

FRAGMENTS, RUN-ONS, and COMMA SPLICES

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

A sentence must have a subject and a verb , and it must express a complete thought . If one of these requirements is missing, the group of words is a sentence fragment.		The cute boy. (no verb) Is always late. (no subject) Because he can't wake up. (not a complete thought)
Correcting Fragments	One way to correct a fragment is to combine it with a sentence before it or after it.	The cute boy is always late because he can't wake up. (correct)
	Another way is to supply the missing subject or verb.	Fishing in the lake. (no verb) Fishing in the lake is forbidden. (correct) Wins every time. (no subject) Our team wins every time. (correct)
A prepositional phrase standing alone is a fragment.		Beyond the deep blue ocean. (prepositional phrase fragment) Africa lies beyond the deep blue ocean. (correct)
A verbal phrase begins with a verb form that does not act as a verb in the sentence and cannot stand alone as a sentence.		To bake a cake. (verbal [infinitive] phrase fragment) I would like to bake a cake. (correct)
A dependent clause , although it has a subject and a verb, cannot stand alone as a sentence.		After we left the party. (fragment) After we left the party, Mary finally arrived. (correct)

A run-on occurs when two sentences are joined without punctuation.		James was late he missed the bus. (run-on) James was late because he missed the bus. (correct)
A comma splice results from joining two sentences with just a comma.		James was late, he missed the bus. (comma splice) James was late because he missed the bus. (correct)
There are five ways to correct run-ons and comma splices.		
Correcting Run-Ons and Comma	Make two sentences.	James was late for school. He missed the bus.
	Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction.	James was late for school, for he missed the bus.
	Insert a semicolon.	James was late for school; he missed the bus.
	Add a semicolon followed by a transition and a comma.	James missed the bus; as a result , he was late for school.
	Create a dependent clause and join it to the independent clause with a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun.	Because he missed the bus, James was late for school. or James, who missed the bus, was late for school.

FRAGMENTS, RUN-ONS, and COMMA SPLICES

LEARN MORE

Texts available to use in the SLC English Writing Lab:

<i>Grassroots with Readings</i> , Ninth Edition Susan Fawcett Chapters 7 and 15	<i>Evergreen, A Guide to Writing with Readings</i> , Ninth Edition, Susan Fawcett Chapter 27	<i>The Bedford Handbook</i> , Seventh Edition, Diana Hacker Pages 240-50 & 251-62
---	--	---

Online:

[Grassroots Companion Site](#)

[Evergreen Companion Site](#)

[Run-ons and Comma Splices](#)

[Fragments](#)

[Sentence Errors](#)

Don't forget: students can always ask tutors or their teachers for an explanation of anything that's not clear.

FRAGMENTS, RUN-ONS, and COMMA SPLICES

PRACTICE

Correct the following fragments.

1. Going on vacation.
2. She at home.
3. Around the corner and down the street.
4. My high school English teacher.
5. Since you are going anyway.
6. Which does not work.

Rewrite the following run-ons and comma splices using one of the five ways to correct sentence errors.

1. I didn't know you were there I would have talked to you.
2. She thinks you are at home, you should call her.
3. It was raining, they cancelled the game.
4. You should read the instructions they are on the back of the box.
5. Sophia was sick over the weekend her mother took her to the walk-in clinic.
6. Ask Dave for help he knows a lot about computers.
7. Pat won't go to the concert, she doesn't like loud music.
8. Mildred did not take care of the plants, now they are all dead.
9. Suzanne likes her students she is a very good teacher.
10. You shouldn't try to move that heavy box Mark will do it when he gets here.