

Run-ons: Fused Sentences and Comma Splices

A compound sentence is a sentence which contains more than one *independent clause*. When a compound sentence is punctuated incorrectly, it becomes a **run-on sentence**. There are two types of run-on sentences: **fused sentences** and **comma splices**.

Fused Sentences

WHAT IS A FUSED SENTENCE?

Fused sentences are sentences which lack proper punctuation. This happens when two independent clauses are joined together without the proper punctuation placed between them. For example:

I had my car repaired I also had it painted.

In this example, there are two complete sentences (independent clauses) joined together. In order for this sentence to be grammatically correct, these clauses need to be separated using the correct punctuation or conjunction. The following are possible corrections of this sentence:

I had my car repaired, and I also had it painted.

I had my car repaired; I also had it painted.

I had my car repaired. I also had it painted.

While my car was being repaired, I also had it painted.

Comma Splices

WHAT IS A COMMA SPLICE?

Comma splices are similar to fused sentences in that they contain two independent clauses which are joined together without the proper punctuation placed between them. However, they differ from fused sentences because they have a comma between the two independent clauses. For example:

My gas tank was nearly empty, I went to the gas station to fill it up.

In this example, there are two complete sentences (independent clauses) joined together by a comma. A comma alone cannot be used to separate two sentences and, therefore, is grammatically incorrect. In order for this sentence to be grammatically correct, these clauses need to be separated using the correct punctuation or conjunction. The following are possible corrections of this sentence:

My gas tank was nearly empty, so I went to the gas station to fill it up.

My gas tank was nearly empty; I went to the gas station to fill it up.

My gas tank was nearly empty. I went to the gas station to fill it up.

Because my gas tank was nearly empty, I went to the gas station to fill it up.

There are four ways to correct run-on sentences:

1. Comma + Coordinating Conjunction

Combine two independent clauses by using a comma before a coordinating conjunction. The seven coordinating conjunctions are: *and*, *but*, *for*, *or*, *nor*, *so*, and *yet*. For example:

Mary went to the grocery store this afternoon, **and** she purchased food for tonight's dinner.

Tom didn't have enough time to finish his exam, **for** his class was only an hour long.

Semicolon 2.

Combine two independent clauses by using a semicolon between them.

Mary went to the grocery store this afternoon; she purchased food for tonight's dinner.

Tom didn't have enough time to finish his exam; his class was only an hour long.

3. Two Sentences

Separate two independent clauses by creating two sentences.

Mary went to the grocery store this afternoon. She purchased food for tonight's dinner.

Tom didn't have enough time to finish his exam. His class was only an hour long.

Subordinating Conjunction 4.

Make one of the independent clauses in the sentence a dependent clause by using a subordinating conjunction.

While Mary was at the grocery store this afternoon, she purchased food for tonight's dinner.

Tom didn't have enough time to finish his exam **because** his class was only an hour long.