RUN-ON SENTENCES:

How to avoid them, and how to fix them.

When a writer puts two or more independent clauses together with either a comma or no punctuation between them, they have created a **run-on sentence**.

Is a run-on sentence just too long?

The length of a sentence has little to do with whether or not it is a run-on. A run-on sentence can have structural flaws even though it is short:

It is hot outside put on some sunscreen.

In this example, the first part of the sentence (It is hot outside) is an independent clause** with the subject **It** and the verb **is**. The second part of the sentence (put on some sunscreen) is also an independent clause: the implied subject is **you**, and the verb is **put.**

**For more info re: clauses, see our *Dependent and Independent Clauses* handout.

How to fix a run-on sentence:

1. Put a period between the two clauses:

Ex.: It is hot outside. Put on some sunscreen.

[Do not put a comma between the two clauses. That will create what is called a "comma splice" and your sentence will still be a run-on.]

2. Add a **comma** and a **coordinating conjunction**:

Ex.: It is hot outside**, so** put on some sunscreen.

[Coordinating conjunctions—or **FANBOYS**—include one of these words: **f**or, **a**nd, **n**or, **b**ut, **o**r, **y**et, and **s**o.]

3. Find the place in the sentence where the ideas connect, and add **a semi-colon**. Do this only if the second idea is closely related to the first:

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Ex.: It is hot outside**;** put on some sunscreen.

4. Find the place in the sentence where the ideas connect, and add a **semi-colon**, an **adverbial conjunction**, and a **comma**:

; however,	; for example,
; then,	; as a result,
; furthermore,	; thus,
; nevertheless,	; moreover,
; consequently,	; also,

Ex.: It is hot outside**; therefore,** you should put on some sunscreen.

5. Re-order your ideas and start your sentence with a **subordinating conjunction**. These are introducing words used in complex sentences. Place one before the two ideas in your sentence, with a comma after the introductory* phrase:

After	Even though	Until
As	If	When
Although	Since	Which
Because	That	While
Before	Unless	Who

Ex.: **Because** it is hot outside, you should put on some sunscreen.

*For more info re: introductory phrases, see our *Commas* handout.

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