

Campus Academic Resource Program
Grammar Boot Camp: Run-On and Fragmented Sentences

Workshop Objectives:

- Explore the different aspects that make up a sentence.
- Express how to identify and alter run-on sentences.
- Practice how to restructure run-on sentences.
- Consider comma splices and coordinating conjunctions.
- Practice how to avoid comma splices in forming run-on and fragmented sentences.
- Address subordination conjunctions as parts of sentences.
- Practice how to identify subordinating conjunctions in sentences.
- Focus on semi-colons and their functions.
- Analyze the different kinds of fragmented sentences.
- Practice how to know what kind of fragment and how to correct a sentence.

What are Different Parts of a Sentence?

Before we determine how to identify run-on and fragmented sentences, we need to understand different parts of a sentence.

- **Subject:** The main noun/pronoun the sentence speaks of.
- **Predicate:** Contains the main verb used to link the subject to another noun or adjective.
 - I talk to you.
 - Subject: I
 - Predicate: talk to you
 - Main Verb: talk
- **Independent Clause:** Standalone sentences that represent one main idea. Independent clauses are also known as complete sentences or a main clause.
- **Dependent Clause:** Dependent clauses are not complete sentences on their own. By themselves, they can be known as fragments. Dependent clauses can be identified by a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun.
 - **Subordinating Conjunctions** introduce dependent clauses. Moreover, recognizing a subordinating conjunction can help you realize a clause is dependent.
 - For example: I had to leave early since I had a lot of work to finish.
 - “Since” is the sentence’s subordinating conjunction. The phrase, “since I had a lot of work to finish” is not an independent clause; rather, it is dependent because it needs the independent clause “I had to leave early” to make a complete thought.
 - **Relative Pronouns** are specific kinds of pronouns that create a dependent clause. They are: whose, whosoever, whomever, who, whom, whoever, that, which, whichever.
 - For example: Whoever asked for the television remote, it’s on the table.
 - “Whoever” is the relative pronoun and introduces the dependent clause, “asked for the television remote.” Like the above example,

Campus Academic Resource Program
Grammar Boot Camp: Run-On and Fragmented Sentences

this phrase is a dependent clause and needs the independent clause, “it’s on the table” to make a complete thought.

Run-On Sentences

A run-on sentence can be identified in a couple of ways.

- Run-on sentences can be identified as a sentence that lacks proper punctuation between clauses, usually between two independent clauses.
 - For example: I went to the store I bought milk.
 - Both “I went to the store” and “I bought milk” are independent clauses. However, this sentence lacks proper punctuation (such as a semicolon or a comma with a coordinating conjunction) and creates a run-on sentence.
- Run-on sentences can also be identified as long sentences that lack focus because they contain multiple ideas. These types of sentences become issues in one’s writing because they lack academic concision. Once recognized, run-on sentences can be fixed by:
 - Breaking down the sentence’s structure and recognizing the sentence’s focus.
 - This will help you recognize the sentence’s structural form.
 - Then, you can correct the run-on into one cohesive sentence or multiple sentences.

Examples

- They were watching the movie last night it was really funny.
 - There are clearly two independent clauses (standalone sentences), but no punctuation separating them.
 - | | |
|---|----------------------|
| They were watching the movie last night | it was really funny. |
|---|----------------------|
 - By adding the proper punctuation, the sentence becomes complete, rather than a run-on.
 - The run-on sentence can be made into two sentences:
 - They were watching the movie last night. It was really funny.
 - The run-on sentence can also remain one sentence by adding a semicolon:
 - They were watching a movie last night; it was really funny.
 - Or, we can re-phrase the sentence to make it into one complete, or standalone, sentence.
 - They watched a funny movie last night.
- Some say that The Rolling Stones are the best classic rock band, but The Beatles are superior because their albums were more in tune with the political climate during the ‘60s like how they opposed the Vietnam War with their songs and openly recognized and embraced counterculture.

Campus Academic Resource Program

Grammar Boot Camp: Run-On and Fragmented Sentences

- There is proper punctuation, but the sentence lacks focus and contains more than one idea.
- We can break this sentence down to recognize its main ideas (or, focus) and add proper punctuation where need be.
 - The writer wants to emphasize that The Beatles are superior to The Rolling Stones because they acknowledged sociopolitical issues.
 - The writer also includes some supporting information to emphasize this point.
 - They opposed the Vietnam War
 - They openly recognized and embraced counterculture
- We can rewrite this sentence to emphasize the writer's main focus.
 - The Beatles are superior to The Rolling Stones because their music acknowledged political issues; they opposed the Vietnam War and embraced counterculture.

Run-On Sentence Exercise

Reformat the following Run-On Sentence using the skills discussed.

1. My professor says I have to be more diligent in completing my assignments because I get distracted too easily with my personal life like how I spend more time with my friends and my partner instead of in the library.

- a. Is the above sentence: Two independent clauses lacking punctuation or a sentence that contains proper punctuation but lacks focus? _____

- b. What is the sentence's main focus? _____

- c. What supporting information is used to emphasize this point?

- d. How can you rewrite this sentence? _____

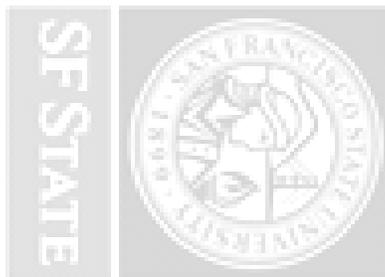
Coordinating Conjunctions and Commas

Coordinating conjunctions are used with commas if both clauses are independent clauses. If coordinating conjunctions are not used properly, they create run-on sentences because they can connect too many ideas into one sentence. Coordinating conjunctions are important in any type of writing because they join thoughts together.

Campus Academic Resource Program
Grammar Boot Camp: Run-On and Fragmented Sentences

Coordinating conjunctions are commonly referred to by the acronym FANBOYS.

- For (used like “because”)
And
Nor
But
Or
Yet
So



Examples with Commas

The following examples use a comma with a coordinating conjunction because both clauses are independent.

• Summer is her favorite season	, for	her birthday falls in August.
• We could go to the beach	, or	we could go to the lake.
• He says he wants to start running in the morning	, yet	he always stays up late.

Comma Splices

Even though commas may seem like a quick way to fix run-on sentences, they can also create run-on sentences if used incorrectly. Comma splices can be defined as any improper comma use, but they are most commonly seen when connecting two independent clauses.

Example

- I went to the store, I bought milk.
 - The above sentence is two independent clauses improperly connected with a comma. We can fix this sentence by making it into two sentences or by using a coordinating conjunction.
 - Two sentences: I went to the store. I bought milk.
 - Coordinating Conjunction: I went to the store, **and** I bought milk.
 - It should be noted that a comma is still used with the coordinating conjunction since both clauses are independent.

Comma Splice Exercise

Correct the following comma splices using coordinating conjunctions.

1. My new job is fun, the hours are long and worthwhile.
 - a. _____
2. They should study more, they should start their assignments earlier.
 - a. _____

Campus Academic Resource Program
Grammar Boot Camp: Run-On and Fragmented Sentences

3. He always feels overwhelmed at the beginning of the semester, he runs often.
a. _____

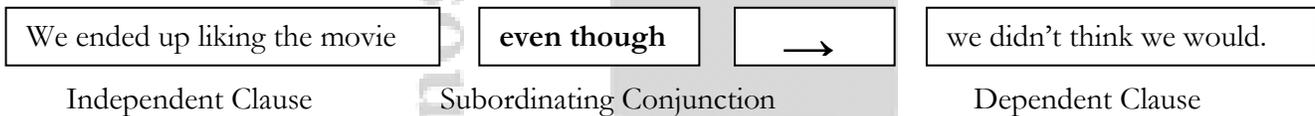
Subordinating Conjunctions and Semicolons

Subordinating conjunctions introduce a dependent clause and tie it to an independent clause. A subordinating conjunction will always introduce a dependent clause, regardless of their order in a sentence (Independent clause, Dependent clause / Dependent clause, Independent clause).

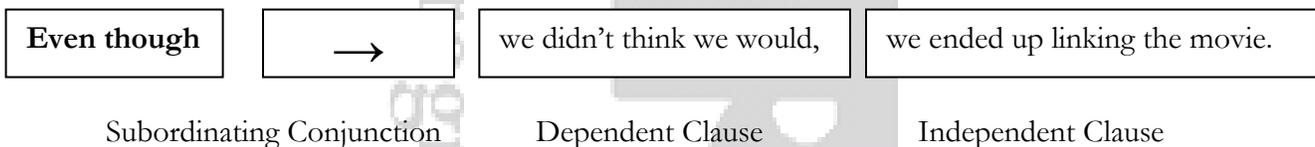
Below is a list of Subordinating Conjunctions:

after although as because before even if even though if in order that	once provided that rather than since so that than that though unless	until when whenever where whereas wherever whether while why
---	--	--

Example



- In the above example, the independent clause precedes the dependent clause. We know that the latter clause is dependent because the subordinating conjunction, “even though” introduces it. However, as previously stated, the dependent clause can also come before the independent clause as long as a subordinating conjunction is used.



- In the above example, the dependent clause precedes the independent clause. We know that the former clause is dependent because the subordinating conjunction, “even though” introduces it. Although we've added a comma after the dependent clause, this

Campus Academic Resource Program
Grammar Boot Camp: Run-On and Fragmented Sentences

example shows that as long as a subordinating conjunction is used, the order of dependent and independent clauses in one sentence does not matter.

- Quick note: commas are usually used if a dependent clause precedes an independent clause to create a proper pause in a sentence.

Subordinating Conjunction Exercise

Identify both the subordinating conjunction and the dependent clause in the following sentences.

1. Unless told otherwise, you have to read two chapters per day.
 - a. Subordinating conjunction: _____
 - b. Dependent clause: _____
2. Sweeping is part of our daily chores, whether we like it or not.
 - a. Subordinating conjunction: _____
 - b. Dependent clause: _____
3. She strives for excellence, whereas he just gets by.
 - a. Subordinating conjunction: _____
 - b. Dependent clause: _____

Semicolons

Semicolons also connect two independent clauses, but there are no connecting words (coordinating conjunctions) between the two clauses. Semicolons are longer pauses in a sentence than a comma, but shorter than a period. Semicolons are useful not only because they connect two independent clauses, but because they show relationships between these two clauses. The second independent clause supports the first independent clause.

Examples

- I like to read; detective novels are my favorite.

Or, let's look back at the previous example of a run-on sentence:

- The Beatles are superior to The Rolling Stones because their music acknowledged political issues; they opposed the Vietnam War and embraced counterculture.

The above examples contain independent clauses before and after the semicolons. The independent clauses after the semicolons support the preceding clauses. Therefore, you can use a semicolon to connect these two clauses without using coordinating conjunctions.

Campus Academic Resource Program
Grammar Boot Camp: Run-On and Fragmented Sentences

Fragmented Sentences

Fragmented Sentences are:

- Any type of clause not attached to a main clause
 - A dependent clause without an independent clause is always a fragment
- A sentence that does not contain a subject or a verb
- Parts of a sentence that were made to stand alone but rely on the independent clause

Example

- He never went shopping. Hating everyone.
 - We can fix this fragment by removing the period. By doing so, the subordinate clause becomes attached to the main clause, making a complete sentence.
 - He never went shopping because he hates everyone.
 - We can also reverse the order of the two sentences to make a complete sentence.
 - Hating everyone, he never went shopping.

Types of Fragments

There are a few types of fragmented sentences. More often than not, these sentences can be adjusted the same way as described above: either by removing punctuation or reversing the order of the two sentences (as mentioned above, we use a comma if we reverse the order and have the dependent clause precede the independent clause).

Subordinate Clause Fragment

- A period is placed between an independent clause and a **subordinate clause**.
 - They left the lecture early. **Rather than** asking for permission before it started.
- Ways to fix this fragment:
 - Removing punctuation: They left the lecture early **rather than** asking for permission before it started.
 - Reversing the order: **Rather than** asking for permission before it started, they left the lecture early.

Participle Phrase Fragment

- A sentence starts with a **past participle** (verbs ending in –ed or –ing) or **irregular verb**. These sentences often lack a subject.
 - Fragment with a past participle: The dogs were hiding under the couch when I came home. **Startled** by the lightning and thunder.
 - Ways to fix this fragment:
 - Removing punctuation: In this case, removing the period is not enough to construct a complete sentence because doing so creates a

Campus Academic Resource Program

Grammar Boot Camp: Run-On and Fragmented Sentences

run-on sentence. Instead, we can rewrite the two sentences to compile a complete sentence.

- The dogs were hiding under the couch when I came home because they were **startled** by the lightning and thunder.
- Reversing the order: **Startled** by the lightning and thunder, the dogs were hiding under the couch when I came home.
- Fragment with an irregular verb: It took us a while to find our cat, Mindy, because she covered a lot of ground. **Ran** so far away from home.
 - Ways to fix this fragment:
 - Removing punctuation: Just like the above example, removing the period is not enough to construct a complete sentence because it would the necessary predicate. We can rewrite the two sentences to compile a complete sentence.
 - It took us a while to find our cat, Mindy, because she covered a lot of ground **when she ran** away from home.
 - Reversing the order: The structure of these sentences doesn't allow us to merely reverse the order of the two sentences to make a complete sentence. Instead, we have to add extra words to make a complete sentence if we want to reverse the order.
 - Since she covered a lot of ground **when she ran** away from home, it took us a while to find our cat, Mindy.
 - We also used a subordinating conjunction, since, to introduce the sentence's dependent clause.

Infinitive Phrase Fragment

- A sentence starts with an **infinitive verb** (to + verb base, such as: to fix). These sentences lack a subject.
 - She's been staying home on the weekends. **To save** money for summer.
 - Ways to fix this fragment:
 - Removing punctuation: She's been staying home on the weekends to save money for summer.
 - Reversing the order: To save money for summer, she's been staying home on the weekends.

Appositive Phrase Fragment

- A sentence begins with, or only contains, an **appositive phrase**. An **appositive phrase** provides extra meaning or description for a word or phrase.

Campus Academic Resource Program
Grammar Boot Camp: Run-On and Fragmented Sentences

- He looks different after summer vacation. **Taller, tanner, and thinner.**
 - Ways to fix this fragment:
 - Removing punctuation **and** adding a *subordinating conjunction* with a “to be” verb: He looks different after summer vacation *since* he is now taller, tanner, and thinner.
 - You can also put the **appositive phrase** in front of the noun it describes: **Taller, tanner, and thinner**; he looks different after summer vacation.

Types of Fragments Exercise

Identify the type of fragmented sentence and how re-write it.

1. She had to quit her job at the restaurant. To do the best she could in school.
 - a. Type of fragment: _____

 - b. Fixed sentence: _____

2. To lose the most weight, they knew they had to run often. Whenever was possible.
 - a. Type of fragment: _____

 - b. Fixed sentence: _____

3. Listening to the waves. He felt peaceful.
 - a. Type of fragment: _____

 - b. Fixed sentence: _____

4. The roses were beautiful. Multicolored, fresh, and sweet-smelling.
 - a. Type of fragment: _____

 - b. Fixed sentence: _____

5. I'm sorry I was late last night, traffic was horrible. Caught up by the impending storm.
 - a. Type of fragment: _____

 - b. Fixed sentence: _____

Campus Academic Resource Program
Grammar Boot Camp: Run-On and Fragmented Sentences

Answer Key

Run-On Sentence Exercise

1. My professor says I have to be more diligent in completing my assignments because I get distracted too easily with my personal life like how I spend more time with my friends and my partner instead of in the library.
 - a. The above sentence is: A sentence that contains proper punctuation but lacks focus.
 - b. What is the sentence's main focus? My professor says I have to be more diligent in completing my assignments.
 - c. What supporting information is used to emphasize this point?
 - i. I get distracted too easily with my personal life
 - ii. I spend more time with my friends and partner
 - iii. Instead of spending time in the library
 - d. How can you rewrite this sentence? Since I get distracted too easily with my friends and partner, my professor says I have to be more diligent in completing my assignments.

Comma Splice Exercise

1. My new job is fun, the hours are long and worthwhile.
 - a. My new job is fun, **for** the hours are long and worthwhile.
 - i. The coordinating conjunction, for, is used in this example since it operates like the word "because." This sentence describes why the job is fun.
2. They should study more, they should start their assignments earlier.
 - a. They should study more, **or** they should start their assignments earlier.
 - b. They should study more, **and** they should start their assignments earlier.
 - c. They should study more, **but** they should also start their assignments earlier.
 - i. This sentence can be fixed using multiple coordinating conjunctions depending on what you want the sentence's meaning to be.
3. He always feels overwhelmed at the beginning of the semester, he runs often.
 - a. He always feels overwhelmed at the beginning of the semester, **so** he runs often.
 - i. This sentence's structure indicates cause (He always feels overwhelmed at the beginning of the semester) and effect (he runs often). To maintain this structure, we use the coordinating conjunction "so."

Campus Academic Resource Program
Grammar Boot Camp: Run-On and Fragmented Sentences

Subordinating Conjunction Exercise

1. Unless told otherwise, you have to read two chapters per day.
 - a. Subordinating conjunction: Unless
 - b. Dependent clause: Unless told otherwise
2. Sweeping is part of our daily chores, whether we like it or not.
 - a. Subordinating conjunction: Whether
 - b. Dependent clause: Whether we like it or not
3. She strives for excellence, whereas he just gets by.
 - a. Subordinating conjunction: Whereas
 - b. Dependent clause: Whereas he just gets by

Types of Fragments Exercise

1. She had to quit her job at the restaurant. To do the best she could in school.
 - a. Type of fragment: Infinitive Phrase Fragment
 - b. Fixed sentence: To do the best she could in school, she had to quit her job at the restaurant.
 - c. Fixed sentence: She had to quit her job at the restaurant to do the best she could in school.
2. To lose the most weight, they knew they had to run often. Whenever was possible.
 - a. Type of fragment: Subordinate Clause Fragment
 - b. Fixed sentence: To lose the most weight, they knew they had to run whenever was possible.
3. Listening to the waves. He felt peaceful.
 - a. Type of fragment: Participle Phrase Fragment (Past Participle)
 - b. Fixed sentence: He felt peaceful listening to the waves.
 - c. Fixed sentence: Listening to the waves, he felt peaceful.
4. The roses were beautiful. Multicolored, fresh, and sweet-smelling.
 - a. Type of fragment: Appositive Phrase Fragment
 - b. Fixed sentence: Multicolored, fresh, and sweet-smelling, the roses were beautiful.
 - c. Fixed sentence: The roses were beautiful; multicolored, fresh, and sweet-smelling.
5. I'm sorry I was late last night, traffic was horrible. Caught up by the impending storm.
 - a. Type of fragment: Participle Phrase Fragment (Irregular Verb)
 - b. Fixed sentence: I'm sorry I was late last night; traffic was horrible because we were caught up by the impending storm.
 - c. Fixed sentence: Caught up by the impending storm, traffic was horrible last night, which is why I was late.

Campus Academic Resource Program
Grammar Boot Camp: Run-On and Fragmented Sentences

Works Cited

- “Commas.” *CARP*. San Francisco State University, n.d. Web. 28 July 2015.
- "Coordinating Conjunctions." *YourDictionary*. YourDictionary, n.d. Web. 28 July 2015.
- Driscoll, Dana, and Allen Brizee. "Commas vs. Semicolons in Compound Sentences." *Purdue OWL: Commas*. Purdue OWL, 4 June 2012. Web. 28 July 2015.
- “Run-Ons and Fragments.” *CARP*. San Francisco State University, n.d. Web. 28 July 2015.
- “Semi-colons, Colons, And Dashes.” *CARP*. San Francisco State University, n.d. Web. 28 July 2015.
- "Subordinating Conjunctions." *YourDictionary*. YourDictionary, n.d. Web. 28 July 2015.
- “Understanding NPAs.” *CARP*. San Francisco State University, n.d. Web. 12 Aug. 2015.
- Wells, Jaclyn M. "Comma Splices." *Purdue OWL Engagement*. Purdue OWL, 7 Aug. 2009. Web. 06 Aug. 2015.