

Fixing Run-on sentences

A **run-on sentence** (sometimes also called a “**fused sentence**” when **there is no separation at all between the two sentences**) has at least two parts, either one of which can stand by itself (in other words two independent clauses), but the two parts are not properly connected.

The length of the sentence has nothing to do with whether it is or is not a run-on; instead a run-on is a structural flaw that can also occur in short sentences. A run-on sentence is an error caused by joining two or more independent clauses with **only** a coordinating conjunction such as **and, but, for, nor, yet, or, so**.

Example: The sun is high, put on some sunblock.

This particular sentence constitutes a run-on we call a comma splice. It occurs when two independent clauses are connected **only** with a comma. When one uses a comma to connect two independent clauses, it must be accompanied by a coordinating conjunction such as **and, but, for, nor, yet, or, so**.

Run-on sentences typically occur under the following circumstances.

- **When an independent clause gives an order or directive based on what was said in the prior independent clause.**

Example: This next chapter has a lot of difficult information in it, you should start studying right away.

We could put a period where that comma is and start a new sentence. Alternatively, a semicolon might also work here.

- **When two independent clauses are connected by a transitional phrase (conjunctive adverb) such as however, moreover, furthermore, nevertheless.**

Example: Mr. Jones has sent his four children to colleges, however, he has sacrificed his health working day and night in that dusty bakery.

Again, where that first comma appears, we could have used either a period –and started a new sentence—or a semicolon.

□ **When the second of two independent clauses contains a pronoun that connects it to the first independent clause.**

Example: This computer doesn't make sense to me, it came without a manual.

Although these two clauses are quite short, and the ideas are closely related, this is a run-on sentence. We need a period where the comma now stands.

Another example: Most of the computers in the Writing Center are broken already, this proves my point about American computer manufacturers.

Again two nicely related clauses, incorrectly connected – a run-on. Use a period to cure this sentence.

Run-on sentences also occur when:

□ **Oftentimes, the subject of the second sentence—the second independent clause is *this, that, these, those*.**

How to fix comma splices, fused sentences and run-ons.

You can separate the clauses with a period.

You can join the clauses with a semi-colon.

You can connect the clauses with a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb followed by a comma.

You can connect the clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

You can use a subordinator (dependent word) to make one clause dependent upon another

A subordinator **before a dependent clause** such as **after, although, as before, since, provided that, unless, though** requires a comma before the independent clause.

If the subordinator is placed **before the second sentence** than you will not need any comma.