



# Helpful Hints for Writers

## Sentence Fragments and Run-Ons

*Sentence fragments and run-ons are two of the most common errors that students encounter. This guide will help you learn ways to identify and fix these mistakes.*

### SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

A sentence fragment is an incomplete idea. In order to make a complete sentence, include a noun and a verb, and make sure the sentence makes sense. The thought has to be a complete idea.

*Dependent clauses can't stand on their own because they are missing a subject or a predicate.*

**Example:** Because she drove me.

**Correction:** I was able to make it on time because she drove me.

**Ask Yourself:** Does the sentence make sense on its own?

### EXAMPLES OF A SENTENCE FRAGMENT

**(a fragment is often a dependent clause that doesn't express a complete idea)**

- Running away. [Who or what is running?]
- Because he loved me. [What happened because of this?]
- The types of people. [What about them?]
- Whether or not he loved me. [What is this regarding?]
- When he goes there. [What happens?]

### What is a complete sentence?

- A proper sentence needs a noun (subject) and a verb (predicate)
- It must form a complete thought

### How do I create a complete sentence?

- Break independent clauses into separate sentences with a period
- Use a semi-colon to join two independence clauses that are closely related in meaning
- Connect independent clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so). Trick: to remember the different conjunctions, the first letters of these words spell out the acronym FANBOYS

### RUN-ON SENTENCES

A run-on sentence incorporates too many ideas. They are usually compound sentences that aren't properly punctuated. It's okay to vary your sentences so some are longer and more complex and others are short and to the point. Sometimes the easiest fix is a period or semi-colon.

### EXAMPLE OF A RUN-ON SENTENCE:

I love to write papers I would write one every day if I had time.

**Correction:** I love to write papers. I would write one every day if I had time.

**Correction:** I love to write papers; I would write one every day if I had time.

**Correction:** I love to write papers, and I would write one every day if I had time.

A **comma splice** is an incorrectly used comma. (Usually two independent clauses with no correct punctuation.) Two sentences cannot be joined by a comma because it creates a run-on sentence. A period or semi-colon must be used.

### EXAMPLE OF A COMMA SPLICE

I love the way the flowers look when I walk by, they are so pretty.

**Correction:** I love the way the flowers look when I walk by. They are so pretty.

**Correction:** I love the way the flowers look when I walk by; they are so pretty.

## Practice

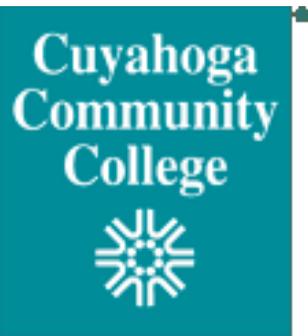
### Try it for yourself!

*Circle 3 of the 5 following phrases that are sentence fragments (not complete sentences). Then correct them.*

1. Because I said so.
2. She took me there.
3. Where is it?
4. Where I went.
5. Of the best and the worst.

*Correct the punctuation below so that these sentences are no longer run-ons:*

6. My dad is the best dad in the world he loves to take us on hikes.
7. She loved him so much more than her old boyfriend Fred he was a bus driver from Canton.
8. What's the name of that guy who lived in the house with the little blue shutters and I think his wife's name was Jean?
9. Take me to the park I'll show you around the swings.
10. Mom always makes these cookies with little blue sprinkles Sara loves them.



# Helpful Hints for Writers

## Sentence fragments and run-ons

### Practice Key

Try it for yourself!

Circle 3 of the 5 following phrases that are sentence fragments (not complete sentences). Then correct them.

1. **(He should do it)** Because I said so.
2. She took me there.
3. Where is it?
4. **(That is the place)** Where I went.
5. **(Those beaches were some)** Of the best and the worst.

Correct the punctuation below so that these sentences are no longer run-ons:

6. My dad is the best dad in the world. **h He** loves to take us on hikes.
7. She loved him so much more than her old boyfriend, Fred. **h He** was a bus driver from Canton.
8. What's the name of that guy who lived in the house with the little blue shutters? **and** I think his wife's name was Jean?**?**
9. Take me to the park. I'll show you around the swings.
10. Mom always makes these cookies with little blue sprinkles. Sara loves them.