

## Correcting Fragments

A fragment is an incomplete sentence. It may look like a sentence (it starts with a capital letter and ends with a period) but it may be missing a subject, a verb, or both.

Examples:

Just ran around with his arms in the air. (*Who* ran? There is no subject.)

Paul and his sister with the dessert. (Paul and his sister *did* what? There is no verb.)

Most fragments can be fixed in two ways:

**1) Attach the fragment to a nearby sentence.**

**2) Rewrite them to turn them into sentences.**

Examples:

The lottery winner just ran around with his arms in the air. (A subject is added.)

Paul and his sister with the dessert arrived. (A verb is added.)

## Correcting Run-On Sentences (Hacker 210-215)

Run-on sentences are independent clauses written together without proper punctuation between them.

Two kinds of run-ons:

**1) fused sentence** (It has no punctuation between independent clauses.)

Example:

Music is soothing I listen to it in the evenings.

**2) comma splice** (It joins two or more independent clauses together with a comma.)

Example:

I love the sound of guitar, Eric Clapton is one of my favorites.

In another type of comma splice, the comma is joined by a word that is not a FANBOYS (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*). FANBOYS also are called coordinating conjunctions.

Example:

I love the sound of guitar, however, Eric Clapton is one of my favorites.

Run-on sentences can be corrected in one of four ways:

**1) Make the two independent clauses into two sentences.**

Music is soothing. I listen to it in the evenings.

I love the sound of guitar. Eric Clapton is one of my favorites.

**2) Connect the two independent clauses with a semi-colon.**

Music is soothing; I listen to it in the evenings.

\*I love the sound of guitar; therefore, Eric Clapton is one of my favorites.

\*When a connecting word or transition such as *therefore, also, consequently, finally, furthermore, however, or nevertheless* is used to join two independent clauses, a semi-colon come before the connecting word and a comma comes after it.

**3) Connect the two independent clauses with a comma and a FANBOYS** (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*).

Music is soothing, so I listen to it in the evenings.

I love the sound of guitar, and Eric Clapton is one of my favorites.

Before you put a comma in front of a FANBOYS, be sure you have two independent clauses. The first sentence below has two independent clauses. However, the second sentence has an independent clause with two verbs and needs no commas.

The snow began falling at dusk, and it continued to fall through the night.  
The snow began falling at dusk and continued to fall through the night.

**4) Rewrite the sentence, making one clause dependent or subordinate to the other by adding a dependent word (*since, when, as, after, or because*).**

Because music is soothing, I listen to it in the evenings.

Eric Clapton is one of my favorites since I love the sound of guitar.

(Examples taken from Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. )

## Fixing comma splices (c/s)

**Removing a comma from a comma splice does not fix the problem; instead, it creates a run-on sentence.**

Example of original sentence with a **comma splice**:

These teens will likely not even graduate high school, they'll be too busy hammering down beers one after another.

Here is what happens when you eliminate the comma:

These teens will likely not even graduate high school they'll be too busy hammering down beers one after another. (This is now a run-on sentence.)

**To fix a comma splice, which is one type of run-on sentence, you have several choices:**

- 1) Use a comma and a FANBOY
- 2) Use a semicolon
- 3) Use a period between the two independent clauses or sentences.
- 4) Rewrite the sentence, perhaps by subordinating one of the clauses.

Fix the comma splices and run-on sentences in the paragraph below.

It's a shame when students don't learn about correct sentence structure, they show they don't know what a sentence is. Using a fused or run-on sentence may be how we talk but let's face it run-ons aren't acceptable in college-level writing. Some students may think that removing all punctuation solves the problem but they are wrong. All that does is create a new grammatical problem, lack of punctuation hurts the essay's meaning, too.