

Fixing Run-On Sentences

A run-on sentence occurs when two complete sentences are improperly punctuated. There are two types of run-on sentences that writers should avoid. One is called a **comma splice**, which occurs when two complete sentences are joined with a comma. Here is an example.

I had an important test the next morning, I had to study.

Solution: I had an important test the next morning; I had to study.

The other type of run-on sentence is called a **fused sentence**, which occurs when two complete sentences are joined with no punctuation at all. Here is an example:

I had an important test the next morning I had to study.

Solution: I had an important test the next morning. I had to study.

The Solutions:

1. I had an important test the next morning. I had to study.
2. I had an important test the next morning; I had to study.
3. I had an important test the next morning, so I had to study.
4. Since I had an important test the next morning, I had to study.

There are four basic ways to correct run-on sentences:

1. Separate the two sentences with a period.

I had an important test the next morning. I had to study.

2. Separate the two sentences with a semicolon.

I had an important test the next morning; I had to study.

**** Please note that the semicolon should only be used to separate two sentences that are related in some way. For example, one wouldn't link the following sentences with a semicolon because they're not related ideas.**

Incorrect solution: I was hungry; my car needed some gas.

Correct solution: I was hungry. As well, my car needed some gas.

3. Separate the two sentences with a comma and a conjunction (linking word). The seven conjunctions in the English language are *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*.

I had an important test the next morning, so I had to study.

** Please note that the comma always appears **BEFORE** the conjunction, not after it.

4. Make one of the full sentences a fragment, otherwise known as a *dependent clause* by adding a subordinating conjunction.

Since I had an important test the next morning, I had to study.
I had to study **because** I had an important test the next morning.

** Please note that when starting with the fragment, use a comma to offset the fragment from the full sentence. In the examples above, the words *since* and *because*, placed at the beginning of the full sentence, create the fragments. This style of sentence (fragment + full sentence) is known as a *complex sentence*, and it's a very effective way of layering information in writing.