



Success Center Tips for Revising Fragments and Run-Ons

Fragments

A fragment is an incomplete thought that is punctuated as if it is a complete thought. To identify fragments, ask what has been left out of a word group:

- Do you see a complete verb (the helping and action words)?
- Do you see a subject (person or thing doing the acting)?
- Do you see *only* a dependent clause?

Fragment: *Deciding what groceries to buy.*

- Do you see a complete verb? NO—fragment.
- Do you see a subject? NO—fragment.
- Do you see *only* a dependent clause? YES—fragment.

The italicized group of words is a fragment. When the word group is missing a subject or verb or does not express a complete thought, it is a fragment. **To edit this type of fragment, add the missing words.**

Complete thought: *I was deciding what groceries to buy.* (subject and verb added)

Editing Dependent Clause Fragments

- Transform them into sentences by removing the period and joining all the words.

Fragment: *Kay creates oil paintings from photographs. That resemble the artwork of the Impressionists.*

Complete

Thought: *Kay creates oil paintings from photographs that resemble the artwork of the Impressionists*

- Attach fragments that begin with subordinating words (*after, although, because, since, if, while, even though, though, when*) to a nearby independent clause, replacing the period with a comma.

Fragment: *Because I was deciding what groceries to buy for the luau party. I spent two hours in the new grocery store.*

Complete

Thought: *Because I was deciding what groceries to buy for the luau party, I spent two hours in the new grocery store.*

Run-on (Fused) Sentences and Comma Splices

When a writer joins two independent clauses (complete ideas that can stand alone as a sentence) incorrectly, a run-on (fused) sentence or comma splice results. Run-on (fused) sentences are two complete sentences joined without punctuation. These sentences show no indication of where one complete sentence ends and the other begins.

Run-on (fused) sentence: *College is too serious I am not ready to grow up.*

There are five ways to edit a run-on sentence:

- **Add a semicolon** (Note: a colon or dash is a less common editing solution):

College is too serious; I am not ready to grow up.

- **Add a comma and coordinating conjunction** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so—“fanboys”):

College is too serious, yet I am not ready to grow up.

- **Add a subordinating conjunction** (e.g., when, after, while, since, because, even though) **and set off the clause with a comma:**

Even though college is too serious, I am not ready to grow up.

- **Make two sentences:** *College is too serious. I am not ready to grow up.*

- **Use a conjunctive adverb with proper punctuation** (e.g., therefore, for example, however):

College is too serious; however, I am not ready to grow up.

Comma Splices

Comma splices use a comma to separate complete sentences when a period or semicolon is needed to clarify ideas and construct a complete unit of meaning.

Comma Splice:

The leader of the bicycling group is seventy-five years old, he rode four hundred miles last year.

There are three common ways to correct a comma splice.

- **Add a semicolon:**

The leader of the bicycling group is seventy-five years old; he rode four hundred miles last year.

- **Add a comma and a coordinating conjunction:**

The leader of the bicycling group is seventy-five years old, but he rode four hundred miles last year.

- **Add subordinating conjunctions or conjunctive adverbs** (see examples above) **and set off the phrase with a comma:**

Even though the leader of the bicycling group is seventy-five years old, he rode four hundred miles last year.