

RUN-ON SENTENCES

WHAT IS A RUN-ON SENTENCE?

A run-on results when two independent sentences (called “clauses”) are run together without correct punctuation. Described below are the different types of run-ons and the various ways to correct them.

COMMA SPLICE RUN-ONS

When two independent sentences are separated by a comma instead of a period, the result is called a comma splice.

Comma Splice

(Run-on): Swimming is good exercise, I do it every morning.

Option # 1: Add a coordinating conjunction (also called a FANBOYS conjunction: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So), along with the comma, to join the sentences. A FANBOYS conjunction and a comma must come together to separate two independent sentences.

Correct Punctuation: Swimming is good exercise, so I do it every morning. (Notice that there is a comma and a FANBOYS conjunction [so])

Incorrect Punctuation (Run-on): I still haven’t figured out Spanish and I’ve been studying it for years.

Incorrect Punctuation (Run-on): I have been waiting here for one hour so I’m going home.

(Notice that there is a FANBOYS conjunction but no comma; this does not work.)

The clause following the conjunctions in each sentence (“I’ve been studying it for years” and “I’m going home”) could stand alone as complete sentences. Therefore, a comma must appear before the FANBOYS conjunction.

Correct Punctuation: I still haven’t figured out Spanish, and I’ve been studying it for years.

Correct Punctuation: I have been waiting here for one hour, so I’m going home.

Option #2: Separate the sentences with a period. **Correct Punctuation:** Swimming is good exercise. I do it every morning.

Option #3: Use a semicolon to separate the two sentences. (A semicolon indicates a close relationship between the sentences.)

Correct Punctuation: Swimming is good exercise; I do it every morning.

FUSED SENTENCE RUN-ONS

Sometimes two independent sentences are run together without any punctuation or a conjunction. You can fix fused sentences using the same options described in the “comma splices” section above.

No Punctuation (Run-on): I hope to go to the movies this weekend there is a new one, in the dollar theater.

Option #1: Add an appropriate word (like a conjunction) to join the sentences.

Correct Punctuation: I hope to go to the movies this weekend because there is a new one in the dollar theater.

Option #2: Separate the sentences with a period.

Correct Punctuation: I hope to go to the movies this weekend. There is a new one in the dollar theater.

Option #3: Use a semicolon to indicate a close relationship between the two sentences.

Correct Punctuation: I hope to go to the movies this weekend; there is a new one in the dollar theater.