

# Run-on Sentences:

## *A Skill Sheet*

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A **run-on sentence** occurs when two separate sentences are joined without any form of punctuation, or any sort of word connecting them. It is without question the simplest of all sentence errors in that its cause is not the result of any particular misunderstanding or misconception.

Below are several examples of run-on sentences.

### Examples of Run-on Sentences:

1. The computer is a useful tool it can be used for writing papers.
2. My mother says I can go first I have to empty the garbage, though.
3. Once a time there was a man his name was Josh.
4. Bees don't eat flowers they gather nectar from them then they go back to the hive.
5. I heard the tires squeal then the car came around the corner I got out of the way fast.

### Explanation of the Problem:

Run-on sentences usually occur because students either write very quickly, or aren't paying particular attention to their work. Such a reason should come as good news to most students because it means that fixing the problem is often as simple as re-reading one's work and then putting in an appropriate punctuation mark.

### How to Fix It:

Fixing a run-on sentence is a matter of **1)** detecting the sentence in the first place, and then **2)** adding in a punctuation mark.

To detect the presence of a run-on sentence, a student should re-read his or her work. Reading aloud tends to be more effective than reading to oneself because **voice intonation reveals where individual sentences start and stop**. A sentence which should end in a period is typically accompanied by a **drop** in the voice. A sentence which should end with a question mark will be characterized by a **rise** in one's voice. Likewise, a sentence that should end with an exclamation point will usually end with the voice taking on a more forceful tone, or a **punch**.

Reading the following sentences aloud will demonstrate the **three types of sounds** that might accompany the end of a sentence.

The <i>drop</i> created by a <b>period</b> :	<i>I have to go.</i>
The <i>rise</i> created by a <b>question mark</b> :	<i>I have to go?</i>
The <i>punch</i> created by an <b>exclamation point</b> :	<i>I have to go!</i>

When reading a piece of writing aloud, a **run-on sentence can easily be identified by listening to the tone of one's own voice**. Consider, for example, these next three run-on sentences:

I have to go my dad says it's time to eat.  
 I have to go I'm not ready.  
 I have to go if I don't I'll be late.

The **run-ons** are thus easily detected, and can be corrected in the following manner:

I have to go. My dad says it's time to eat.  
 I have to go? I'm not ready.  
 I have to go! If I don't I'll be late.

Fixing a run-on sentence, then, can be as simple as **reading one's work out loud and listening for places in which the voice signals a new sentence**. At that point a student must decide which punctuation mark (a period, an exclamation point, or a question mark) will be most appropriate for the sentence.

## *Run-on Sentences:* Exercises

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### **Part One**

**Directions:** Eliminate the following run-on sentences by inserting an appropriate punctuation mark (a period, question mark, or exclamation point).

1. The man took out the garbage he was cleaning the house.
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2. The woman ate a pear she smiled because it was delicious.
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3. After the parade we went for a walk we needed to stretch our legs.
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4. What should I do I think I am lost.
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5. I've had enough I can't take it anymore!
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6. Watch my favorite movie you bet I'd like to see it again.

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7. There were gardens everywhere there were some in the back there were even some around the side of the house.

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8. Can you go I'd really like to see you there if you can't I'll understand, of course.

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9. Notecards are good for recipes scrap pads are good for keeping lists.

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10. We won the lottery that's wonderful!

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**Part Two**

**Directions:** In the following paragraphs eliminate all the run-on sentences.

11. They walked through the forest, twigs snapping beneath their feet an owl hooted a frog croaked the sounds of the woods were all around them.

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12. While sledding down the hill, Billy lost his hat his friends helped him look for it, but they couldn't find it they looked at the top of the hill, and they looked at the bottom of the hill it was nowhere to be found.

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13. In the cabinet Janet found an old book its cover was dusty, but she could see that it was made of leather she blew off the dust, and when the air cleared she could barely make out the title it was a diary she began to wonder how it got there her family had just moved into the old house, and they had almost finished cleaning it out how the cabinet down in the cellar had been overlooked was a mystery to her.

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14. It was a cozy house with thick wooden beams supporting the ceiling and stout wooden logs for walls the fireplace was made of stones it had a mantle with carvings of deer and bear on it, and pegs for hanging wet mittens and scarves could the pegs be used for stockings at Christmas of course they could!

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## Solutions to *Sentence Fragment Exercises*

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### Part One: Solutions

1. The man took out the garbage. He was cleaning the house.
2. The woman ate a pear. She smiled because it was delicious.
3. After the parade we went for a walk. We needed to stretch our legs.
4. What should I do? I think I am lost.
5. I've had enough! I can't take it anymore!
6. Watch my favorite movie? You bet I'd like to see it again.
7. There were gardens everywhere. There were some in the back. There were even some around the side of the house.
8. Can you go? I'd really like to see you there. If you can't I'll understand, of course.
9. Notecards are good for recipes. Pads are good for keeping lists.
10. We won the lottery? That's wonderful!

### Part Two: Solutions

11. They walked through the forest, twigs snapping beneath their feet. An owl hooted. A frog croaked. The sounds of the woods were all around them.
12. While sledding down the hill, Billy lost his hat. His friends helped him look for it, but they couldn't find it. They looked at the top of the hill, and they looked at the bottom of the hill. It was nowhere to be found.
13. In the cabinet Janet found an old book. Its cover was dusty, but she could see that it was made of leather. She blew off the dust, and when the air cleared she could barely make out the title. It was a diary. She began to wonder how it got there. Her family had just moved into the old house, and they had almost finished cleaning it out. How the cabinet down in the cellar had been overlooked was a mystery to her.
14. It was a cozy house with thick wooden beams supporting the ceiling and stout wooden logs for walls. The fireplace was made of stones. It had a mantle with carvings of deer and bear on it, and pegs for hanging wet mittens and scarves. Could the pegs be used for stockings at Christmas? Of course they could!
15. There is a place, not far from here, at the edge of a meadow. If you go there you'll find a mound of earth, with wildflowers growing upon it. When the heat of the day is too much to bear, I go there. There's always a breeze, and the ground is

soft. Sometimes I see hawks circling high above the meadow. Sometimes I see a fox scampering through the grass. How did I find such a place? I stumbled upon it, I suppose. Yesterday only the bees and bugs and silent trees knew it was there, but now you know as well.