

Run-On Sentences and Comma Splices

Marked as “RS” or “CS”

A **run-on sentence** (also known as a **fused sentence**) or a **comma splice** occurs when two or more independent clauses in a sentence are joined improperly. A run-on sentence lacks necessary punctuation or a conjunction, while a comma splice results from joining two independent clauses with only a comma.

Identifying Run-Ons and Comma Splices

The following are examples of run-on and comma splice errors:

Run-On sentence: Homer believes in nuclear power Lisa prefers solar power.

[The sentence does not include any punctuation.]

Comma splice: Homer believes in nuclear power, Lisa prefers solar power.

[The sentence lacks a conjunction following the comma.]

Corrected: Homer believes in nuclear power, and Lisa prefers solar power.

[These two independent clauses must be joined with both a comma and a conjunction.]

Run-on sentences and comma splices confuse the reader and slow comprehension because the end of one complete thought blurs together with the beginning of the next complete thought.

Fixing Run-On Sentences and Comma Splices

The following tips list the three easy ways to fix any sentence that contains a run-on sentences or a comma splice:

Example: The current was swift he swam to shore. (RS)

The current was swift, he swam to shore. (CS)

1. Add a coordinating conjunction (*and, or, but, for, nor, so, yet*) after the comma.

Corrected: The current was swift, and he swam to shore.

2. Replace the comma with a semicolon so that it separates two independent clauses.

Corrected: The current was swift; he swam to shore.

3. Create two separate sentences.

Corrected: The current was swift. He swam to shore.

4. Add a semi-colon and a conjunctive adverb (*e.g., therefore, however, moreover*).

Corrected: The current was swift; therefore, he swam to shore.

<p>For more information on Run-On Sentences, see p. 509 of the <i>Business Writer’s Handbook</i>. For more information on Comma Splices, see p. 98 of the <i>Business Writer’s Handbook</i>.</p>
