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## Run ons and fragments worksheet

Didn't find what you need? Search our website or email us. If instructors have ever returned your papers with “frag,” “S.F.,” “R.O.,” or “run-on” written in the margin, you may find this handout useful. It will help you locate and correct sentence fragments and run-ons. The basics Before we get to the problems and how to fix them, let's take a minute to review some information that is so basic you've probably forgotten it. What is a complete sentence? A complete sentence is not merely a group of words with a capital letter at the beginning and a period or question mark at the end. A complete sentence has three components: a subject (the actor in the sentence) a predicate (the verb or action), and a complete thought (it can stand alone and make sense—it's independent). Some sentences can be very short, with only two or three words expressing a complete thought, like this: This sentence has a subject (They) and a verb (waited), and it expresses a complete thought. We can understand the idea completely with just those two words, so again, it's independent—an independent clause. But independent clauses (i.e., complete sentences) can be expanded to contain a lot more information, like this: They waited for the bus all morning. They waited for the bus all morning in the rain last Tuesday. Wishing they'd brought their umbrella, they waited for the bus all morning in the rain last Tuesday. Wishing they'd brought their umbrella and dreaming of their nice warm bed, they waited for the bus all morning in the rain last Tuesday, determined to make it to class for their test. As your sentences grow more complicated, it gets harder to spot and stay focused on the basic elements of a complete sentence, but if you look carefully at the examples above, you'll see that the main thought is still that they waited—one main subject and one main verb. No matter how long or short the other sentence parts are, none of them can stand alone and make sense. Being able to find the main subject, the main verb, and the complete thought is the first trick to learn for identifying fragments and run-ons. Sentence fragments A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence. Some fragments are incomplete because they lack either a subject or a verb, or both. The fragments that most students have trouble with, however, are dependent clauses—they have a subject and a verb, so they look like complete sentences, but they don't express a complete thought. They're called “dependent” because they can't stand on their own (just like some people you might know who are SO dependent!). Look at these dependent clauses. They're just begging for more information to make the thoughts complete: Because their car was in the shop (...What did they do?) After the rain stops (...What then?) When you finally take the test (...What will happen?) Since you asked (...Will you get the answer?) If you want to go with me (...What should you do?) Does each of these examples have a subject? Yes. Does each have a verb? Yes. So what makes the thought incomplete? It's the first word (Because, After, When, Since, If). These words belong to a special class of words called subordinators or subordinating conjunctions. If you know something about subordinating conjunctions, you can probably eliminate 90% of your fragments. First, you need to know that subordinating conjunctions do three things: join two sentences together make one of the sentences dependent on the other for a complete thought (make one a dependent clause) indicate a logical relationship Second, you need to recognize the subordinators when you see them. Here is a list of common subordinating conjunctions and the relationships they indicate: Cause / Effect: because, since, so that Comparison / Contrast: although, even though, though, whereas, while Place & Manner: how, however, where, wherever Possibility / Conditions: if, whether, unless Relation: that, which, who Time: after, as, before, since, when, whenever, while, until Third, you need to know that the subordinator (and the whole dependent clause) doesn't have to be at the beginning of the sentence. The dependent clause and the independent clause can switch places, but the whole clause moves as one big chunk. Look at how these clauses switched places in the sentence: Because their car was in the shop, they took the bus. They took the bus because their car was in the shop. Finally, you need to know that every dependent clause needs to be attached to an independent clause (remember, the independent clause can stand on its own). How do you find and fix your fragments? Remember the basics: subject, verb, and complete thought. If you can recognize those things, you're halfway there. Then, scan your sentences for subordinating conjunctions. If you find one, first identify the whole chunk of the dependent clause (the subject and verb that go with the subordinator), and then make sure they're attached to an independent clause. They took the bus. (Independent clause. So far, all is well!) Because their car was in the shop. (Dependent clause all by itself. Uh oh! Fragment!) They took the bus because their car was in the shop. Run-ons These are also called fused sentences. You are making a run-on when you put two complete sentences (a subject and its predicate and another subject and its predicate) together in one sentence without separating them properly. Here's an example of a run-on: My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus it is very garlicky. This one sentence actually contains two complete sentences. But in the rush to get that idea out, I made it into one incorrect sentence. Luckily, there are many ways to correct this run-on sentence. You could use a semicolon: My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus; it is very garlicky. You could use a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so): My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus, for it is very garlicky. -OR- My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus, and it is very garlicky. You could use a subordinating conjunction (see above): My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus because it is very garlicky. -OR- Because it is so garlicky, my favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus. You could make it into two separate sentences with a period in between: My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus. It is very garlicky. You could use an em-dash (a long dash) for emphasis: My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus—it is very garlicky. NOTE: You CANNOT simply add a comma between the two sentences, or you'll end up with what's called a “comma splice.” Here's an example of a comma splice: My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus, it is very garlicky. You can fix a comma splice the same way you fix a run-on—either change the punctuation or add a conjunction. The good news is that writers tend to be either comma splicers or run-on artists, but almost never both. Which one are you? If you have particular trouble with comma splices, try looking at our handout on commas. Finding run-ons As you can see, fixing run-ons is pretty easy once you see them—but how do you find out if a sentence is a run-on if you aren't sure? Rei R. Noguchi, in his book Grammar and the Teaching of Writing, recommends two methods for testing your sentences. Try these two tests: Turn your sentences into yes/no questions. Turn your sentences into tag questions (sentences that end with a questioning phrase at the very end—look at our examples below). These are two things that nearly everyone can do easily if the sentence is not a run-on, but they become next to impossible if it is. Look at the following sentence: My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus. If you turn it into a question that someone could answer with a yes or no, it looks like this: Is my favorite Mediterranean spread hummus? If you turn it into a tag question, it looks like this: My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus, isn't it? The first sentence is complete and not a run-on, because our test worked. Now, look again at the original run-on sentence: My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus it is very garlicky. The yes/no question can only be made with each separate thought, not the sentence as a whole: Is my favorite Mediterranean spread hummus? Is it very garlicky? But not: Is my favorite Mediterranean spread hummus is it very garlicky? The tag question can also only be made with each separate thought, rather than the whole: My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus, isn't it? It's very garlicky, isn't it? But never: My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus it is very garlicky, isn't it? Unlike the complete sentence, the run-on sentence doesn't pass these tests. When you try to turn the run-on sentence into a single question, you immediately see that the sentence has more than one complete concept. Make sure you try both tests with each of your problem sentences, because you may trick yourself by just putting a tag on the last part and not noticing that it doesn't work on the first. Some people might not notice that “My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus it is very garlicky isn't it?” is wrong, but most people will spot the yes/no question problem right away. Every once in a while, you or your instructor will see a really long sentence and think it's a run-on when it isn't. Really long sentences can be tiring but not necessarily wrong—just make sure that yours aren't wrong by using the tests above. Works consulted We consulted these works while writing this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout's topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find additional publications. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial. We revise these tips periodically and welcome feedback. Hacker, Diana, and Nancy Sommers. 2014. A Writer's Reference, 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St Martin's. Lunsford, Andrea A. 2015. The St. Martin's Handbook, 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St Martin's. Noguchi, Rei. 1991. Grammar and the Teaching of Writing: Limits and Possibilities. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. Ruszkiewicz, John J., Christy Friend, Daniel Seward, and Maxine Hairston. 2010. The Scott, Foresman Handbook for Writers, 9th ed. Boston: Pearson Education. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 License. You may reproduce it for non-commercial use if you use the entire handout and attribute the source: The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Make a Gift Run-on sentences occur when two or more independent clauses are not joined together properly. Correctly punctuation the run-on sentences. If it is correct, write C beside it. On the blank line after each word group, write an independent clause beginning with the word printed in parentheses. Add connectors and proper punctuation and capitalization. Edit the following paragraph. Correct all run-on sentences. Be sure to use proper punctuation and capitalization as necessary. Read each run-on sentence. Choose the sentence that correctly punctuates the run-on. Fill in the bubble beside the correct answer. Write S in the blank before each simple sentence, C before each compound sentence, and RO before each run-on sentence. Correct the run-on sentences. Correct the run-on sentences in the paragraph. Same as the above worksheet. Just more reps for you. This will require you to think through this in a deep and difficult way. Correct the run-on sentences in the following paragraphs. Correct each of the following run-on sentences by rewriting them on the lines. While listening to music she often sings aloud to herself whether she is alone or not and whenever I am around and hear her it is really annoying especially since she couldn't carry a tune in a bucket! A group of words that does not express a complete thought, but is still punctuated like a sentence, is called a fragment. A fragment can be corrected by adding more words so that it becomes a sentence. It can also be corrected by adding it to another sentence or correcting the punctuation. Read each sentence below. If it is a run-on sentence, write RO on the line. If it is a fragment, write F on the line. If it is a complete sentence, write S on the line. In order to be a sentence, a group of words must contain both a subject and a verb, and express a complete thought. A fragment is a group of words that does not express a complete thought, but is still punctuated like a sentence. A run-on sentence is two or more complete sentences that are punctuated as one long sentence. An incomplete sentence is called a sentence fragment. It is either missing a subject, missing a predicate, or does not express a complete thought. Read each set of words. Write fragment or sentence on the line. Revise the sentence: George is an excellent student he listens carefully he follows directions and he studies hard. Revise each fragment or run-on sentence so that it is a complete, properly punctuated sentence. You may add words to fragments as necessary. Read each set of words. If it is a sentence, write an S on the line. If it is a fragment, write an F on the line. Read each sentence. If it is correct as written, write correct on the line. If it is a run-on sentence, write run-on on the line. Read each sentence. It is a correct sentence, a run-on, or a fragment? Write your answer on the line. Practice started at eight but there were only three people there so we all had to wait another twenty minutes for the rest of the team to arrive the coach was angry. Read the paragraph. Underline each fragment once. Underline each run-on sentence twice. Then, on a separate sheet, rewrite the paragraph, correcting the errors. Find all the errors and put it together in a sentence. Give your students a grammar quiz or quiz yourself!Do you know what makes a complete sentence? Can you identify a sentence fragment? How about a run-on? (Can you find the fragment in this paragraph?) Answers are at the bottom of the page. This Grammar Quiz Covers... Sentence Construction Sentence Fragments Run-on Sentences 1. Identifying Sentence Fragments Directions: If a group of words is a sentence, write sentence. If it is a fragment, write fragment. Remember that sentences express a complete thought. If a group of words is missing a subject, predicate, or both, it is a sentence fragment. Example: My sister's cat. Answer: fragment 1. The cow in the field. 2. The sweet little bird in the tree. 3. This food tastes delicious. 4. Everyday after school. 5. People talked. 6. This is a wonderful movie. 7. The character with the blonde hair. 8. My very energetic mother. 9. I asked my mother to bake chocolate chip cookies. 10. Whenever my sister sings. 2. Fixing Fragments Directions: Correct these sentence fragments by adding the missing parts. Answers will vary. Use your creativity to make fun sentences! Example: my sister's cat Possible Answer: My sister's cat is adorable. 1. ran all over town 2. the red and blue chair 3. the famous chef from your favorite television show 4. the rain 5. swam two miles 6. I can't believe that little boy plays the violin! 7. I read twenty books this summer. 8. May I use a calculator on this quiz? 9. Why? This is a grammar quiz! 10. My math teacher always lets us use a calculator. 3. Identifying & Fixing Run-on Sentences Directions: If a group of words is a sentence, write sentence. If it is a run-on sentence, write run-on, and correct the sentence so that it is no longer a run-on. Remember that a run-on sentence is two or more sentences written incorrectly as one. For more information on fixing run-on sentences, see this page. Example: My dog is cute, his name is George. Answer: Run-on. Correction: My dog is cute. His name is George. 1. My grammar teacher is incredibly nice she works hard to teach me. 2. I'm so glad that I am learning proper grammar! 3. Do you like football my dad loves it. 4. I always watch my sister's soccer games. 5. It's really hot today, we're going to the ocean. 6. Lea, Natalie, and April walked around town and ate ice cream. 7. We're eating pizza for dinner tonight. 8. I saw a deer in the woods it had a white tail. 9. The gardener trims the plants on Tuesdays he does a great job. 10. I love that blue dress, the color looks great on you. Answers Would you like to download these grammar quizzes? 6 Quizzes (2 Beginner, 2 Intermediate, 2 Advanced)46 PagesBlank Quizzes & Answer KeysPrintableQuizzes Cover Fragments, Run-on Sentences, Types of Sentences, Parts of Speech, Parts of a Sentence, & More100% Money-Back GuaranteeOnly \$3.99 1. Identifying Sentence Fragments Answers 1. Fragment 2. Fragment 3. Sentence 4. Fragment 5. Sentence 6. Sentence 7. Fragment 8. Fragment 9. Sentence 10. Fragment 2. Fixing Fragments Answers Answers will vary for this grammar quiz. Here are some possible answers. 1. Bob and Bill ran all over town. 2. The red and blue chair looks gorgeous in your living room! 3. The famous chef from your favorite television show just baked an apple pie. 4. The rain made everything beautiful. 5. My crazy dog just swam two miles! 6. I can't believe that little boy plays the violin! 7. I read twenty books this summer. 8. May I use a calculator on this quiz? 9. Why? This is a grammar quiz! 10. My math teacher always lets us use a calculator. 3. Identifying & Fixing Run-on Sentences Answers The answers for the run-on sentence corrections will vary since there are a few different ways that you can fix run-on sentences. 1. Run-on Correction: My grammar teacher is incredibly nice. She works hard to teach me. 2. Sentence 3. Run-on Correction: Do you like football? My dad loves it. 4. Sentence 5. Run-on Correction: It's really hot today; we're going to the ocean. 6. Sentence 7. Sentence 8. Run-on Correction: I saw a deer in the woods. It had a white tail. 9. Run-on Correction: The gardener trims the plants on Tuesdays. He does a great job. 10. Run-on Correction: I love that blue dress; the color looks great on you. Would you like to download these grammar quizzes? 6 Quizzes (2 Beginner, 2 Intermediate, 2 Advanced)46 PagesBlank Quizzes & Answer KeysPrintableQuizzes Cover Fragments, Run-on Sentences, Types of Sentences, Parts of Speech, Parts of a Sentence, & More100% Money-Back GuaranteeOnly \$3.99 If you don't want to teach or learn grammar by yourself, click here to see how I can help you. Thank you for the work that you do. Listening to how you explain things makes a lot of sense to me. I can really comprehend it.- Harriett Would you like to download these grammar quizzes? Only \$3.99 6 Quizzes (2 Beginner, 2 Intermediate, 2 Advanced)46 PagesBlank Quizzes & Answer KeysPrintableQuizzes Cover Fragments, Run-on Sentences, Types of Sentences, Parts of Speech, Parts of a Sentence, & More100% Money-Back Guarantee

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