

Avoiding Run-On Sentences and Fragments

A sentence must have both a **subject** and **verb**.

The **subject** is the **actor** in the sentence and is generally a noun (person, place, or thing).

The **verb** expresses the **action** that the subject is performing.

Sentence Fragments are sentences that lack either a subject or verb, therefore making the sentence incomplete.

Example (missing verb): “He trying to figure out what he wants to do after college.”

Revision: “He is trying to figure out what he wants to do after college.”

Example (missing subject): “And played it constantly.”

Revision: “Caroline loved the new game and played it constantly.”

How to revise a **sentence fragment**:

- Attach fragmented subordinate clauses or turn them into sentences.
- Attach fragmented phrases or turn them into sentences.
- Attach other fragmented word groups or turn them into sentences.
- Attach lists to complete a sentence with a colon or a dash.

Run-On Sentences are independent clauses or word groups that stand alone as a sentence, but have not been joined correctly.

Comma Splices are two or more complete sentences joined together by a comma without a coordinating conjunction.

Example: “Kevin went to the store, he bought eggs and a cake mix.”

Revision: “Kevin went to the store. He bought eggs and a cake mix.”

Fused Sentences are two complete sentences joined together without punctuation.

Example: “I do not recall what kind of printer it was all I remember is that it could sort, staple, and print a packet at the same time.”

Revision: “I do not recall what kind of printer it was; all I remember is that it could sort, staple, and print a packet at the same time.”

How to revise **run-on sentences, comma splices, and fused sentences**:

- Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for so, yet).
- Use a semicolon if the two sentences are closely related and the second sentence tells more about the first sentence, or if there is no word that shows the relationship between the two ideas.
- Make the clauses into two separate sentences.
- Rephrase the sentence.
- Join the two sentences with a subordinating conjunction.

See Chapter 33 (page 602) in *The Penguin Handbook* for more information.