

Guide to Run-on Sentences

Introduction

A **run-on sentence** is when two independent clauses are joined together improperly, usually due to an incorrect use of punctuation or conjunctions (such as and, but, or). Many students come across this mistake in their writing, which can make their ideas confusing or hard to follow. However, with these editing strategies and methods of how to spot run-on sentences below, you can improve your writing tremendously and maintain clarity with your ideas.

An **independent clause** is a group of words that has both a subject and verb and can stand alone as a complete sentence. Typically, an independent clause is a full thought; run-on sentences occur because two full thoughts are jumbled together into one sentence. While it's possible to have two separate thoughts in one sentence, they must be joined together correctly. Since a run-on sentence has two independent clauses, they can also be two stand-alone thoughts, and thus should be distinguished from each other when put into one sentence. This is so the reader can best interpret your ideas and understand you without getting lost in the flow of your sentence. Below are some methods of identifying run-on sentences and how to edit them.

How to spot a run-on sentence

After completing a draft, take some time to reread your draft. Are there any sentences that contain more than one idea? Is there any trouble connecting these ideas in the sentence? If so, you might have a run-on sentence!

Fixing run-on sentences

When writing or editing, fixing run-on sentences is easy! Depending on the content of the sentence, you can utilize a few different strategies.

Solutions

There are a number of solutions available for fixing a run-on sentence. Picking how you want to fix a run-on sentence depends on personal preference and the tone of a paper.

There are three main ways to fix a run-on sentence:

1. Separation with a period
2. Connecting with conjunctions
3. Adding a semicolon

Separating ideas with a period:

Some run-on sentences can be fixed by separating the two thoughts with a period. These cases require a sentence that has two complete thoughts that work better independently of each other.

Connecting with conjunctions:

Other run-on sentences are almost complete but require coordinating or subordinating conjunctions to connect the thoughts. Using these conjunctions require a specific connection between the two ideas, so use the word that fits the topic best!

- Coordinating conj ~~and~~ "or," "but," "so" are words lik
- Subordinating conj ~~because~~ "unless," "although" words li

Adding a semicolon:

Semicolons can feel intimidating for writers, but they can be useful. Semicolons connect two related independent clauses without creating two separate sentences. Semicolons are useful when the two ideas are closely related to one another.

Examples

As stated earlier, sentences can be edited in sentence that can be fixed in all three solutions previously discussed. These strategies might also require additional words or other minimal tweaking.

Example sentence:

"Poetry often discusses themes that are em
be a good way to get a look into the poet'

Separating ideas with a period:

"Poetry often discusses the ~~themes~~ ^{Analyzing themes can} are em
be a good way to get a look into the poet'

Connecting with a conjunction:

" Poetry often discusses the ~~and~~ analyzing themes are em
can be a good way to get a look into the p

Adding a semicolon:

" Poetry often discusses the ~~and~~ analyzing themes can are em
be a good way to get." a look into the poet'

Conclusion

A run-on sentence isn't a reflection of a writer's writing skills, but rather a misuse of conjunctions and other grammatical devices. Run-on sentences can even be intentional if the grammar is used correctly, but what makes the reader see it as "word vomit" or part of a rough draft is the incorrect use of punctuation and conjunctions. The main objective when fixing run-ons is to make your ideas as clear as possible throughout the paper. Knowing this, we find the solution to run-on sentences by separating ideas with a period, connecting them with conjunctions, or adding a semicolon. While there are many ways to include two separate thoughts in one sentence, these techniques are a great foundation to utilize while editing your final draft. With a clear sentence structure that flows naturally from one thought to the next, your ideas will be better displayed and understood by the reader.

References Consulted:

" Run On Sentences: Effective Writing Practices | Northern Illinois University
<https://www.niu.edu/writingtutorial/punctuation/run-on-sentences.shtml>.