

## FRAGMENTS, SPLICES, AND RUN-ONS

### SENTENCE FRAGMENTS

If a group of words does not contain a principal subject and a principal verb or cannot stand on its own as a sentence, then that group of words is called a fragment.

EX:

Although she is my friend. <i>Although</i> makes the sentence dependent. The man wearing the Indiana Jones hat. <i>This phrase lacks a main verb.</i> Because I love to read and write. <i>Because</i> makes the sentence dependent. Have been going to school regularly. <i>This phrase lacks a main subject.</i>
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### FIXING FRAGMENTS

Most fragments can be corrected easily and quickly. The corrections can be made by simply attaching the fragment to the sentence before or after it in the passage.

*Incorrect:* We used to go to the movies and watch television; however, my favorite thing to do was to read books. **Because books let me use my imagination.**  
fragment

*Correct:* We used to go to the movies and watch television; however, my favorite thing to do was to read books **because books let me use my imagination.**

*Incorrect:* Thomas Edison was the U.S.A.'s greatest inventor. **If he had not been born.**  
Then we would be living in darkness. fragment

*Correct:* Thomas Edison was the U.S.A.'s greatest inventor. **If he had not been born,**  
then we would be living in darkness.

Some fragments, however, require that you add something to them to make them complete.

*Incorrect:* **The teacher who said that grades don't matter.** It would be nice if she were right.**fragment** (You can fix this fragment by adding a main verb.)

*Correct:* **The teacher who said that grades don't matter was only trying to make me feel better.** It would be nice if she were right.

*Incorrect:* **Jean Valjean, struggling to find himself in an unfair world.** He finally found a way to believe in himself with the help of the bishop. (You can fix this fragment by supplying a verb for the subject, Jean Valjean. That verb is the word *found* in the second sentence)

*Correct:* **Jean Valjean, struggling to find himself in an unfair world, finally found a way to believe in himself with the help of the bishop.**

Some fragments are harder to spot than others. Here are some hints to help you find them:

- Read your papers and assignments aloud. Doing this will help you hear incomplete sentences.
- As you read aloud, try to locate the subject and verb. If you cannot find both, you have a fragment on your hands.
- Sometimes you can correct a fragment by removing a weakener such as *who* or *because*.
- Watch for subordinate clauses, sentences beginning with a subordinate conjunction (a weakener).. These clauses contain a subject and a verb, but they cannot stand alone as sentences—they lack independence because they contain a word that makes them dependent. They, therefore, must be attached to a complete sentence (independent clause). The following is an example of a subordinate clause.

These words introduce a subordinate clause

after	as	before	since	until
when	whenever	while	because	even though
unless	while	whereas if	so that	in order that
that	although	though	provided that	

### COMMA SPLICES

A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses (complete sentences) are joined together by only a comma.

**Rule:** Two independent clauses cannot be joined by only a comma; instead, they must be joined by either a comma and coordinating conjunction or a semi-colon. The two clauses may also be separated by a period.

### FIXING COMMA SPLICES

*Example:* I bought a gas grill two weeks ago, and I cook on it every day. **(In this example**

**the clauses are joined by a comma and coordinating conjunction *and*.)**

*Example:* I bought a gas grill two weeks ago; I cook on it every day. **(In this example the clauses are joined by a semicolon.)**

*Example:* I bought a gas grill two weeks ago. I cook on it every day. **(In this example the clauses are separated by a period.)**

## RUN-ON SENTENCES

<p><b>clause</b>        <b>+</b>        <b>clause</b> I love grammar I want to be a grammar teacher.</p> <p>Both clauses are <b>independent clauses and can stand as complete sentences.</b> <i>I love grammar.</i> <i>I want to be a grammar teacher</i> <i>I want to be a grammar teacher.</i></p>
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A run-on occurs when two independent clauses (complete sentences) are joined without any punctuation or conjunction

**The rule:** Two independent clauses must be joined by either a comma and coordinating

conjunction or a semi-colon. The two clauses may also be separated by a period. They cannot be placed together without either semicolon or a comma and a conjunction.

#### FIXING RUN-ON SENTENCES

*Example:* I love grammar, **so** I want to be a grammar teacher. **(In this example the clauses are joined by a comma and the coordinating conjunction so.)**

*Example:* I love grammar; I want to be a grammar teacher. **(In this example the clauses are joined by a semicolon.)**

*Example:* I love grammar. I want to be a grammar teacher. **(In this example the clauses are separated by a period.)**

and    but    or    nor    so    for    yet
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