

Run-Ons and Comma Splices

RUN-ON SENTENCES

A run-on sentence occurs when two independent clauses are mistakenly combined into one sentence without any punctuation. Note that this means that a sentence can become a run-on if it has a coordinating conjunction but no comma. The sentence doesn't have to be long to be a run-on.

The ice cream melted in the sun it ran down my hand.

Independent Clause (IC)

Independent Clause (IC)

[The ice cream melted in the sun]

[It ran down my hand.]

S

V

S

V

Possible fixes: Separate the two independent clauses using a semi-colon or a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS). If the two thoughts are not very closely tied together, then use a period instead.

The ice cream melted in the sun; it ran down my hand.

(IC) semi-colon (IC)

The ice cream melted in the sun, **and** it ran down my hand.

(IC) comma + conjunction (IC)

COMMA SPLICES

A comma splice occurs when two complete independent clauses are mistakenly combined into one sentence using only a comma.

The ice cream melted in the sun, it ran down my hand.

Independent Clause (IC)

Independent Clause (IC)

[The ice cream melted in the sun]

[It ran down my hand.]

S

V

S

V

Possible fixes: Separate using a semi-colon or a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS), or use a period if the two thoughts are unrelated.

The ice cream melted in the sun; it ran down my hand.

(IC) semi-colon (IC)

The ice cream melted in the sun, and it ran down my hand.

(IC) comma + conjunction (IC)

Flow chart to explain which