

FRAGMENTS AND RUN-ONS

This module will cover run on sentences, comma splices and fragments. It will enable the student to identify potential run-ons and fragments as well as determine the appropriate way to fix them

Fragments are sentences that are incomplete. A sentence can be considered a fragment if:
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. A DEPENDENT CLAUSE is a sentence that can have a subject and a verb, but does not express a complete thought.

The words in the box are called SUBORDINATORS because they render a sentence subordinate or unable to stand on its own.

Here are a few examples of fragments (or, dependent clauses with subordinators) at the beginning

Fragment	<u>Correct Way</u> (Not a fragment)
If I go to school today.	If I go to school today, then I will take the test.
Unless love finds me.	Unless love finds me, I will always be unhappy.
After you leave.	After you leave, I will be sad.

It is missing a subject or verb

Here are a few fragments that are missing the subject or the verb

Fragment	<u>Correct Way</u> (Not a fragment)
Lilies from the valley.	I can smell the lilies from the valley
Plays in the dark.	The theater puts on plays in the dark.
Pumpkins in the grass.	Let me see the pumpkins in the grass.

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

Here are a few examples of fragments that have the words *which*, *that* or *who* following the noun

Fragment	<u>Correct Way</u> (Not a fragment)
Children that sing.	The children that sing in the choir will be over for dinner.
A dancer who steals.	A dance who steals the show will impress the audience.
People that laugh.	People who laugh tend to be happy.

How can one turn a fragment into a complete sentence? One may simply add to the sentence what is lacking. For example

As long as I have you. **As long as I have you, nothing can stand in our way.**

This fragment can be fixed by adding an INDEPENDENT CLAUSE. An independent clause is a sentence that can stand alone because it has a subject and a verb and conveys a complete thought. Independent clauses are basically regular sentences.

Running in the streets. **Sam is running in the streets.**

We can fix this fragment by adding what it is lacking, a subject. In the corrected sentence, the subject is Sam.

Papers from the office. **Please put away these papers from the office.**

This fragment can be fixed by adding what is lacking. In this example, a verb is what is lacking. In the corrected sentence, the verb is put.

Please try the following exercises on your own or with the help of a tutor. If the sentence is a fragment, circle it. Then rewrite the fragment as a complete sentence.

1. Sarah likes to play cards.
2. Playing cards at night.
3. Fairy princesses from the sky.
4. Pecan pie is my favorite kind of pie.
5. Nothing makes sense anymore.
7. Please tell the teacher to go away.
8. If I go to the florist.
9. Teachers who don't like to read.
10. Tell me why you feel this way.

11. Flowers on the grave.

12. While she was sleeping.

RUN-ON SENTENCES AND COMMA SPLICES

Before you begin this lesson, it would be helpful to know what the words **INDEPENDENT CLAUSE** mean. An **INDEPENDENT CLAUSE** is simply normal sentence. This means it has a subject, verb and expresses a complete thought

Here are a few examples of independent clauses.

I went to the store today.

The football game was fun.

Please make sure she doesn't forget her keys.

A sentence can be considered a **RUN-ON** if it joins two independent clauses with a comma or no punctuation at all. A run-on sentence that has two independent clauses joined by a comma is called a **COMMA SPLICE**.

Here are a few examples of sentences with comma splices.

My head hurts, I took some Advil.

Mary went to the market, she bought some apples.

I went the part last night, I need to sleep in this mornings.

Here are a few more examples of run-on sentences

We showed up late and the hostess was mad, but she let us in anyway.

Alyssa picked up the new vampire romance book from the library she read it as soon as she got home.

Greg likes football all he does is watch football all the time.

Run-on sentences can be confusing to a reader because they put too many ideas into one sentence. How can one fix a run-on sentence? Here are a few ways to do just that.

One way is join the two independent clauses with a **COORDINATOR**. The following words are coordinators.

F or A nd N or B ut O r Y et S o

The acronym **FANBOYS** is an easy way to remember these words. Always be sure to put a comma before the coordinator.

Here are a few examples of run-on sentences joined by a coordinator.

RUN-ON

Mary needed to tell him the truth she refused to speak a word.
Peeta likes to bake Katniss likes to shoot arrows

Corrected with a coordinator

Mary needed to tell him the truth, but she refused to speak a word.
Peeta likes to bake, and Katniss likes to shoot arrows.

Another way to repair a run-on sentence is to join the two independent clauses with a SUBORDINATOR. Here are a few common subordinators.

although, after, as if, because, even though, that, until, unless, wherever, whether, which, while, since, if, as long as

Here are a few examples of run-on sentences fixed by using a subordinator

RUN-ON

Alex can play outside he has to finish his dinner.
Michael wasn't paying attention the teacher was looking right at him.

Corrected by adding a subordinator

Alex can play outside, as long as he finishes his dinner.
James wasn't paying attention, even though the teacher was looking right at him.

Run-on sentences can be separated by a semicolon. A semicolon may work best if an adequate word cannot be found to join the two sentences.

Here are a few examples.

RUN-ON

Michael followed Alyssa into her room he closed the door behind them
Stefan had run away Elena refused to follow him

Corrected with a semicolon

Michael followed Alyssa into her room; he closed the door behind them.
Stefan had run away; Elena refused to follow him.

Lastly, a run-on sentence can be broken up by a period. The independent clauses are then separated into their own sentences. Here are a few examples of run-on sentences broken up by a period.

RUN-ON

The milkman came earlier he left the milk bottle on the porch.

I had to pick up my son from daycare he was sick.

Sookie wanted to be with Bill she wanted to be with Eric too

Corrected by separating the clauses with a period

The milkman came earlier. He left the milk on the porch.

I had to pick up my son from daycare. He was sick.

Sookie wanted to be with Bill. She wanted to be with Eric too.

Please attempt the following exercises either by yourself or with a tutor. Identify whether or not the sentence is a run-on. If it is, rewrite the correct way using one of the methods given above.

1. I can't wait I have to get to school now I'm going to be late.
2. Let's go to the park after the movie, and then we can watch the sunset.
3. I'm going to make spaghetti, but I'm all out of pasta.
4. Please stop bothering me you are really getting on my nerves.
5. Ashley worked for more than eight hours she didn't receive the overtime pay she deserved.
6. Sarah asked the teacher if she could bring her pet frog to school, but the teacher said no.
7. You can go to the park, after you put on your shoes.
8. I didn't want her at the party, so we asked her to leave.
9. Alex needed to finish a paper he stayed at the library all night.

10. The professor reminded her students of the importance of studying for the final she did not want her students to fail.