

RUN-ONS

GRAMMAR



WHAT IS A RUN-ON?

Run-ons are one of the most common grammatical errors in student writing. There are two different types of run-ons: **fused** and **comma splice**.

A **fused** run-on is two sentences put together with NO punctuation.

Fused run-on examples:

Cheese is Sarah's favorite food she eats it every day.

Fabio loves cats he loves dogs even more

The most common kind of run-on is a **comma splice**, which is two sentences linked together with a comma. But adding only a comma doesn't make it any less of a run-on!

Comma splice examples:

Cheese is Sarah's favorite food, she eats it every day.

Fabio loves cats, he loves dogs even more.

RECOGNIZING RUN-ONS

It's often difficult to identify run-ons in your own writing. Many people believe that any long sentence is a run-on, but **it's possible to have long sentences that are not run-ons and short sentences that are run-ons.**

For example:

run-on: Bill loves me I love him, too.

not a run-on (correct): Although Bill loves me and I love him, I worry that perhaps our love will not be enough to sustain us through today's difficult world, in which so many previously happy couples are driven to deception, infidelity, and ultimately divorce.

Questions to determine if something is a run-on or a complete sentence:

1. Could the sentence be split into two halves that could each stand alone as a complete sentence?

If yes ---> **run-on.**

If no ---> **not a run-on.**

2. Is there a comma in the sentence? If so, could the material on each side of the comma stand alone as a complete sentence?

If yes ---> **comma splice.**

If no ---> **not a comma splice.**

4 FIXES FOR RUN-ONS

Add a Period

Fix a run-on or comma splice by dividing it into two separate sentences.

run-on: *Cheese is Sarah's favorite food, she eats it every day.*

correct: Cheese is Sarah's favorite food. She eats it every day.

Add a Semicolon

One way you can connect closely related sentences is with a semicolon.

run-on: *Cheese is Sarah's favorite food, she eats it every day.*

correct: Cheese is Sarah's favorite food; she eats it every day.

Add a Comma Plus Coordinating Conjunction (FANBOYS)

Use a conjunction, or linking word, to join two complete sentences; put a comma before the conjunction. Conjunctions are: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.

run-on: *Cheese is Sarah's favorite food, she eats it every day.*

correct: Cheese is Sarah's favorite food, so she eats it every day.

Add a Subordinating Conjunction

Attach a subordinating conjunction like "because" or "although" to either the first or second half of the sentence. If attached to the first half of the sentence, you must include a comma before the second half.

run-on: *Cheese is Sarah's favorite food, she eats it every day.*

correct: Although cheese is Sarah's favorite food, she doesn't eat it every day.

correct: Sarah eats cheese every day because it's her favorite food.

PRACTICE WITH RUN-ONS

Try your hand at fixing these run-on mistakes. Use a different strategy for each correction you make:

1. Fred is not crazy, he is just creative.
2. Maria loves dogs she went to the pound to adopt one.

3. While I plan to get a degree in business, I know that the educational journey I am on will challenge me and make me stronger I will have to work hard and persevere.

4. I will attend the play next Saturday and ask my boyfriend to come with me we will have such a wonderful time.

5. Have you ever been to Italy where the food is scrumptious and the people are friendly if not, let me tell you about my experiences traveling through Italy last summer.

Answers: 1) Fred is not crazy. He is just creative. 2) Maria loves dogs; she went to the pound to adopt one. 3) While I plan to get a degree in business, I know that the educational journey I am on will challenge me and make me stronger, so I will have to work hard and persevere. 4) I will attend the play next Saturday and ask my boyfriend to come with me, and we will have such a wonderful time. 5) Have you ever been to Italy where the food is scrumptious and the people are friendly; if not, let me tell you about my experiences traveling through Italy last summer.