RUN-ONS: FUSED SENTENCES & COMMA SPLICES

WHAT IS A RUN-ON SENTENCE?

A compound sentence contains more than one independent clause, and when a compound sentence is not punctuated correctly, it becomes a run-on sentence. There are two types of run-on sentences: fused sentences and comma splices.

FUSED SENTENCES

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

I went to the mall I bought three shirts.

These are two complete sentences (independent clauses) joined together without proper punctuation. In order for this sentence to be grammatically correct, these clauses need to be separated using the correct punctuation or conjunction. Usually there are multiple ways to insert punctuation.

How To Fix:

I went to the mall**.** I bought three shirts.
(Insert a period between the two independent clauses.)

I went to the mall**, and** I bought three shirts.
(Insert a comma + a coordinating conjunction between the two independent clauses.)

I went to the mall**;** I bought three shirts.
(Insert a semicolon between the two independent clauses.)

COMMA SPLICES

A comma splice contains two independent clauses that are joined without the proper punctuation placed between them. They differ from fused sentences because they have a comma between the two independent clauses. The previous example as a comma splice:

I went to the mall, I bought three shirts.
(A comma alone cannot be used to separate two sentences and, therefore, is grammatically incorrect.)

RUN-ONS: FUSED SENTENCES & COMMA SPLICES

Comma splices are corrected the same way that a fused sentence is.

I went to the mall. I bought three shirts.
I went to the mall; I bought three shirts.
I went to the mall, and I bought three shirts.

CORRECTING RUN-ON SENTENCES: FOUR WAYS

1. COMMA + COORDINATING CONJUCTION

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.**

Run-on: Sammy tried to start his car, he was out of gas.
Fix: Sammy tried to start his car, **but** he was out of gas

2. SEMICOLON

Combine sentences by placing a semicolon between them.

Run-on: Daniel really wanted to pass his exam he studied all night.
Fix: Daniel really wanted to pass his exam; he studied all night.

3. TWO SENTENCES

Avoid run-on sentences by creating two sentences separated by a period.

Run-on: I have a bad headache I am going to take a nap.
Fix: I have a bad headache. I am going to take a nap.

4. SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION

Make one of the independent clauses a dependent clause by adding a subordinating conjunction.

Run on: May was in line someone cut in front of her.
Fix: **While** May was in line, someone cut in front of her.