support the decision to build a new theater.