FRAGMENTS AND RUN-ONS

Run-on sentences and sentence fragments are mistakes that writers sometimes make, resulting in unclear sentences. They cause confusion for the reader by making the writing hard to follow.

WHAT IS A SENTENCE FRAGMENT?

A complete sentence must have a visible subject. A sentence that does not have some essential part, such as a subject, is called a sentence fragment.

HOW DO YOU CORRECT A SENTENCE FRAGMENT?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence fragment</th>
<th>Complete sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am very busy. Taking my kids to ballet lessons and soccer practice four days a week.</td>
<td>I am very busy. I take my kids to ballet lessons and soccer practice four days a week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer has a great job that she really likes. Unfortunately, cannot take a full course load in college.</td>
<td>Jennifer has a great job that she really likes. Unfortunately, she cannot take a full course load in college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki earned a lot of money because was an outstanding player.</td>
<td>Nikki earned a lot of money because she was an outstanding player.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT IS A RUN-ON SENTENCE?

A run-on sentence typically has two independent clauses incorrectly joined together in a single sentence without proper punctuation or by just a comma.

HOW DO YOU CORRECT A RUN-ON SENTENCE?

There are four ways to correct a run-on sentence.

1. Separate the two independent clauses to make two simple sentences. Add a period and a capital letter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Run-on sentence</th>
<th>Two simple sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The class meets twice a week it starts at 10 and ends at 12.</td>
<td>The class meets twice a week. It starts at 10 and ends at 12.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Join the two independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction to make a compound sentence. There are seven coordinating conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. (Use the acronym FANBOYS to help you remember them!)

   **Run-on sentence:** We arrive a little early, the instructor arrives at 10:00.
   **Compound sentence:** We arrive a little early, and the instructor arrives at 10:00.

3. Add a subordinate word to one independent clause, making it a dependent clause, and join the two clauses to make a complex sentence. If the dependent clause comes first, insert a comma after it. There are several subordinating conjunctions in English: because, after, although, when, as, that, which, etc.

   **Run-on sentence:** We are ready she starts the class.
   **Complex sentence:** As soon as we are ready, she starts the class.
   **Complex sentence:** When we are ready, she starts the class.

4. Separate the two independent clauses with a semicolon. This correction is the least common as semicolons are somewhat rare in writing. Use this option only when the two sentences have a clear and compelling connection.

   **Run-on sentence:** Our writing assignments are challenging they often take several drafts.
   **Two sentences:** Our writing assignments are challenging; they often take several drafts.