

**Handout Topic: Run-on Sentences**

**What are run-on sentences?**

A run-on sentence results from two or more complete sentences being connected without any punctuation.

**How to find a run-on sentence:**

The best way to find a run-on sentence is to determine whether there is more than one independent clause in the same sentence without punctuation. If there are two subjects (who or what the sentence is about) or a subject and its pronoun (he, she, it, they etc.) in the same sentence and they are not separated with proper punctuation, then a run-on sentence results.

**e.g.** I ran across the road it was very dangerous. (two independent clause)

**e.g.** I ran across the road. It was very dangerous. (fixed with proper punctuation)

Be careful not to turn a run-on sentence into a comma splice. A comma splice is an error that results from using a single comma to separate two independent clauses. Run-on sentences cannot be fixed with a single comma. For more information, see the WRC handout on comma splices.

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

**1. Separate the two clauses with a period.**

**e.g.** Jim is the fastest runner in the class he wins all of the races.

**Fixed** Jim is the fastest runner in the class. He wins all of the races.

**2. Separate the clauses with a semi-colon.**

**e.g.** I have owned four different guitars my first guitar was a Gibson Explorer.

**Fixed** I have owned four different guitars; my first guitar was a Gibson Explorer.

**3. Use a comma with a coordinating conjunction (e.g. and, but, or, for, yet, nor, so) to separate the clauses.**

**e.g.** Our parents did not like the loud music we could not stop dancing.

**Fixed** Our parents did not like the loud music, **but** we could not stop dancing.

**4. Use a subordinating conjunction (e.g. although, after, before, unless, as, because, even though, if, since, until, when, while) and a comma to separate the two clauses.**

**e.g.** Stephanie worked all week she still partied on Fridays.

**Fixed Although** Stephanie worked all week, she still partied on Fridays.

**Exercises:** Fix the following run-on sentences, using each of the four techniques above at least once.

1. You can't stop rock n' roll it is here to stay.
2. I like vanilla ice cream chocolate is my favorite.
3. Karen loves going to the movies she hates sitting in the front.
4. The car screeched its tires as it sped off it sent smoke rising into the air.
5. Peter will eat anything you give him he does it all the time.
6. Mark calls home every day he does not want to move back.
7. The sky was very grey a grey that really makes you sad.
8. Julia likes singing she likes dancing as well.