Sentence Fragments

A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence missing one or more of the following components: a subject, a predicate, or a complete thought.

Missing a Subject
Some incomplete sentences are missing a subject, or the “doer” of the action of the sentence.

E.g., Appeasing both stockholders and customers. (incomplete: Who/What is appeasing?)
   The new plan should appease both stockholders and customers. (complete)

EXCEPTION: Commands usually are complete sentences, even when they do not explicitly name a subject because the implied subject is “you.”

E.g., [You] Shut the door! (complete)

Missing a verb
Some incomplete sentences lack a verb, the describer of the action of a sentence.

E.g., The memo, with its convoluted wording (incomplete: What did the memo do?)
   The memo confused employees with its convoluted wording. (complete)

Recognizing dependent clauses
Dependent clauses are often mistaken for complete sentence; however, they need more information to make them complete (not a complete thought):

E.g., Because she left her laptop at home (What did she do?)
   After she calls her husband (What then?)
   When you finish your BBA (What will happen?)
   Since you asked (Will you get the answer?)
   If you want to be my friend (What should you do?)


Additional Resources: