

# RUN-ON SENTENCES

## ■ Writing Run-on Sentences

Run-on sentences are created in one of the following ways.

- Punctuating two complete sentences (“independent clauses”) as one. This can be called a “fused sentence.”

She went to the gym the machines there were new.

- Connecting two complete sentences with a comma. This can be called a “comma splice.”

The sun on the grass is warm, the trees are bending gently in the wind.

- Connecting more than two complete sentences with **and**, **but**, **or**, **so**, **for**, **nor**, or **yet**.

The restaurant has fresh seafood and it's cheap so we would eat there but my sister likes steak better so we'll stay home and grill.

## ■ Finding Run-on Sentences

Start from the last line of your paper and read backwards, one sentence at a time. Stop at the first comma you see and read the part of the sentence in front of it. Could it be a sentence by itself? If so, read the part of the sentence after it. If it, too, could be a sentence, then you've got a comma splice that you need to fix. If either part can't stand alone, that comma is OK; move on to the next one and do the same thing again. You can use a similar strategy to find sentences that have too many independent clauses connected by and, or, but, or so: look for those words and then read the words before and after them. If you've got two or more of them connecting three or more independent clauses in the same sentence, you'll need to revise.

## ■ Fixing Run-on Sentences

Use one of the following options to revise a run-on sentence.

- Use a period to divide the original sentence into two or more shorter ones.

The sun on the grass is warm. The trees are bending gently in the wind.

- Use a semicolon to separate the two original sentences while showing they're connected.

The sun on the grass is warm; the trees are bending gently in the wind.

- Use **and**, **but**, **or**, **so**, **for**, **nor**, or **yet** to connect the two original ideas.

She went to the gym, and the machines there were new.

- Rewrite one of the two original sentences so that it can no longer stand alone.

She went to the gym because the machines there were new.

She went to the gym and saw the machines there were new.

- Use two or more of these options to revise an original sentence containing **more** than two independent clauses.

The restaurant has fresh seafood and it's cheap. We would eat there, but since my sister likes steak better we'll stay home and grill.

The restaurant has fresh seafood and it's cheap; we would eat there, but my sister likes steak better. Instead, we'll stay home and grill.

## FRAGMENTS

### ■ Writing Sentence Fragments

Fragments are sentences that are incomplete and are created in the following ways.

- It begins with the words **which, because, although, before, while, whether, whenever, unless, if, after, since, when, until, by, as long as, even though, whereas** AND is a dependent clause (does not express a complete thought)

If I go to school today.  
After you leave.

- It is missing a subject or verb.

The sun on the grass.  
Running in the street.

- The noun is followed by the words **who, which, or that**

Children that sing.  
Teachers who don't like to read.

### ■ Fixing Sentence Fragments

Sentence fragments can be fixed by adding what is lacking.

- Add an independent clause (a sentence that can stand alone because it has a subject and a verb and conveys a complete thought.

If I go to school today, I will take good notes in class.

- Add a subject or verb.

The sun on the grass is warm. (verb)  
The little boy is running in the street. (subject)

- Complete the thought.

The children that sing in the choir will be over for dinner.  
Teachers who don't like to read are very rare.