

Vocabulary Building

Clause – A group of words that has both a subject and verb.

Independent Clause – A clause that can stand as its own sentence. It is a complete thought with a subject and a verb.

Subject – The subject of a sentence is the person, place, thing, or idea that is doing or being something. Who or what is a sentence about? Who or what “has” the verb? Who or what is the verb in the sentence referring to?

Verb – A word that represents an action or a state of being.

Run-On Sentence – Two independent clauses are combined into one sentence without proper punctuation to separate the ideas.

Comma Splice – A type of run-on sentence where two independent clauses are combined with only a comma.

Fused Sentence – A type of run-on sentence where two independent clauses are combined without any punctuation at all.

Squished – Pressed together in a space that is too tight.

Are there more unfamiliar words?

Look up words you don't know on the Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary at www.learnersdictionary.com.

Want More Practice?

There are staff in the Learning Center who would love to help you with your writing!

The College Skills Zone

The College Skills Zone is a great place to engage in conversations that help you understand concepts, especially some basic grammar concepts, and then practice those skills. The College Skills Zone is a place where you can just drop in anytime during open hours.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center assistants are trained to help you with any aspect of the writing process, from understanding an assignment, to brainstorming, to revising your essays. You can drop in during open hours or make a 30-minute appointment for a specific time.

English Language Learner Specialist

A specialist for English Language Learners, Sarah Mosser, is available in the Learning Center during certain hours for drop-in or appointments. Because her schedule varies, it is best to make appointments.

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Linn-Benton
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
WRITING CENTER

Punctuation

Run-On Sentences



Go-To Guides

Go-To Guides are designed to help in all areas of the writing process.

A Brief Explanation

What is a run-on sentence? It's simply when two independent clauses (a clause that has a subject, a verb, and a complete thought) are squished together in the same sentence without proper punctuation.

An independent clause has both a subject and a verb and is a complete thought.

Examples of independent clauses:

This sentence is an independent clause. **It has** both a subject and a verb. The subjects are underlined, and the verbs are in bold.

Let's see what happens when we just squish these independent clauses together:

I have a test in my reading class tomorrow it might be hard, last night, my friends and I studied for two hours we think that we are ready for the test.

Confusing! Right? Okay, now let's talk about the two kinds of run-ons and how to fix them.

A **fused sentence** is when we squish two independent clauses together without any punctuation at all!

Example: **I have** a test in my reading class tomorrow it might **be** hard.

Notice that we have two independent clauses that could stand alone as their own sentence: 1) I have a test in my reading class tomorrow, and 2) It might be hard.

A **comma splice** is when we combine two independent clauses with only a comma connecting them.

Example: **I have** a test in my reading class tomorrow, it might **be** hard.

A comma isn't strong enough to hold two independent clauses together by itself. It cannot separate two complete subject/verb sets.

So how do we fix a run-on? There are three ways:

- 1) Make two complete sentences by adding a period and a capital.

Example: I have a test in my reading class tomorrow. **It** might be hard.

- 2) Add a comma and a coordinating conjunction (and, but, so, or, for, yet, nor... think BOYSFAN).

Example: **I have** a test in my reading class tomorrow, **and** it might **be** hard.

- 3) Add a semicolon (;) between the two clauses.

Example: **I have** a test in my reading class tomorrow; it might **be** hard.

Examples

1. Period and Capital

Incorrect: I studied for five hours last night, I was very tired.

This is a comma splice. There are two subject/verb sets, I/studied and I/was. The comma is not strong enough to hold the two independent clauses together.

Correct: I studied for five hours last night. I was very tired.

A period and a capital fixed the comma splice.

2. Comma and Coordinating Conjunction

Incorrect: I took the test yesterday it wasn't as hard as I thought.

This is a fused sentence. There are two subject/verb sets (I/took and it/wasn't) without punctuation between them.

Correct: I took the test yesterday, and it wasn't as hard as I thought.

A comma and a coordinating conjunction fixed the fused sentence. A comma and a conjunction can hold two independent clauses together in one sentence.

3. Semi-Colon

Incorrect: There is another test next week, it's too soon.

This is a comma splice. There are two subject verb sets, There/is and it/is (it's = it is, the "it" acting as the subject of the sentence and the "is" as the verb). The comma is not strong enough to hold two independent clauses together.

Correct: There is another test next week; it's too soon.

A semi-colon fixed the fused sentence. Semi-colons are great for two independent clauses that are very closely related. They are strong enough to hold two independent clauses together in the same sentence.

Try it Out!

True or False?

1. T F Run-on sentences occur when two independent clauses are squished together into one sentence without proper punctuation.
2. T F Comma splices and fused sentences are grammatically correct and don't need any added punctuation to fix them.
3. T F A fused sentence is when two independent clauses are squished together without any punctuation at all.
4. T F A comma splice is not a type of run-on sentence because it has punctuation.

ANSWERS: 1. T 2. F 3. T 4. F

Identify Run-On Sentences

Mark each sentence with either an "F" for "fused sentence," a "CS" for "comma splice," or a "C" for "correct." After you identify each sentence, go back and fix any sentences that were fused sentences or comma splices to make them all correct.

1. _____ I took my first college test yesterday it was harder than I thought it would be.
2. _____ I studied for two hours the night before the test; I really should have studied longer.
3. _____ Next time I will start studying at least a week before the test, that will give me more time to ask questions about what I don't understand.
4. _____ I think that I can do better on my next test and still be successful in the class.
5. _____ Tomorrow I will get my grade back for the class, I won't let it discourage me because I'll do better next time.

ANSWERS: 1. F 2. C 3. CS 4. C 5. CS

Fix It!

In the paragraph, add punctuation where necessary to fix any run-on sentences.

Last year, I really didn't take all my classes seriously it wasn't a good year for me. I failed one of my easy classes, I should have gotten an A. This year, I will do better. I will study for each exam, I will start to study a week before the test instead of the night before. I know I can pass all my classes.