**Finding and Fixing Run-On Sentences**

**What is a run-on sentence?**

To understand what a run-on is, it’s best to start with two independent complete sentences.

* My professor reviewed my paper. He said it contained a lot of errors.

Both of these are complete sentences. Each one contains a subject and a verb. In addition, each one expresses a complete thought.

**Run-ons occur when writers combine complete sentences without showing where one idea ends and the next begins.**

* My professor read my paper he said it contained a lot of errors.

This run-on is a **fused sentence**. Two complete sentences have been squashed together without showing the reader where one idea ends and the next one begins.

**How can I find run-on sentences in my work?**

**Run-ons can be long or short.** Since length is not a factor, many students wonder how to tell if a sentence is a run-on. Fortunately, there is a test: **try to turn the sentence into a yes/no question.** If your sentence is a run-on, it will not be possible. Here is an example:

* Did my professor read my paper he said it contained a lot of errors?

This doesn’t make sense. You can only turn the sentence into a question if you divide it into two separate, complete ideas, like this:

* Did my professor review my paper?
* Did he say it contained a lot of errors?

Therefore, the fused sentence is a run-on. Sometimes, people try to correct run-ons by adding a comma, like this:

* My professor read my paper, he said it contained a lot of errors.

This is still a run-on, but it’s called a **comma splice**. By itself, a comma is not enough to fix a run-on sentence.

**How can I correct run-on sentences?**

Consider the following run-on sentence:

* INCORRECT: The weather should be great this weekend we should go camping.

This sentence can be corrected in five ways:

1. **Separate the complete sentences with a period and a capital letter.**

* CORRECT: The weather should be great this weekend. We should go camping.

1. **Connect the two sentences using a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).**

* CORRECT: The weather should be great this weekend, so we should go camping.

1. **Insert a semi-colon between the two sentences.**

* CORRECT: The weather should be great this weekend; we should go camping.

1. **Use a semi-colon with a conjunctive adverb. NOTE: a comma should be placed after the conjunctive adverb (however, nevertheless, moreover, therefore, & etc…).**

* CORRECT: The weather should be great this weekend; therefore, we should go camping.

1. **Use a subordinating conjunction to make one sentence a dependent clause.**

* CORRECT: Because the weather should be great this weekend, we should go camping.
* CORRECT: We should go camping because the weather should be great this weekend.

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