**RUN-ON SENTENCES**

**Four Ways to Find Them**

The Writing & Learning Studio Room 4301 Shoreline Community College

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**WHAT’S A “RUN-ON”? A *run-on sentence* occurs when two or more main thoughts run together without correct punctuation. Writing run-on sentences is a common writing error.**

1. ***How to Find Run-ons:* LISTEN to the Words!**

Read each sentence **ALOUD** at your regular pace. Listen closely for clues to where a sentence might end:



* If your voice **stops and drops** in tone, a **period** could be needed.
* If your voice **raises**, a **question mark** could be needed.
* If your voice expresses **strong emotion**, try an **exclamation** **mark**.
* Remember to **begin new sentences** with a **capital letter**.

Try the sentences below. Read each one **aloud and listen to your voice**. See if you can put in the correct punctuation:

* We rushed out for lunch then we walked 10 blocks to a restaurant.
* Does your boss answer the phone, mine always waits for me to do it.
* I waited and waited for my tax refund finally it came.

1. ***How to Find Run-ons*: L K for the TROUBLESOME WORDS!**
   1. Certain words are often responsible for run-on sentences. If one of these words starts a complete thought, use an end mark before it:

**then here consequently**

**finally there therefore**

**usually soon however**

* 1. Run-on: Margo waited 10 minutes for her hot chocolate, finally the server brought it.

**Correct: Margo waited 10 minutes for her hot chocolate. Finally, the server brought it.**

Run-on: Mimi laughed until she cried, then she fell out of her chair.

**Correct: Mimi laughed until she cried. Then she fell out of her chair.**

Run-on: Ralph tried to grow orchids, however, the climate was too cold.

**Correct: Ralph tried to grow orchids. However, the climate was too cold.**

Run-on: I was surprised to see monkeys at the party, usually only rabbits attend these events.

**Correct: I was surprised to see monkeys at the party. Usually only rabbits attend these events.**

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1. ***How to Find Run-ons*: Watch for PRONOUNS!** 
   1. Another common mistake is a run-on error with one of these pronouns: ***I, you, he, she, it, we, they.***

If you slowly read aloud the run-on sentences below, you will see that in each run-on, a complete thought ends just before the italicized pronoun**.**

* 1. Run-on: Cinderella tried on the glass slipper, it fit perfectly.

**Correct: Cinderella tried on the glass slipper. It fit perfectly.**

Run-on: My two brothers collect bottle caps, they are planning to build a metal sculpture.

**Correct: My two brothers collect bottle caps. They are planning to build a metal sculpture.**

Run-on: The hotel hosted a fire-walking contest I won a hundred dollars walking on hot coals.

**Correct: The hotel hosted a fire-walking contest. I won a hundred dollars walking on hot coals.**

**Reminder:** Whenever you use one of the pronouns listed above, stop for a moment. Does the word start a

complete thought? Does your voice stop and drop before it? If so, use a period and start the pronoun with a

capital letter.

**Try These:**

*Run-on:* Don’t be late for the fashion show, it is a spectacular event.

**Correct: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Run-on: Mr. Nisket is very friendly he always has a smile for me.

**Correct: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Run-on: Everyone needs a diet full of vitamins, they are very important to our health.

**Correct: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Run-on: We arrived at the store at 9:00, it had not yet opened.

**Correct: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Run-on: I was hoping you would come to the party I haven’t seen you in such a long time.

**Correct: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**4. *How to Find Run-ons:* Watch for COMMAS!**

1. A comma is NOT an end mark. Used alone, it cannot separate two sentences. When writers incorrectly use

it that way, the run-on sentences is called a **“comma splice.”** It can be corrected with a period instead of a comma,

or, sometimes, with a semi-colon instead of a comma. (See #5 below, too.)

Comma splice: The hamburger weighed five pounds, he was unable to finish it.

**Correct: The hamburger weighed five pounds; he was unable to finish it.**

Comma splice: Joan runs like wildfire when wolves are chasing her, she howls a lot, too.

**Correct: Joan runs like wildfire when wolves are chasing her. She howls a lot, too.**

1. ***Two Other Ways to Fix Run-ons***
2. When two complete thoughts are very closely related in meaning, you can use a **semicolon** to connect them.

Run-on: We tried to catch the bus, however, we left too late.

**Correct:** **We tried to catch the bus; however, we left too late.**

Run-on: She laughed loudly, then she covered her mouth.

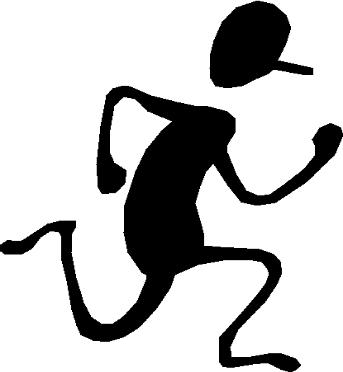
**Correct:** **She laughed loudly; then she covered her mouth.**

Run-on: The camera broke, consequently, no wedding pictures are available.

**Correct: The camera broke; consequently, no wedding pictures are available.**

1. If the two run-on word groups are **equal in importance,** you can also join the run-on by using one of these **connectors:** *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*. When you use one of these connectors to fix a run-on, use a **comma**

before it.

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Run-on: We tried to catch the dinosaur, it ran too fast.

**Correct: We tried to catch the dinosaur, but it ran too fast.**

Run-on: My ankle broke, I couldn’t finish climbing Mt. Everest.

**Correct: My ankle broke, so I couldn’t finish climbing Mt. Everest.**

Run-on: Give Macy the extra cake, it’s her birthday.

**Correct: Give Macy the extra cake, for it’s her birthday.**