I'm not a bot

Shetland Sheepdog outdoors on grass meadow with run-on Sentence yanjf / iStock / Getty Images Plus Used under Getty Images license No one wants to read a page of short, simple sentences. Combining sentences is a great way to vary sentence structure — but beware of the run-on sentence, which can confuse your readers and make your writing seem sloppy. Run-on sentences contain too many ideas without proper punctuation. This common grammatical error occurs when you combine independent clauses without conjunctions, with too many conjunctions, or with no punctuation at all. Examples of run-on sentences include: Jim is cold, he wants to go inside.My dog is playful she is also smart.The movie theater was dark and it was too expensive but we really wanted to see the movie so we bought tickets. Can you find the errors in each sentence? If not, it may help to determine which type of run-on sentence you're dealing with. Run-on sentences range from mildly annoying to completely confusing, depending on the sentence. Once you know what type of run-on sentence you're dealing with, however, they're easy to fix. A comma splice happens when a comma, rather than a semicolon, connects independent clauses. Examples of comma splices include: Kelly likes to cook, she makes chicken every day.Martin and Ellen moved in next door, they seem really nice.The train was late, I missed my meeting. Joining these two clauses calls for a semicolon, not a comma. You can also improve them with a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet so). For example: Kelly likes to cook; she makes chicken every day.Martin and Ellen moved in next door, and they seem really nice.The train was late, so I missed my meeting. A fused sentence mashes two main clauses together with no punctuation at all. These run-on sentences are the easiest to spot because they make your writing hard to read. For example: Mary likes dogs she has a beagle.I'm cold I want to go home.That's my favorite book I don't like the sequel. All that's necessary to fix these sentences is to insert the proper punctuation. Like comma splices, you can use either a semicolon or a coordinating conjunction. Mary likes dogs; she has a beagle.I'm cold, so I want to go home.That's my favorite book, but I don't like the sequel. When you think of a run-on sentence, you probably think of a polysyndeton. Polysyndeton refers to the use of more conjunctions than a sentence requires. Examples of polysyndeton include: We went to the park and we ate dinner and we got ice cream and when it got dark we chased fireflies.I went to high school with Brian but we didn't have any classes together, so we didn't recognize each other in college, but we figured it out eventually.Our flight was delayed, so we can go get coffee in the airport, or we can relax outside, or we can go shopping, or we can get another flight. Sometimes, the overuse of conjunctions is a deliberate rhetorical choice. Most of the time, however, it's a simple error with an even simpler fix: Divide the statement into separate sentences with a bit of punctuation and commas. You can also change some of the independent clauses into dependent clauses by adding subordinating conjunctions or creating serial lists. We went to the park and we ate dinner. Then, we got ice cream, and when it got dark, we chased fireflies.I went to high school with Brian, but because we didn't have any classes together, we didn't recognize each other in college. However, we figured it out eventually.Our flight was delayed, so we can go get coffee in the airport. We can also relax outside, go shopping, or get another flight. Run-on sentences are a common grammatical error, but luckily they are an easy mistake to fix. A run-on sentence occurs when at least two independent clauses are pushed together without proper punctuation or conjunctions. We're taking a deep dive into run-on sentences to learn what they are, how to spot them, and how you can avoid them in your writing. What Is a Run-On Sentence? A run-on sentence isn't just an overly long sentence. In fact, it doesn't even have to be that long! Run-on sentences involve cramming multiple independent clauses into one sentence without proper punctuation. Let's review independent clauses and sentence structure, so we can understand run-on sentences. An independent clause represents a complete thought. The most basic sentences, called simple sentences, consist of one independent clause. Independent clauses are complete sentences, so they have a subject and a verb. They can stand alone. But we often combine these complete sentences into longer sentences. A compound sentence has at least two independent clauses. To be grammatically correct, you must join the independent clauses with either a semicolon or a comma and coordinating conjunction. Sometimes, you may use an em dash or colon in lieu of a semicolon. Take a look at the examples of correct compound sentences below: Correct: I was out of milk; I had to eat my cereal dry this morning. Correct: I was out of milk, so I had to eat my cereal dry this morning. Without proper punctuation, and any necessary coordinating conjunctions between the two independent clauses, the sentence becomes a run-on sentence. Incorrect: I was out of milk I had to eat my cereal dry this morning. Many times, a run-on sentence will contain more than two independent clauses. Each of these separate independent clauses must have the correct punctuation and conjunctions to be grammatically correct. But why should you care about run-on sentences? Run-on sentences affect how easily someone can read your writing. While your run-on sentence might make sense to you, it's hard for other people to understand. Punctuation marks tell our brains when to insert natural pauses. When there aren't pauses between complete sentences, it feels like you're rushing to read it. Run-on sentences read as if someone is talking incredibly fast without stopping to breathe. This affects clarity and readability. Your brain can't catch up to process what you're reading. There's no logical end to a train of thought, so you lose much of the intended meaning. What Are the Three Types of Run-On Sentences? While all run-on sentences involve independent clauses, they don't all look the same. There are three main types of run-on sentences: comma splices, fused sentences, and polysyndeton. Let's look at each in more detail. Comma Splices A comma splice occurs when you connect two independent clauses with only a comma and no coordinating conjunction. This is one of the most common run-on sentence mistakes. Here's what this looks like with our previous example: Incorrect: I was out of milk, I had to eat my cereal dry this morning. When you separate independent clauses with a comma, you must also use a coordinating conjunction. Correct: I was out of milk, so I had to eat my cereal dry this morning. Sometimes comma splices separate more than two independent clauses in a run-on sentence. Incorrect: I was out of milk, I had to eat my cereal dry this morning, I hate dry cereal. Correct: I was out of milk, so I had to eat my cereal dry this morning, and I hate dry cereal. To avoid a comma splice, you can add a coordinating conjunction to your comma. You can also just use a semicolon, or in certain situations, an em dash or a colon. Fused Sentences The next type of run-on sentence is the fused sentence. You probably see fused sentences all the time on social media. They're very common mistakes, especially in informal writing. A fused sentence occurs when several independent clauses have no punctuation or conjunction between them. Incorrect: I was out of milk I had to eat my cereal dry this morning I hate dry cereal. Without the correct punctuation, it's hard for our brains to catch up. We don't know where to pause or where to put intonations. Polysyndeton A polysyndeton sentence is a run-on sentence with only conjunctions between independent clauses—but no punctuation. Polysyndeton comes from the Greek poly, meaning many, and syndetos, meaning bound together. Polysyndeton can also be a rhetorical device. It means using several conjunctions in close succession, and it can combine words or sentence fragments. But when those conjunctions combine independent clauses without punctuation, it's a run-on sentence. Here's an example of a polysyndeton run-on sentence: Incorrect: I was out of milk and I had to eat my cereal dry this morning and I hate dry cereal. The quickest way to make that polysyndeton sentence grammatically correct is to add a comma before each "and." How to Spot a Run-On Sentence Sometimes, sentences are long—even unnecessarily long. This is especially common in classic literature. But how can you tell whether a sentence is just long, or if it's a run-on sentence? The key is to look at each independent clause in the sentence. Are these clauses separated with the correct punctuation? Is there a missing conjunction? Often, run-on sentences will stand out when you're reading because they feel like you're speaking quickly without taking a breath. When this happens, take a look at the sentence to see if you need to correct it. Run-On Sentence Examples Sometimes, authors use run-on sentences as a stylistic choice. They can help achieve a frantic tone. They're also useful for stream-of-consciousness narration when used sparingly. Here are two examples of run-on sentences from classic literature: "My God the cigar what would your mother say if she found a blister on her mantel just in time too look here Quentin we're about to do something we'll both regret I like you liked you as soon as I saw you I says he must be …"—William Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury "But then they were married (she felt awful about being pregnant before but Harry had been talking about marriage for a while and anyway laughed when she told him in early February about missing her period and said Great she was terribly frightened and he said Great and lifted her put his arms around under her bottom … she was still little clumsy dark-complected Janice Springer and her husband was a conceited lunk who wasn't good for anything in the world Daddy said and the feeling of being alone would melt a little with a little drink."—John Updike, Run, Rabbit The above are both examples of fused sentences. One of the most famous examples of comma splices comes from Charles Dickens. The opening line of A Tale of Two Cities uses multiple comma splices to set the dichotomous tone of the book. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair… —in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only." How to Fix a Run-On Sentence The quickest way to find and fix a run-on sentence is by putting your writing through a free grammar checker. ProWritingAid's grammar checker can identify your run-on sentences, and then you can fix them with just a click. How to Avoid Run-On Sentences There are several ways to avoid run-on sentences, but the best option will depend on the situation. You can add a comma and a conjunction. You can use a semicolon. If you want to set information apart for emphasis, you might consider an em dash. A colon can show a direct connection between two independent clauses. Sometimes, it sounds better to make separate sentences with an ending punctuation mark. Or you can rewrite the entire run-on sentence in a new way. Let's look at several ways you might fix this run-on sentence. Incorrect: I was out of milk I had to eat my cereal dry this morning I hate dry cereal. Possible fixes include: I was out of milk, so I had to eat my cereal dry this morning, and I hate dry cereal. I was out of milk, so I had to eat my cereal dry this morning—and I hate dry cereal. I was out of milk. I had to eat my cereal dry this morning, and I hate dry cereal. I was out of milk and had to eat my cereal dry this morning, which I hate. I was out of milk. I had to eat my cereal dry this morning. I hate dry cereal. Conclusion: Run-On Sentences Avoid run-on sentences so people understand your meaning when you write. Using correct punctuation and conjunctions ensures your readers can process what you're trying to say with ease. Run-on sentences occur when two or more independent clauses are joined incorrectly without proper punctuation or conjunctions. These sentences can confuse the reader or listener because they lack clear separation between ideas. Understanding how to recognize and fix run-on sentences is essential for improving your writing and communication. In this article, we will explore what run-on sentences are, provide examples, and discuss how to correct them. Along with correct sentence examples, we will also be having a look at: How to fix run-on sentences How to avoid run-on sentences An exercise to correct the run-on sentence Here are some examples of run-on sentences. An independent clause is a group of words that can stand alone as a complete sentence, as it has both a subject and a verb. To avoid confusion, independent clauses need to be connected in the correct way, either with punctuation (such as a period or semicolon) or conjunctions (like "and" or "but"). This is an example of a run-on sentence I love reading books I don't have much time for it. She went to the store I stayed home and cleaned the house. The weather is warm today we should go for a walk. I forgot my keys I was late for the meeting. He studied all night he still failed the test. Each of these examples contains two independent clauses that are incorrectly joined, making them run-on sentences. Related: Transitional Sentences: Examples For Better Writing They are problematic because they confuse the reader or listener by combining multiple ideas without clear boundaries. When sentences are too long or lack appropriate punctuation, it can become difficult to understand the intended meaning. Additionally, run-on sentences can make writing seem disorganized or careless. Correct sentence structure helps make communication clearer and more effective. Related: Synonym Examples: 33 Sentences For Better English! There are several ways to fix run-on sentences. Below are the most common methods to correct them: Let's fix this run-on sentence Method to fix run on sentencesHow to fix themExampleUse a PeriodSeparate the independent clauses into two sentences by adding a period.Run-on: I love reading books I don't have much time for it. Corrected: I love reading books. I don't have much time for it.Use a Comma and Coordinating ConjunctionInsert a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) to link the clauses.Run-on: She went to the store I stayed home and cleaned the house. Corrected: She went to the store, and I stayed home and cleaned the house.Use a SemicolonUse a semicolon to link two related independent clauses.Run-on: The weather is warm today we should go for a walk. Corrected: The weather is warm today; we should go for a walk.Use a Subordinating ConjunctionUse a subordinating conjunction to turn one clause into a dependent clause.Run-on: I forgot my keys I was late for the meeting. Corrected: I forgot my keys because I was late for the meeting.These are some of the common ways to fix run-on sentences Related: Connectors In English Language: Sentence + Paragraph Examples Correct each one by using one of the methods discussed (period, comma + conjunction, semicolon, or subordinating conjunction). Correct the run-on sentence I was hungry I made a sandwich. He wanted to go to the beach it was raining. I like to swim I also enjoy hiking. She studied all week she still wasn't ready for the exam. The cat is sleeping it looks so peaceful. Corrected run-on sentences I was hungry, so I made a sandwich. He wanted to go to the beach, but it was raining. I like to swim, and I also enjoy hiking. She studied all week; she still wasn't ready for the exam. The cat is sleeping. It looks so peaceful. Here are some sentences that nearly could have been run-on sentences, but are now actually grammatically correct. Read and repeat them out loud to better visualize how the correct use of punctuation, clauses, and conjunctions work to form correct sentences. Repairing run-on sentences I like coffee in the morning, especially with a little bit of milk and sugar. Sally went to the mall, and I stayed home. The weather was warm, so we decided to go to the beach. He enjoys reading mystery novels; they are his favorite. I called my friend, but she didn't answer. They were tired after the trip. They went straight to bed. We had dinner, then we watched a movie. The dog ran in the yard, and the cat sat on the porch. It was raining, yet they still went for a run. I need to finish my work before I can relax. The music was loud. I couldn't concentrate. She loves to travel. Last year, she went to Australia. He's a great cook, and he enjoys trying new recipes. Preventing them in your writing starts with a good understanding of sentence structure. Here are some tips to help avoid creating them: How to avoid run-on sentences Understand the basic sentence structure: Remember that every sentence needs a subject and a verb. Be sure to break long thoughts into separate sentences if necessary. Use punctuation correctly: Make sure to separate independent clauses with a period, semicolon, or comma plus conjunction. Read your writing aloud: Sometimes when you read your sentences out loud, you'll notice if they are too long or confusing. If you find yourself pausing in the middle of a sentence, it may be a sign of a run-on sentence. Revise your work: After writing, always take the time to revise your sentences. Look for run-on sentences and correct them to improve clarity. Practice writing shorter sentences: If you find it difficult to write clear sentences, try focusing on writing shorter, simpler sentences. This can help you avoid creating them in the first place. Understanding run-on sentences and knowing how to fix them is crucial for improving your writing skills. By learning to spot and correct run-ons, you can ensure that your sentences are clear, concise, and easy to understand. Whether you separate independent clauses with punctuation or connect them with conjunctions, taking care to structure your sentences properly will improve your overall communication. With practice, you'll become more confident in creating sentences that flow smoothly and effectively. A run-on sentence occurs when two or more independent clauses (sentences that can stand alone) are joined incorrectly—often without the proper punctuation or conjunction. Run-ons make writing hard to follow, confuse readers, and reduce clarity. Learning to spot and correct run-on sentences helps ensure that each sentence communicates a clear, concise, and complete idea.Table of contentsA run-on sentence is essentially two or more independent clauses smooshed together without appropriate punctuation (such as a period, semicolon) or a coordinating conjunction (like "and," "but," "or"). In other words, it tries to cram multiple complete thoughts into a single sentence without the necessary connectors.Key Points:Run-ons are not always extremely long; even short sentences can be run-ons if they contain multiple independent clauses joined incorrectly.They can occur due to missing punctuation, incorrect punctuation, or lack of proper coordinating or subordinating words.A fused sentence occurs when two independent clauses are joined with no punctuation or linking word at all.Example:Run-on (Fused): "She went to the store she bought apples."Corrected: "She went to the store. She bought apples."A comma splice is a specific type of run-on sentence in which a comma is used to connect two independent clauses without an appropriate conjunction.Example:Run-on (Comma Splice): "He loves soccer, he plays every weekend."Corrected: "He loves soccer, and he plays every weekend."or "He loves soccer. He plays every weekend."or "He loves soccer; he plays every weekend."Both types of run-ons fail to correctly separate independent clauses. The difference is that a fused sentence has no punctuation between clauses, while a comma splice uses just a comma (which is insufficient).Check for Multiple Independent Clauses: Determine if you have more than one complete thought. Each independent clause must have a subject and a verb and stand on its own as a complete sentence.Look for Missing Conjunctions or Punctuation: If two standalone sentences are joined without a period, semicolon, or a suitable conjunction (with a comma), it's likely a run-on.Read Aloud: Reading your sentence out loud can help. If you run out of natural pauses or feel that the sentence keeps going without a break, it might be a run-on.Separate the run-on into two sentences by placing a period between the independent clauses.Example:Run-on: "I love to read it helps me relax."Fixed: "I love to read. It helps me relax."Semicolons can join two closely related independent clauses without a coordinating conjunction.Example:Run-on: "She studied all night she passed the exam."Fixed: "She studied all night; she passed the exam."Add a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) to correctly join the clauses.Example:Run-on: "They ran out of time they didn't finish the project."Fixed: "They ran out of time, so they didn't finish the project."or "They ran out of time, and they didn't finish the project."Turn one of the independent clauses into a dependent clause by using subordinating conjunctions (although, because, when, while, since, if).Example:Run-on: "I woke up late I missed the bus."Fixed: "Because I woke up late, I missed the bus." or "I missed the bus because I woke up late."Here are 20 examples of Run-on Sentences with their corrections.Run-on: I love pizza I could eat it every day.Correction: I love pizza. I could eat it every day.Run-on: She went to the store she bought some milk.Correction: She went to the store, and she bought some milk.Run-on: The movie was great I watched it twice.Correction: The movie was great; I watched it twice.Run-on: He didn't study for the test he failed it.Correction: He didn't study for the test, so he failed it.Run-on: I wanted to go outside it was raining.Correction: I wanted to go outside, but it was raining.Run-on: She loves coffee, she drinks it every morning.Correction: She loves coffee, and she drinks it every morning.Run-on: We were hungry, we ordered pizza.Correction: We were hungry, so we ordered pizza.Run-on: The dog barked loudly, the neighbors complained.Correction: The dog barked loudly; the neighbors complained.Run-on: I enjoy reading, my favorite book is "1984."Correction: I enjoy reading. My favorite book is 1984.Run-on: She wanted to dance, he preferred to sit.Correction: She wanted to dance, but he preferred to sit.Run-on: The sun was shining we went to the beach.Correction: The sun was shining, so we went to the beach.Run-on: He plays the guitar he also sings.Correction: He plays the guitar, and he also sings.Run-on: I forgot my homework I had to redo it.Correction: I forgot my homework, so I had to redo it.Run-on: She writes novels they are always interesting.Correction: She writes novels, and they are always interesting.Run-on: The restaurant was closed we went somewhere else.Correction: The restaurant was closed, so we went somewhere else.Run-on: I love summer it is my favorite season.Correction: I love summer because it is my favorite season.Run-on: He was late to work he missed the bus.Correction: He was late to work because he missed the bus.Run-on: We took an umbrella it was raining outside.Correction: We took an umbrella since it was raining outside.Run-on: The concert was loud we could barely hear each other.Correction: The concert was so loud that we could barely hear each other.Run-on: I didn't sleep well I was tired all day.Correction: Since I didn't sleep well, I was tired all day.Keep Sentences Manageable: Long sentences are not necessarily incorrect, but the longer the sentence, the higher the chance of run-ons. Break long sentences into shorter, clearer ones.Know Your Conjunctions: Memorize coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So) and use them when joining two related independent clauses with a comma.Use Semicolons Wisely: A semicolon can elegantly connect related ideas, but don't overuse it. Ensure both clauses could stand alone as complete sentences.Subordinate When Appropriate: If two ideas are not equally important, make one dependent on the other. This avoids run-ons and clarifies the relationship.Proofread: Take the time to read your work carefully. If you find multiple verbs and subjects without proper connectors or punctuation, revise accordingly.Identify and Correct the Run-Ons: a. "I finished my work early I went home."b. "He loves classical music he hates opera."c. "She wanted to go to the party, she had to babysit."Choose the Correct Revision: a. Run-on: "The dog barked at midnight the neighbors complained."Which fix is correct?"The dog barked at midnight, the neighbors complained.""The dog barked at midnight; the neighbors complained.""The dog barked at midnight because the neighbors complained."Add Punctuation or Conjunctions: a. "He can sing he can't dance."b. "They left early they caught the train."Identify and Correct: a. Run-on: "I finished my work early I went home."Fixed: "I finished my work early, so I went home." or "I finished my work early. I went home." b. Run-on: "He loves classical music he hates opera."Fixed: "He loves classical music, but he hates opera." or "He loves classical music; however, he hates opera." c. Run-on: "She wanted to go to the party, she had to babysit." (Comma splice) Fixed: "She wanted to go to the party, but she had to babysit." or "She wanted to go to the party; however, she had to babysit."Choose the Correct Revision:Given: "The dog barked at midnight the neighbors complained."Correct fix: "The dog barked at midnight; the neighbors complained." (#2) The first option still gives a comma splice, and the third option changes the meaning.Add Punctuation or Conjunctions: a. "He can sing; he can't dance." or "He can sing, but he can't dance." b. "They left early, and they caught the train." or "They left early so they caught the train." A run-on sentence is two or more independent clauses incorrectly presented in a single sentence. This can be highly distracting to readers and prevent the writer from successfully communicating key information. General Considerations Fused sentence and comma splice are two terms that describe specific kinds of run-on sentences. When two or more independent clauses are included in a single sentence with no punctuation between them, this is a fused sentence. Class began the professor lectured. The professor lectured students took notes. When two or more independent clauses are included in a single sentence separated only by commas, this is a comma splice. The professor lectured, students took notes. Class began, the professor lectured, students took notes. An independent clause is a group of words that contains a subject and verb and is by itself a complete sentence. A few simple examples would be: Class began. The professor lectured. Students took notes. In Practice Run-on sentences can be fixed in a number of ways, some of which can help add variety, flair, or sophistication to your writing. 1. The easiest way to fix a run-on sentence is to punctuate each independent clause with a period. The professor lectured. The students took notes. Class began. The professor lectured. Students took notes. These sentences are grammatically correct, but if you think you might like more variety in your sentences, other solutions might be better. 2. Another relatively easy way to fix run-ons is to separate independent clauses with semicolons. Class began; the professor lectured. The professor lectured; students took notes. The semicolon is a good solution if you have two independent clauses in your run-on sentence. If you have three independent clauses, inserting two semi-colons is technically correct, but may look awkward to readers. Class began; the professor lectured; students took notes. There are other, better options for repairing a run-on sentence with three independent clauses. 3. You can also fix a run-on using one or more commas and one of the following coordinating conjunctions: and, but, so, or, nor, for. Class began, and the professor lectured. The professor lectured, so the students took notes. In these examples, two independent clauses are being joined, and one comma before the conjunction is all that is necessary. However, to join three independent clauses, insert a comma after the first two. Class began, the professor lectured, and students took notes. This is often a very effective way to repair a run-on with three independent clauses. 4. The most sophisticated way to fix a run-on is to subordinate one of the independent clauses. When you subordinate a clause, you change the wording so that it is a dependent rather than an independent clause. When class began the professor lectured. The professor lectured while the students took notes. Adding "when" and "while" to what had formerly been independent clauses made them dependent clauses that could be joined to an independent clause with no punctuation. Sometimes, when you subordinate a clause, you may need a comma. 5. Any of the solutions above are great ways to repair a run-on. Once you are familiar with them, you can use them together to add even more variety to your writing. The following sentence uses solutions 1 and 3: Class began. The professor lectured, and students took notes. This sentence uses solutions 1 and 4: When class began, the professor lectured. Students took notes. This one uses solutions 2 and 4: When class began, the professor lectured; students took notes. Exercises Revise these sentences to eliminate run-ons. [Note: One sentence requires no editing.] Scholars argue about the veracity of this claim this paper will defend it. The experiment was a success, my lab group and I were pleased with the results. Historians have one view of this evidence, while religious authorities have a different view. My research resulted in three useful articles, I will use them as evidence for my thesis. This method has some advantages other methods are less promising. A run-on sentence happens when two or more complete thoughts are joined without proper punctuation or connecting words. Even if the ideas are clear, the sentence becomes grammatically incorrect and harder to follow.Run-on sentences are one of the most common issues in writing, especially when writers try to pack too much into a single sentence. But with a few simple techniques, they're also one of the easiest problems to fix. In this article, you'll learn what run-on sentences are, how to spot them, and how to correct them using clear, practical methods.A run-on sentence occurs when two or more independent clauses are joined together without the right punctuation or a connecting word. These sentences may seem fine at first glance, but they often feel rushed, confusing, or grammatically incorrect.It's important to note that a run-on sentence isn't defined by length. A sentence can be long and still be correct, or short and still be a run-on if it joins full ideas improperly. Maya loves playing piano she practices every evening.(This sentence includes two complete thoughts with no punctuation or connectors.)✔ Maya loves playing piano. She practices every evening.(Each clause stands alone with proper punctuation.)✔ Maya loves playing piano, and she practices every evening.(Here, the clauses are joined with a comma and a coordinating conjunction.)Learning how to recognize run-on sentences starts with understanding how full sentences should be connected. In the next section, we'll look at the different types of run-on sentences and how they appear in writing.Run-on sentences don't all look the same. A sentence can break the rules of correct clause connection in different ways. Here are the most common types:A fused sentence joins two independent clauses with no punctuation or connector at all.Incorrect: The power went out we sat in the dark.Correct: The power went out. We sat in the dark.This happens when a comma is used between two independent clauses without a coordinating conjunction.Incorrect: The train arrived late, we missed our connection.Correct: The train arrived late, so we missed our connection.Correct: The train arrived late. We missed our connection.This involves joining several clauses with coordinating conjunctions but without a clear structure or punctuation. While sometimes used for style, it often leads to unclear sentences.Incorrect: She went to the store and she bought milk and she saw a friend and they talked for an hour.Better: She went to the store, bought milk, and ran into a friend she hadn't seen in a while.Understanding these variations helps you identify run-ons more easily and apply the right fix depending on how the sentence is structured.Identifying a run-on sentence isn't about counting words—it's about recognizing when two or more independent clauses are joined incorrectly.Here's how to check if a sentence is a run-on:Each independent clause should be able to stand on its own as a complete sentence.I finished my homework it was getting late.(Two full ideas are present, but there's no punctuation or connector.)Try placing a period where you think the sentence could break. If both parts make sense as complete sentences, you likely have a run-on.The road was icy we drove slowly.→ The road was icy. We drove slowly.✔ Both parts work, so the original sentence is a run-on.A single comma is not enough to separate two independent clauses. If that's all you see, you're likely looking at a comma splice.Incorrect: I enjoy reading, I rarely find time for it.Correct: I enjoy reading, but I rarely find time for it.Spotting run-ons becomes easier with practice. In the next section, we'll go over how to fix them correctly.Once you spot a run-on sentence, there are several effective ways to correct it. The method you choose depends on the tone, length, and flow you want to achieve in your writing.Break the sentence into two complete thoughts using a period.Incorrect: She loves writing she journals every night.Correct: She loves writing. She journals every night.Semicolons connect two closely related independent clauses without a conjunction.Correct: She loves writing; she journals every night.Use a comma followed by a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).Correct: She loves writing, and she journals every night.Turn one independent clause into a dependent clause using a word like because, although, or while.Correct: Because she loves writing, she journals every night.Correct: She journals every night because she loves writing.If you want to show a relationship (such as cause and effect), use a semicolon followed by a transitional phrase like however, therefore, or in fact.Correct: She loves writing; therefore, she journals every night.Each of these methods corrects the structure while preserving the original meaning. Choose the one that fits the tone and purpose of your sentence.Run-on sentences often happen when writers focus more on ideas than structure. They're especially common in early drafts, informal writing, or when trying to sound conversational. Here are the most frequent causes:Many run-ons come from not realizing that two complete thoughts need a connector or punctuation. If each clause can stand alone, they need to be separated or joined properly.Example:I woke up early I still missed the bus.(Two complete ideas, but no proper punctuation.)Writers sometimes assume that adding a comma or repeating "and" is enough to connect thoughts.Example:He finished the project, he didn't check the details.(This is a comma splice, not a correct sentence.)Example:She ran and she called and she cried.(Too many conjunctions without structure makes the sentence feel overwhelming.)When a writer tries to pack too many ideas into one sentence, it often leads to unclear connections or missing punctuation.Example:The presentation started late the sound system failed the audience got restless.(This is a series of fused sentences.)Run-on sentences and sentence fragments are often confused because they both break basic sentence rules, but they're opposite problems.A run-on joins two or more complete thoughts without the right punctuation or connectors.Example (Run-on):She opened the window it was too warm inside.This has two independent clauses but no punctuation or linking words.A fragment is missing a subject, a verb, or a complete idea.Example (Fragment):Because she opened the window.This sentence leaves the reader waiting for what happened next.If the sentence feels too long or rushed and seems like two full thoughts pushed together → it's likely a run-on.If the sentence feels cut off or unfinished → it's likely a fragment.A run-on sentence is a sentence that joins two or more independent clauses without proper punctuation or connecting words. It lacks the structure needed to separate complete thoughts.Check if the sentence includes two or more complete thoughts without a period, semicolon, or conjunction. If each part could stand as a full sentence but isn't correctly connected, it's likely a run-on.Yes, in formal and academic writing, run-on sentences are considered grammatical errors. However, in fiction or informal dialogue, a run-on may be used deliberately for style, but it should still be used carefully.A comma splice is a type of run-on sentence. It occurs when two independent clauses are joined with just a comma and no coordinating conjunction.Use clear punctuation and sentence structure. Read your sentences aloud, look for separate thoughts, and revise as needed by using periods, conjunctions, or semicolons to break up long or crowded sentences. Run on sentences can make your writing hard to understand. When you connect complete thoughts without proper punctuation, readers get lost. Fortunately, fixing a run on sentence is straightforward once you know the techniques. What is a Run On Sentence? A run-on sentence occurs when two or more independent clauses (complete thoughts) are joined without proper punctuation or connecting words. For example: "I went to the store I bought milk." This sentence contains two complete thoughts improperly connected. Four Easy Ways to Fix Run On Sentences 1. Add a Period The simplest solution is to split the run-on into separate sentences: Run-on: "The movie was excellent I enjoyed it thoroughly." Fixed: "The movie was excellent. I enjoyed it thoroughly." 2. Use a Semicolon When two ideas are closely related, a semicolon works well: Run-on: "She studied all night she passed the test." Fixed: "She studied all night; she passed the test." 3. Add a Comma and Coordinating Conjunction Use a comma followed by a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet): Run-on: "He missed the bus he was late for work." Fixed: "He missed the bus, so he was late for work." 4. Use a Subordinating Conjunction Make one clause dependent on the other with words like because, although, when, if: Run-on: "I stayed home it was raining." Fixed: "I stayed home because it was raining." Practice Makes Perfect The best way to improve is through practice. Try these steps: Read your writing aloud Look for places where you need to pause Check if each part has a subject and verb Apply one of the four fixes above See more: How to Identify Compound Complex Sentence? A run-on sentence is a common English writing mistake that happens when a sentence incorrectly connects clauses. People write run-on sentences all the time, but luckily they're easy to correct. In this guide, we explain everything you need to know about run-on sentences, including how to fix them. Grammarly helps you communicate confidently Table of Contents What are run-on sentences? 3 ways to fix a run-on sentence Examples of run-on sentences and how to fix them Types of run-on sentences Run-on sentences FAQs What are run-on sentences? To understand run-on sentences, you first have to understand independent and dependent clauses. A clause is a basic unit of language that includes a subject and a predicate (which requires at least one verb). A single clause alone, with proper punctuation, is a complete sentence. I fell asleep. The TV woke me up. If you want to connect two or more clauses together in English, you need to use the right grammar. Usually, you can connect clauses correctly by adding a comma with a conjunction or adding a semicolon to the sentence. I fell asleep, but the TV woke me up. I fell asleep; the TV woke me up. If you don't connect the clauses with a semicolon or comma with a conjunction, the sentence is incorrect. These mistakes are called run-on sentences. I fell asleep the TV woke me up. Likewise, if you use too many conjunctions or use them incorrectly (for example, without the comma), that's also a run-on sentence. I fell asleep but the TV woke me up and now I want to sleep again but I can't. 3 ways to fix a run-on sentence 1 Divide the clauses into two sentences Often in writing, the best way to fix a run-on sentence is to split it into two or more separate sentences. Be sure to capitalize the first letter of each sentence and use a period, question mark, or exclamation point between them. Our training was successful we won our first game! Our training was successful! We won our first game! 2 Insert a semicolon between the two clauses Another way to write better sentences is by using a semicolon to connect two clauses in the same sentence. This works great for comma splices because you can simply replace the comma with a semicolon. It hasn't rained in weeks, my flowers are turning brown. It hasn't rained in weeks; my flowers are turning brown. 3 Use a comma and a conjunction Conjunctions work well for describing the relationship between two clauses. You can use either a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so) or a subordinating conjunction (because, if, while, etc.). If you use a coordinating conjunction, place a comma before the conjunction. If you're using a subordinating conjunction, use a comma only if the subordinate clause comes first. You don't need a comma if the subordinate clause comes second. This is a special trip we should get matching tattoos. This is a special trip, so we should get matching tattoos. Because this is a special trip, we should get matching tattoos. We should get matching tattoos because this is a special trip. Fix run-on sentences, clarity, tone, and more Check Text with Grammarly Examples of run-on sentences and how to fix them The light inside is broken the vending machine still works. The light inside is broken, but the vending machine still works. Red looks too aggressive for the living room walls, let's try blue. Red looks too aggressive for the living room walls; let's try blue. The zombie invasion finally came but I am well prepared so let's work together. The zombie invasion finally came, but I am well prepared. Let's work together. Scarves were popular last season, this season hats are popular. Scarves were popular last season. This season, hats are popular. The car will start eventually you have to keep trying. The car will start eventually; you have to keep trying. Types of run-on sentences What is a fused sentence? A fused sentence joins two or more clauses without any punctuation. We met for a date there was no chemistry we won't meet again. What is a comma splice? Comma splices are when two or more clauses are separated with only a comma and are missing a conjunction. We met for a date, there was no chemistry, we won't meet again. What is a polysyndeton? A polysyndeton is a sentence that uses too many conjunctions or more conjunctions than necessary. We met for a date and there was no chemistry and we won't meet again. Run-on sentences FAQs What are run-on sentences? Run-on sentences are a type of grammar mistake that happens when two or more clauses are joined incorrectly. What are the different kinds of run-on sentences? There are three types of run-on sentences: A fused sentence is when clauses are joined with no punctuation. A comma splice is when clauses are joined with only a comma (and nothing else), and a polysyndeton is when a sentence uses too many conjunctions or more conjunctions than necessary. How can you fix a run-on sentence? You can fix run-on sentences just by adding a semicolon or a conjunction with a comma between the clauses. Alternatively, you can simply split the sentence into two or more separate sentences. The run-on sentence and comma splice are common punctuation errors that can create confusion in your writing. Run-on sentence A run-on sentence occurs when two or more complete sentences (independent clauses) are joined with no punctuation. Here's an example: Joseph Cornell was an innovative American artist known for his shadow boxes and collages his art became more famous after his death in 1972. Comma splice A comma splice occurs when two or more complete sentences are joined only with a comma, which is not strong enough punctuation. This is an example of a comma splice: Joseph Cornell was an innovative American artist known for his shadow boxes and collages, his art became more famous after his death in 1972. Five Ways to Fix a Run-on or Comma Splice Add a period and a capital letter to separate the sentences. Joseph Cornell was an innovative American artist known for his shadow boxes and collages. His art became more famous after his death in 1972. Add a comma and a coordinating conjunction. Coordinating conjunctions are easy to remember as F.A.N.B.O.Y.S.—for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. Joseph Cornell was an innovative American artist known for his shadow boxes and collages, but his art became more famous after his death in 1972. Add a semicolon if the sentences are closely related. Joseph Cornell was an innovative American artist known for his shadow boxes and collages; his art became more famous after his death in 1972. Add a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb—also known as a "transitional word". When using a transitional word, the comma should be placed immediately after the transition. Joseph Cornell was an innovative American artist known for his shadow boxes and collages; however, his art became more famous after his death in 1972. Common Transitional Words: Add a subordinating conjunction—also known as a "dependent word"—to the beginning or the middle of the sentence. Even though Joseph Cornell was an innovative American artist known for his shadow boxes and collages, his artwork became more famous after his death in 1972. In the example above, the comma stays when the conjunction "even though" is added to the beginning of the sentence. Joseph Cornell was an innovative American artist because he used objects and items most people would throw away in his work. In this example, the comma is removed when the conjunction "because" is added to the middle of the sentence. Common Subordinating Conjunctions: In prescriptive grammar, a run-on sentence occurs when two independent clauses have been run together without an appropriate conjunction or mark of punctuation between them. Put another way, a run-on is a compound sentence that has been incorrectly coordinated or punctuated. Run-on sentences aren't always excessively long sentences, but they can be confusing to readers because they tend to express more than one main idea without making clear connections between the two. Usage guides commonly identify two kinds of run-on sentences: fused sentences and comma splices. In either case, there are five common ways of correcting a run-on sentence: Making the independent clauses two simple sentences separated by a period Adding a semicolon Using a comma and a coordinating conjunction word Reducing the two to a single independent clause Changing the sentence into a complex sentence by adding a subordinating conjunction before one of the clauses Sometimes, run-on sentences occur even when a comma is present between independent clauses because of the omission of joining words and phrases. This type of error is called a comma splice and typically should be separated by either a semicolon or a period instead. Interestingly, Bryan A. Garner's "The Oxford Dictionary of American Usage and Style" states that while there is a distinction between run-on sentences and comma splices, it isn't typically noteworthy. However, Garner also adds "The distinction can be helpful in differentiating between the wholly unacceptable (true run-on sentences) and the usually-but-not-always unacceptable (comma splices)." As a result, comma splices may sometimes be regarded as acceptable in certain situations. Fused sentences, on the other hand, occur when there is an error in which two sentences "are run together without a punctuation mark between them," according to Robert DiYanni and Pat Hoy II's "The Scribner Handbook for Writers." Fused sentences are never accepted as grammatically acceptable. Academic writing requires grammatical accuracy in order for the work to be taken seriously; as a result, it is important for writers to eliminate run-on sentences in order to convey a professional tone and style. Fortunately, there are five common ways in which gramm