

RUN-ON SENTENCES

A **RUN-ON** sentence occurs when two independent clauses are run together without the proper joining word or punctuation. There are two kinds of run-on sentences: the **FUSED** run-on and the **COMMA SPLICED** run-on.

1. THE FUSED RUN-ON occurs when two independent clauses are run together without a conjunction or any punctuation.

Martin has not answered my calls I am going to stop calling him.
Carl ran noisily around the room however his sister remained calm.*
(remember - *however* is not a conjunction, but a conjunctive adverb)

2. THE COMMA SPLICED RUN-ON occurs when two main clauses are joined with a comma and no conjunction. REMEMBER - A COMMA IS NOT ENOUGH TO JOIN TWO MAIN CLAUSES.

The novel was not very interesting, I finished it anyway.

WAYS TO CORRECT RUN-ON SENTENCES:

You must first identify the two main clauses (this means that each one can stand alone as a complete thought). Then, you may use any of the following methods to correct the run-on:

- ▶ insert a **coordinating conjunction** (*and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet*) preceded by a **comma**
Martin has not answered my calls, so I am going to stop calling him.
The novel was not very interesting, but I finished it anyway.
- ▶ insert a **semicolon** between the two main clauses (do NOT use a conjunction with the semicolon)
Martin has not answered my calls; I am going to stop calling him.
The novel was not very interesting; I finished it anyway.
- ▶ insert a **semicolon and a conjunctive adverb**
Martin has not answered my calls; therefore, I am going to stop calling him.
The novel was not very interesting; however, I finished it anyway.

Note: conjunctive adverbs have semicolons in front of them ONLY when they are between two independent clauses.
Martin has not answered my calls; I am therefore going to stop calling him. [no semicolon in front of *therefore*]
The novel was not very interesting; I finished it anyway, however. [no semicolon in front of *however*]

- ▶ insert a **period** between the two main clauses.
Martin has not answered my calls. I am going to stop calling him.
Martin has not answered my calls. Therefore, I am going to stop calling him.
(because *therefore* is not a conjunction, but a conjunctive adverb, it may be used at the beginning of a sentence)
The novel was not very interesting. I finished it anyway.
- ▶ subordinate one of the clauses with a **subordinating conjunction**
Because Martin has not answered my calls, I am going to stop calling him.
Even though the novel was not very interesting, I finished it anyway.

Note: there is no comma if the dependent clause comes last.
I finished it anyway even though the novel was not very interesting.

PRACTICE

Identify each of the following sentences as R/O (run-on) or C (correct).

- _____ 1. First, we bought a new car, then we bought a new house.
- _____ 2. He offered to drive Marie home, however, she did not accept his offer.
- _____ 3. After the fight, they left the party the rest of us stayed and had more fun.
- _____ 4. It was Rob who suggested it, but Ann carried out the plan.
- _____ 5. It is Bruce's turn to drive, so he will take you home.

Correct the following run-ons by inserting a comma and an appropriate coordinating conjunction.

6. The price is very high she can afford to pay it.
7. That nurse works at Deering Hospital during the week she works at Baptist on weekends.
8. I don't want to impose on you I don't want to walk home either.
9. She won a literary contest she was a talented young writer.
10. John wore a clean shirt the rest of his clothing was dirty.

Correct the following run-ons by inserting a semicolon (and conjunctive adverb, only if appropriate).

11. The class met outside we read poetry by the pond.
12. I have been very busy today dinner will not be ready at the usual time.
13. Don't worry be happy.
14. Laughter is good it relaxes you.

Correct the following run-ons by subordinating one of the clauses with a subordinating conjunction.

15. I spent two hours studying for my math test I passed it with an A.
16. Gina got tickets for the concert, she got sick and could not attend.
17. Juan finished his essay, he left it at home.

Correct the following run-ons by any of the methods on the front of this sheet.

18. Shari failed the last test, nevertheless she passed the course.
19. Rafe wanted to know the truth, Bill told him the whole story.
20. Eric studied in the lab every day this week, moreover, he spent six hours in the library on Sunday.
21. They entered the room quietly they still woke the dog.
22. Miriam made the salad, Nick barbecued the ribs.