



# Three Sentence Errors

*Run-on Sentence*

*Sentence Fragment*

*Comma Splice*

Created by Debra Baxley South Campus Learning Center, Communications Lab

Updated by Bill DeLeeuw 06-25-05

Permission to copy and use is granted to all FCCJ staff provided this copyright label is displayed. For more information, visit the Learning Services web site: [www.fccj.edu/lc](http://www.fccj.edu/lc)

## Comma Splice

A comma by itself cannot join two sentences (or two independent clauses). Doing so creates a **COMMA SPLICE**.

**INCORRECT EXAMPLE:** The hungry child picked a basketful of blackberries, they were her favorite.

1. One way to correct this comma splice would be to **write the information as two sentences**.

**CORRECT EXAMPLE:** The hungry child picked a basketful of blackberries. They were her favorite.

2. Another way to correct this would be to use **a comma with a coordinating conjunction** (and, but, nor, for, so, yet).

**CORRECT EXAMPLE:** The hungry child picked a basketful of blackberries, for they were her favorite.

3. A third option would be to **use a semi-colon**. This punctuation mark joins what could be two sentences.

**CORRECT EXAMPLE:** The hungry child picked a basketful of blackberries; they were her favorite.

4. Another option would be to **use a subordinating conjunction** to make one of the clauses dependent upon the other.

**CORRECT EXAMPLES:** Because they were her favorite, the hungry child picked a basketful of blackberries.

The hungry child picked a basketful of blackberries since they were her favorite.

**NOTE:** Some of the most commonly used subordinating conjunctions are: **when, if, since, because, after, while, during, before.**

# Sentence Fragments

**SENTENCE FRAGMENTS** are another common error. This means that a group of words is not a complete sentence. Remember that to be a complete sentence, a group of words must have a **subject**, a **verb**, and **must express a complete idea**. The group of words must not depend on the sentence before it or after it to provide a complete idea.

**INCORRECT EXAMPLE:** When working on your term paper, first develop a time table when stages must be turned in.

Usually one month before the due date.

**CORRECT EXAMPLE:** When working on your term paper, first develop a time table for when you must turn in stages.

You should usually begin this one month before the due date.

**NOTE:** Verb forms ending in **-ing** or in **-en** and that do not have a helping verb with them cannot be used as the single main verb in a complete sentence.

**INCORRECT EXAMPLE:** The man painting our roof.

**CORRECT EXAMPLE:** The man was painting our roof.

**CORRECT EXAMPLE:** The man painting our roof has a dangerous job.

# Run-On or Fused Sentences

**RUN-ON OR FUSED SENTENCES** join too much information, usually two independent clauses without a conjunction or punctuation.

**INCORRECT EXAMPLE:** Ms. Davis was my first grade teacher in 1975 she is still teaching first grade today in the same school.

**CORRECT EXAMPLE:** Ms. Davis was my first grade teacher in 1975, and she is still teaching first grade today in the same school.

**CORRECT EXAMPLE:** Ms. Davis was my first grade teacher in 1975. She is still teaching first grade today in the same school.

**CORRECT EXAMPLE:** Ms. Davis was my first grade teacher in 1975; she is still teaching first grade today in the same school.

## SENTENCE ERROR EXERCISES

**DIRECTIONS:** Indicate whether the following sentences are correct by placing a C in the blank or incorrect by placing an I in the blank.

### COMMA SPLICES:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Louise has many problems, one of them is her poor grammar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Michael is very involved in sports, and football is his favorite.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Dancing is an enjoyable activity, it is very relaxing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Making new friends can be very difficult, therefore, one should meet as many people as possible.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Commercials are boring, the number of them shown during a thirty minute program should be reduced.

### SENTENCE FRAGMENTS:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Before giving up, first try to explore your options.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. On my way to work today the man jogging along the road.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The man on the corner discovered he had to cross the street at his own risk. Since there was not a crossing guard or a crossing light.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. During the night in the middle of August on the hottest evening of the season.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Because he had no one to talk to, Chris sat alone and cried.

### RUN-ONS:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. My sister is the worst tennis player in the world because she does not practice or concentrate on the game.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. When Duane could not find his keys, he searched everywhere he could think he might have lost them he was really embarrassed when he found them in his pocket.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. She lost her job because she was never on time, and she did not fully understand how to perform her duties.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Dancing is my favorite form of recreation swimming is my second.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. He can never seem to understand directions he always confuses east and west and north and south.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Janice loves her job even though her boss is not very nice she plans to work hard in hopes of a promotion.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Bob got soaking wet while walking in the rain he forgot his umbrella.

- \_\_\_\_\_18. The guests stayed until midnight even though the party was supposed to be over at ten they were having too good of a time to leave.
- \_\_\_\_\_19. While on a shopping spree at a local mall, Louise lost her purse, and she got a parking ticket.
- \_\_\_\_\_20. Once while hiking in the woods Marcus found an injured baby bird he took it home and nursed it back to health and then released it back into the wild.

### ANSWERS FOR SENTENCE ERRORS EXERCISES

1. I-two complete sentences cannot be joined with only a comma
2. C
3. I-two complete sentences cannot be joined with only a comma
4. I-;therefore,-because it joins two complete sentences
5. I-two complete sentences cannot be joined with only a comma
6. C
7. I-it is a sentence fragment
8. I-"Since. . .light" is a subordinate clause not a sentence
9. I-it is just a string of prepositional phrases
10. C
11. C
12. I-them; he or them. He
13. C
14. I-recreation; swimming-or recreation. Swimming-or recreation, and swimming
15. I-directions; he-or directions. He- or directions because he
16. I-job. Even though. . .nice, she
17. I-rain; he-or rain. He-or rain because he
18. I-midnight. Even though. . .ten, they
19. C
20. I-once. . .woods, Marcus. . .bird. He