



## Conveying Thoughts

Even though I've been writing for decades, I still like to remind myself **why** we write. We write to convey thoughts, i.e., to communicate. So, we do our best to express ideas by using sentences. But, does a *proper* sentence always illustrate something well? Does a *complete* sentence always capture a complete thought? Let's look at some examples.

Here is a complete sentence.

You can't always get what you want.

Here is an incomplete sentence (phrase).

If you walk away.

What do you think? Do you think one sentence does a better job than the other? Take a minute to examine them again.

Check out two more sentences.

Yikes!

She fell.

Saying, "Yikes!" expresses a complete thought. But, "Yikes!" is not a complete sentence.

"She is falling." is a complete sentence which will leave most folks hanging (literally).

# Decoupling Completeness - Back to Basics

We've seen that *incomplete* sentences can convey a complete thought while complete sentences may not. Instead of tackling the subjectivity of what is complete, it's better to go back to the basics. Whether a sentence represents a clear thought, a proper sentence must always have two things:

A subject (e.g. noun)

A predicate (e.g. verb)

To make the sentence complete, the subject plus predicate must stand on its own—be independent. These are two proper sentences.

Here comes the sun.

I said, "It's alright."

Let's take two incomplete sentences and turn them into complete sentences

Incomplete

If you walk away.

When the sun shines.

Complete

If you walk away, I will follow.

When the sun shines, they slip into the shade.

## Conclusion

A complete thought is debatable and subjective. Always trying to use complete thoughts to guide your sentence structure is risky. Instead, loosely decouple (separate) the concept of completeness from the mechanics of a sentence. Create proper sentences that are independent, have a subject, and have a verb. Then, you can spend your energy arranging your proper sentences to communicate your ideas.