

The background is a dark grey chalkboard with various white chalk sketches. On the left, there is a detailed drawing of a microscope. Above it, a globe of the Earth is sketched. In the bottom left, there are several books stacked together. In the bottom center, an open book is shown with some illegible text on its pages. On the right side, there are sketches of a percentage sign (%), an exclamation mark (!), and a less-than sign (<).

# Fused sentences

# What are Fused Sentences?

## **Definition:**

- A fused sentence occurs when two independent clauses are coordinated improperly.
- There are two kinds of fused sentences:
  1. Run-on sentences
  2. Comma splices

# Review of Coordination

- To join two independent clauses, you must do two things:
  1. Insert a **comma** between the two clauses.
  2. Add a **coordinating conjunction** after the comma.

(Remember FANBOYS: the coordinating conjunctions are For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, and So.)

- EX:
  - I wanted to go to the movie, **but** I had to type my term paper.
  - My mom is pretty particular about family dinner, **so** you'd better come when she calls you to the table.

# Errors of Coordination: Run-ons and Comma Splices

- Both comma splices and run-on sentences result from errors in coordination.
- In other words, these errors result from 1) forgetting the comma, or 2) forgetting the coordinating conjunction.

# Run-On Sentences

A run-on sentence occurs in two instances:

1. When a writer remembers the conjunction but forgets the comma.
2. When a writer forgets both the conjunction and the comma. (This form of run-on is especially bad, and often makes the sentence incomprehensible).

- Exs:
  - I wanted to go to the movie **but** I had to type my term paper. (*Forgot the comma.*)
  - I wanted to go to the movie I had to type my term paper. (*Forgot both the comma and the conjunction.*)

# Comma Splices

- A comma splice is just the opposite of the first case of run-on sentence. Comma splices occur when the author remembers the comma but forgets the conjunction.
- EX:
  - I wanted to go to the movie, I had to type my term paper. (*Forgot conjunction.*)
  - My mom is pretty particular about family dinner, you'd better come when she calls you to the table. (*Forgot conjunction.*)

# Fixing Comma Splices and Run-on Sentences.

- Fixing a fused sentence is easy. All you have to do is to pick one of the four available strategies:
  1. Coordinate the two clauses properly. (This is probably the easiest method).
  2. Divide the two clauses into separate sentences.
  3. Join the clauses with a semicolon.
  4. Join the clauses via subordination.

# Method 1: Proper Coordination

The easiest option is to coordinate the clauses properly.

Here's an example of an improperly coordinated sentence (comma splice):

- *Driving home from school, Brett vowed to protect the fragile ecosystem, the tires of his Cadillac Escalade flattened the toads hopping on the wet streets.*

Here's an example of the sentence fixed with proper coordination:



- *Driving home from school, Brett vowed to protect the fragile ecosystem, yet all the while, the tires of his Cadillac Escalade flattened the toads hopping on the wet streets.*

*Note that in addition to the comma and the coordinating conjunction "yet," the phrase "all the while" has also been added. This phrase isn't grammatically necessary to join the clauses, but it does help to clarify the relationship between them.*



## Method 2: Separate Sentences

Second, you can break the error into two separate sentences, as below:

- Original Sentence (Comma splice): *Driving home from school, Brett vowed to protect the fragile ecosystem, the tires of his Cadillac Escalade flattened the toads hopping on the wet streets.* 
- Revised sentences: *Driving home from school, Brett vowed to protect the fragile ecosystem. All the while, however, the tires of his Cadillac Escalade flattened the toads hopping on the wet streets.* 

## Method 3: Semicolon

You can also use a semicolon:

- Driving home from school, Brett vowed to protect the fragile ecosystem; all the while, however, the tires of his Cadillac Escalade flattened the toads hopping on the wet streets.

## Method 4: Subordination

Another option is to use a subordinating conjunction to join the two clauses. This method reduces one of the two clauses to an incomplete thought:

- Driving home from school, Brett vowed to protect the fragile ecosystem **even as** the tires of his Cadillac Escalade flattened the toads hopping on the wet streets.

# Review

A few easy ways to fix fused sentences:

1. Coordinate the clauses properly by adding a comma and a coordinating conjunction between them. (IC , **CC** IC)

EX: At first I wanted to be a doctor, **but** now I don't.

2. Add a period after the first independent clause and capitalize the next word. (IC . IC)

EX: At first I wanted to be a doctor. **N**ow I don't.

3. Add a semicolon between the independent clauses. Remember to keep both halves of the sentence even. (IC ; IC)

EX: At first I wanted to be a doctor; after pre-med training, I no longer do.

4. subordinate one clause to the other by using a subordinating conjunction.

EX: **While** I wanted to be a doctor at one point, I no longer do now.