

Run-On Sentences

Run-ons are two **independent clauses (complete thoughts)** that “run together” **without a clear connection** and have **no adequate signal** to mark the break between them.

Examples:

- *It is a beautiful day let's go outside.*
- *Do not lose your house key, you will not be able to get back in.*
- *They were having a wonderful time and all of the students were celebrating because their team won the football game despite the fact they had not won a game in 20 years so everyone was very excited.*

**There are three types of run-on sentences:
Fused Sentences, Comma Splices & Polysyndeton**

FUSED SENTENCES:

Two or more independent clauses that have been joined together **without any punctuation or conjunctions** to mark the break between ideas.

On paper, this type of sentence would read as if it were only one continuous thought. Because of the lack of break, this makes the sentence very difficult for the reader to follow.

Examples:

- *It is a beautiful day let's go outside.*
- *Tom loves reading his favourite books are all fantasy novels he has been reading voraciously from the age of five.*

COMMA SPLICES:

Two or more independent clauses that have been joined together or “spliced” together **with only a comma** and without the support of necessary conjunctions or transitions.

Commas splices create a weak or unclear connection, as the two ideas may not be truly related. Additionally, the reader may not see how the two clauses or ideas relate to one another when they are only joined by a comma.

Examples:

- *I didn't want to do my chores, as soon as my mother left the house I ran back to my room.*
- *He is an unfriendly boy, children of his age often avoid him.*

POLYSYNDETON:

More than two clauses have been joined together by an **excessive number of conjunctions**, or more conjunctions than the sentence requires.

As with fused sentences, because of the lack of break, the sentence becomes very difficult for the reader to follow and understand.

They were having a wonderful time and all of the students were celebrating because their team won the football game despite the fact they had not won a game in 20 years so everyone was very excited.

COMMON WORDS THAT LEAD TO RUN-ON SENTENCES:

<i>I</i>	<i>You</i>	<i>He</i>	<i>She</i>
<i>It</i>	<i>We</i>	<i>They</i>	<i>Now</i>
<i>Next</i>	<i>Then</i>	<i>Here</i>	<i>There</i>
<i>This</i>	<i>That</i>	<i>These</i>	<i>Those</i>

METHODS OF CORRECTING RUN-ONS

1. Use a period and a capital letter.

This breaks the two complete independent clauses/ideas into two separate sentences. As these are independent clauses (complete sentences), the two ideas can stand on their own.

RUN-ON: *Tom loves reading his favourite books are all fantasy novels he has been reading voraciously from the age of five.*

CORRECT: *Tom loves reading. His favourite books are all fantasy novels. He has been reading voraciously from the age of five.*

2. Use a comma + a conjunction or transition word to connect two complete & related thoughts.

Rather than breaking the two thoughts apart, this method shows how the two ideas are related to one another, and it gives the reader a chance to pause.

RUN-ON: *I didn't study for the test I failed it.*

Correct: Example (comma + transition word):
*I didn't study for the test, **of course** I failed it.*

Example (comma + conjunction):
*I didn't study for the test, **so** I failed it.*

Some Common Transition Words

- and
- too
- also 
- or 
- as well as
- indeed
- also
- of course
- certainly
- especially
- first/ firstly
- second/ secondly
- third/ thirdly
- finally
- at this time
- like
- as if 
- as ...as 
- equally
- similarly

Conjunctions



3. Use a semicolon (;) to join two complete independent clauses or thoughts.

- *A semi-colon acts as a replacement for the word "and."*
- *This method also shows that the two ideas are related to one another.*
- **DO NOT** use a conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) with a semi-colon.

Example:

RUN-ON: He is an unfriendly boy children of his age often avoid him.

CORRECT: He is an unfriendly boy; children of his age often avoid him.

4. Use subordination to join two or more clauses/ideas together.

- *This demonstrates that one clause is more important than the other.*
- *This structure also indicates that one clause relies on the other.*
- *Each subordinate clause **begins** with a dependent word, and **transforms** an independent clause to a **dependent** clause (a phrase that cannot stand on its own and needs an independent clause to complete it).*

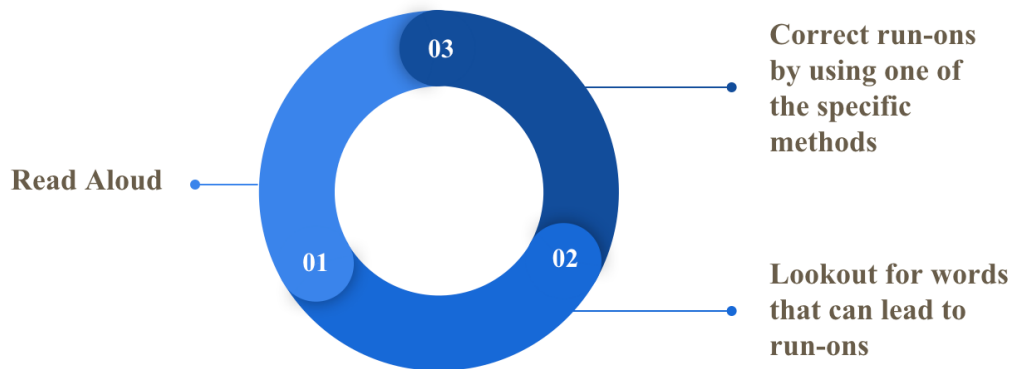
Example:

RUN-ON: Bob was exhausted, he decided to take a nap as soon as he got home.

CORRECT: **Since** Bob was exhausted, he decided to take a nap as soon as he got home.

RUN-ON: I tried not to cry, I found out I failed my test.

CORRECT: I tried not to cry, **when** I found out I failed my test.



Run-On Sentences Review

- A. CORRECT THE SENTENCE.
- B. INDICATE WHAT TYPE OF RUN-ON IT IS (**FUSED**, **COMMA SPLICE**, **POLYSYNDETON**)

Note: Each of the independent clauses have been underlined in the examples below. Corrections may vary. For each of the run-on sentences below, more than one of the methods of correction, which were outlined in the notes above, may be appropriate.

1. Judy leads a charmed life. She never seems to have serious obstacles to overcome.
FUSED (no punctuation, conjunctions or transitions between the two complete sentences)

2. The airport is about to shut down because of the snow. ~~and~~ if the plane doesn't land soon, it will have to go on to Boston, and this will make me miss my connecting flight.
POLYSYNDETON (too many conjunctions/transitions)

3. The show begins at 7:30, so make sure you're there before 7:15.
COMMA SPLICE (no conjunction or transition to show connection between clauses).

4. Marcellino always knew his way around the woods. This is something he could always depend on.
FUSED (no punctuation, conjunctions or transitions between the two complete sentences)

5. Having Jeffrey prepared himself well for the realtor exams. ~~and having~~ He exhausted everyone in the family with his requests that someone help him with the true-and-false drills. Jeffrey, ~~who~~ had never been a particularly good student in high school; however, he knew he was ready to take on the greatest challenge of his life.
Awkward/Unclear Construction
The majority of the sentence is made up of dependent clauses (which depend on one independent clause to complete them). The only subject in the entire sentence is Jeffrey who is not introduced until the end of the second line. This makes the sentence choppy and unclear. That being said, while no run-on has occurred here, it is still an example of poor writing and sentence construction.

6. Throughout history, money and religion were closely linked. There was little distinction between government and religion.
FUSED (no punctuation, conjunctions or transitions between the two complete sentences)

7. The results of the study were inconclusive, so more research needs to be done on the topic.
FUSED (no punctuation, conjunctions or transitions between the two complete sentences)
8. After they completed their test, the students could leave the school at any time; however, they would need to announce their departure to staff.
COMMA SPLICE (no conjunction or transition to show connection between clauses).
9. Since I love writing short stories, I would write one every day if I had the time.
COMMA SPLICE (no conjunction or transition to show connection between clauses).
10. "I said, 'Who killed him?' **and** she said 'I don't know who killed him **but** he's dead all right **and** he's in your boat,' **and** it was dark **and** the water falling in sheets was pooling in the **street no** street lamps or windows shone light into the street **and** it was almost too dark to **see the** boats bobbed quietly up and down out in the harbour **so** I got a rowboat and went out **and** I found my boat **and** I fumbled with the keys **and** then I saw his body **and** I found out she was right."

POLYSYNDETON (too many conjunctions & transitions) and Fused Sentence

Corrected version below:

"I said, 'Who killed him?' ~~and~~ She said, 'I don't know who killed him; ~~but~~ however, he's dead all right, and he's in your boat.' ~~and~~ It was dark, and the water falling in sheets was pooling in the street. **No** street lamps or windows shone light into the street, and it was almost too dark to see. **The** boats bobbed quietly up and down out in the harbour. ~~so~~ I got a rowboat, ~~and~~ went out, and I found my boat. ~~and~~ I fumbled with the keys, ~~and then~~ when I saw his body, ~~and~~ I found out she was right."