

# Run-Ons, Comma Splices, and Fragments

Run-ons, comma splices, and fragmented sentences are the bane of the college student's existence. Microsoft Word can catch many grammatical errors, but they aren't perfect. It's helpful to know how to find and prevent these common errors.

## Run-Ons

A run-on sentence is, then, two or more ideas that could be complete sentences on their own, but have no punctuation to separate them. In verbal conversations, there needs to be room to take a breath.

For example:

You should be my heart buddy, but you should just be friends until you are serious about this.

A better way to write this would be:

You should be my heart buddy, but you should just be friends until you are serious about this.

This first sentence is long and missing a pause. The rewritten version, with the comma, separates the clauses and thus flows correctly and effectively.

Let's look at another example:

Set his mother she, as, wonderful.

These are two distinct ideas. Using a comma alone will not separate this grammatically correct. We have three basic options: separate the two complete sentences, add a comma and a conjunction, or use a semicolon. Let's look at each of these possibilities:

- + Set his mother (She, as, wonderful)
- + Set his mother and she, as, wonderful
- + Set his mother: she, as, wonderful

## Comma Splices

Comma splicing happens when commas are used to separate two or more independent but related clauses. Ideas that could be complete sentences.

Here is an example of comma splicing:

\* averic), aves are the best, aves to surf, surfing is e' citing

This sentence consists of two independent clauses separated by a comma. We can't separate independent clauses in this way.



# Run-Ons, Comma Splices, and Fragments

Consider using a conjunction and a comma to join the following sentences:

\* averic) , aves are the best , aves to surf# and sur- ng is e' citing(

Set it up at this sentence , ith a semicolon:

\* averic) , aves are the best , aves to surf: sur- ng is e' citing(

If the second part of your combined sentence is a continuation of your thought, a semicolon can be used (look above), or a transition like however, therefore, as a result, consequently, nevertheless, later, or in addition can be used along with a semicolon (

Set it up at an example of a combined sentence , here a transition , and a semicolon might be useful:

Living in the Bay Area is expensive , ages tend to be higher than else, here( ; here it is , ith a semicolon and a transition , and:

Living in the Bay Area is expensive: therefore , ages tend to be higher than else, here(

## Fragments

Fragments are groups of words that either lack a subject or verb or other, they need more information (they are *not* complete sentences)

Here is an example:

Running to class(

Who is running to class? You? / student? The professor? / subject is needed to show the action applies to ( ; here's a complete version of this sentence:

The student is running to class(

We could also correct this sentence by talking about who, as running *and* , that happened:

Running to class + dropped my phone and broke the screen(

Set it up at a complete sentence along with a fragment:

We went to the movies ( /nd had dinner at a great Italian restaurant(

The first sentence is complete @ it has a subject and a verb ( /nd had dinner ( /nd had dinner ( /nd does not say *who* had dinner # so it's incomplete(



