

## Run-On Sentences and Comma Splices

A **sentence** is a group of words that functions as a unit. Sentences are made up of two main parts:  
The **subject** names the person, place, thing, or idea that the sentence is concerned with.  
The **verb** makes a statement about the subject. The predicate is everything after the subject, including the verb.

### Example:

(subject) (predicate) [the verb is underlined]  
The thickly forested area / was irresponsibly harvested by the lumber company.

Sentences **function** in two main ways:

- 1) The subject can perform some action as stated in the verb.  
The boy kissed the girl.
- 2) The sentence can work to describe the subject.  
The cat is asleep.  
The man spoke.

**FYI:** There are many variations on these patterns, and sentences are usually much more complex than these, but these patterns are the most common you will see.

**Run-on sentences** happen when there is more than one sentence (grouping of subject and verb on a single topic that makes sense standing on its own) joined together with improper punctuation or without punctuation at all. The following show the most common types of run-on sentences. These have two complete thoughts that are closely related in content joined into a single sentence.

*We worked hard, **it got done.*** (improper punctuation, comma splice)

*The stranger asked for help **and I wanted to help him.*** (no punctuation, fused sentence)

There are several easy ways to correct the most common types of **run-on sentences**:

- 1) Make the run-on into two separate sentences.  
We worked hard. It got done.
- 2) Separate the two parts of the run-on with a semicolon.  
We worked hard; it got done.
- 3) Separate the two parts of the run-on with a comma and a **coordinating conjunction** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so – FANBOYS is an easy way to remember these)  
We worked hard, and it got done.
- 4) Revise the run-on so that one part cannot stand on its own.  
By working hard, it got done.

A **comma-splice** is a specific kind of run-on that students often make. When you separate the two (possible) sentences with only a comma, you create a **comma splice**. To fix this particular run-on, you may use any of the strategies mentioned above.

A **fused sentence** is another specific kind of run-on that students often make. This happens when the two sentences (also called independent clauses) are joined **only** with a coordinating conjunction (remember those FANBOYS?), but no punctuation. To correct this type of run-on, simply add a comma before the coordinating conjunction.

The stranger asked for help, and I wanted to help him.