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SOLVING
COMMON
SENTENCE
PROBLEMS

21 A

A Recognizing Run-Ons

A **sentence** consists of at least one independent clause—one subject and one verb.

© CourseSmart College costs are rising.

A **run-on** is an error that occurs when two sentences are joined incorrectly. There are two kinds of run-ons: *fused sentences* and *comma splices*.

A **fused sentence** occurs when two sentences are joined without any punctuation.

FUSED SENTENCE [College costs are rising][many students are worried.]

A **comma splice** occurs when two sentences are joined with just a comma.

COMMA SPUCE [College costs are rising], [many students are worried.]

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◆ PRACTICE 21-1

Some of the sentences in the following paragraph are correct, but others are run-ons. In the answer space after each sentence, write *C* if the sentence is correct, *FS* if it is a fused sentence, and *CS* if it is a comma splice.

Example: Using a screen reader is one way for blind people to access the Web, two popular programs are JAWS for Windows and Window-Eyes. CS

(1) The Internet should be accessible to everyone, this is not always the case. ____ (2) Many blind computer users have trouble finding information on the Web. ____ (3) Often, this is the result of poor Web design it is the designer's job to make the site accessible. ____ (4) Most blind people use special software called screen readers, this technology translates text into speech or Braille. ____ (5) However, screen readers do not always work well the information is sometimes hard to access. ____ (6) Web sites need to be understandable to all Internet users. ____ (7) The rights of blind Internet users may be protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ____ (8) We will have to wait for more cases to come to trial then we will know more. ____ (9) Meanwhile, we have to rely on software companies to make the necessary changes, this will take some time. ____ (10) However, there are incentives for these companies, the 1.5 million blind users are all potential customers. ____

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WRITING FIRST: Flashback

Look back at your response to the Writing First activity on page 333. Do you see any run-ons? If so, underline them.

B Correcting Run-Ons

FOCUS Correcting Run-Ons

- You can correct run-ons in five ways.
1. *Use a period to create two separate sentences.*
College costs are rising. Many students are worried.
 2. *Use a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, so, or yet) to connect ideas.*
College costs are rising, and many students are worried.
 3. *Use a semicolon to connect ideas.*
College costs are rising; many students are worried.
 4. *Use a semicolon followed by a transitional word or phrase to connect ideas.*
College costs are rising; as a result, many students are worried.
 5. *Use a dependent word (although, because, when, and so on) to connect ideas.*
Because college costs are rising, many students are worried.

1. **Use a period to create two separate sentences.** Be sure each sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period.
- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| INCORRECT
(FUSED SENTENCE) | Gas prices are very high, some people are buying hybrid cars. |
| INCORRECT
(COMMA SPICE) | Gas prices are very high, some people are buying hybrid cars. |
| CORRECT | Gas prices are very high. Some people are buying hybrid cars. (two separate sentences) |

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◆ PRACTICE 21-2

Correct each of the following run-ons by using a period to create two separate sentences. Be sure both of your new sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a period.

Example: Stephen Colbert used to appear on *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*. ^{Now,} ~~now,~~ he has his own show called *The Colbert Report*.

1. In June 2007, Gordon Brown became prime minister of the United Kingdom, he replaced Tony Blair.
2. New York-style pizza usually has a thin crust Chicago-style "deep-dish pizza" has a thick crust.
3. Last week, Soraya won a text-messaging contest the prize for being the fastest was five hundred dollars.
4. In some parts of Canada's Northwest Territory, the only way to transport supplies is over frozen lakes, being an ice road trucker is one of the most dangerous jobs in the world.
5. In 1961, the first Six Flags theme park opened in Arlington, Texas, the six flags represent the six governments that have ruled the area that is now Texas.

2. **Use a coordinating conjunction to connect ideas.** If you want to indicate a particular relationship between ideas—for example, cause and effect or contrast—you can connect two independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction (*and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, or *yet*) that makes this relationship clear. Always place a comma before the coordinating conjunction.

INCORRECT
(FUSED SENTENCE) Some schools require students to wear uniforms other schools do not.

INCORRECT
(COMMA SPICE) Some schools require students to wear uniforms, other schools do not.

CORRECT Some schools require students to wear uniforms, **but** other schools do not. (clauses connected with the coordinating conjunction *but*, preceded by a comma)

◆ PRACTICE 21-3

Correct each of the following run-ons by using a coordinating conjunction (*and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *so*, or *yet*) to connect ideas. Be sure to put a comma before each coordinating conjunction.

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Run-Ons

Example: Many college students use Facebook to keep up with old friends, ^{and} they also use it to find new ones.

1. A car with soft tires gets poor gas mileage, keeping tires inflated is a good way to save money on gas.
2. It used to be difficult for football fans to see the first-down line on television, the computer-generated yellow line makes it much easier.
3. Indonesia has more volcanoes than any other country in the world the United States has the biggest volcano in the world, Mauna Loa in Hawaii.
4. Chefs can become famous for cooking at popular restaurants they can become famous for hosting television shows.
5. Overcrowded schools often have to buy portable classrooms or trailers this is only a temporary solution.

3. **Use a semicolon to connect ideas.** If you want to indicate a particularly close connection—or a strong contrast—between two ideas, use a semicolon.

INCORRECT (FUSED SENTENCE) Most professional basketball players go to college most professional baseball players do not.

INCORRECT (COMMA SPICE) Most professional basketball players go to college, most professional baseball players do not.

CORRECT Most professional basketball players go to college; most professional baseball players do not.
(clauses connected with a semicolon)

◆ PRACTICE 21-4

Correct each of the following run-ons by using a semicolon to connect ideas. Do not use a capital letter after the semicolon unless the word that follows it is a proper noun.

Example: From 1930 until 2006, Pluto was known as a planet; it is now known as a “dwarf planet.”

1. Of all the states, Alaska has the highest percentage of Native American residents 16 percent of Alaskans are of Native descent.
2. Satellites and global positioning systems (GPS) can help farmers to better understand the needs of their crops, these new methods are part of a trend called “precision agriculture.”

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3. Enforcing traffic laws can be difficult some cities use cameras to photograph anyone who runs a red light.
4. Old landfills can sometimes be made into parks, Cesar Chavez Park in Berkeley, California, is one example.
5. Freestyle motocross riders compete by doing jumps and stunts some famous FMX riders are Corey Hart, Nate Adams, and Travis Pastrana.
4. **Use a semicolon followed by a transitional word or phrase to connect ideas.** To indicate a specific relationship between two closely related ideas, add a transitional word or phrase after the semicolon.

INCORRECT (FUSED SENTENCE) Finding a part-time job can be challenging sometimes it is even hard to find an unpaid internship.

INCORRECT (COMMA SPLICE) Finding a part-time job can be challenging, sometimes it is even hard to find an unpaid internship.

CORRECT Finding a part-time job can be challenging; *in fact*, sometimes it is even hard to find an unpaid internship. (clauses connected with a semicolon followed by the transitional phrase *in fact*)

Some Frequently Used Transitional Words and Phrases

as a result	in addition	now
finally	in fact	still
for example	moreover	therefore
for instance	nevertheless	thus
however		

For more complete lists of transitional words and phrases, see 16C.

◆ PRACTICE 21-5

Correct each of the following run-ons by using a semicolon, followed by the transitional word or phrase in parentheses, to connect ideas. Be sure to put a comma after the transitional word or phrase.

Example: When babies are first born, they can only see black and white *; still,* most baby clothes and blankets are made in pastel colors. (still)

1. Restaurant goers can expect to come across different condiments in different regions of the country, few tables in the Southwest are without a bottle of hot sauce. (for example)

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2. Every April, millions of people participate in TV-Turnoff Week by not watching television they read, hang out with family and friends, and generally enjoy their free time. (instead)
3. Today, few people can count on company pension plans, thirty years ago, most people could. (however)
4. Bottled water can be a waste of money tap water is free. (after all)
5. Dog breeders who run “puppy mills” are only concerned with making money they are not particularly concerned with their dogs’ well-being. (unfortunately)

FOCUS Connecting Ideas with Semicolons

Run-ons often occur when you use a transitional word or phrase to join two independent clauses *without also using a semicolon*.

INCORRECT (FUSED SENTENCE) It is easy to download information from the Internet, however, it is not always easy to evaluate the information.

INCORRECT (COMMA SPICE) It is easy to download information from the Internet, however, it is not always easy to evaluate the information.

To correct this kind of run-on, put a semicolon before the transitional word or phrase, and put a comma after it.

CORRECT It is easy to download information from the Internet; however, it is not always easy to evaluate the information.

5. **Use a dependent word to connect ideas.** When one idea is dependent on another, you can connect the two ideas by adding a dependent word, such as *when*, *who*, *although*, or *because*.

INCORRECT (FUSED SENTENCE) American union membership was high in the mid-twentieth century, it has declined in recent years.

INCORRECT (COMMA SPICE) American union membership was high in the mid-twentieth century, it has declined in recent years.

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■ Culture Clue

Labor unions are groups of workers who band together to achieve common goals such as fair wages, safety, and security.

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CORRECT Although American union membership was high in the mid-twentieth century, it has declined in recent years. (clauses connected with the dependent word *although*)

CORRECT American union membership, which was high in the mid-twentieth century, has declined in recent years. (clauses connected with the dependent word *which*)

Some Frequently Used Dependent Words

after	eventually	until
although	if	when
as	instead	which
because	since	who
before	that	
even though	unless	

For complete lists of dependent words, including subordinating conjunctions and relative pronouns, see 17B and 17C.

◆ PRACTICE 21-6

Correct each of the following run-ons and comma splices by adding a dependent word. Consult the list above to help you choose a logical dependent word. Be sure to use correct punctuation.

Example: ^{Even though the} ~~The~~ court found him guilty, his fans still believed he was innocent.

1. The Dragon Boat Festival is a traditional Chinese celebration it occurs every year on the fifth day of the fifth month of the Chinese calendar.
2. Many people now know that tanning damages the skin, most people use sunscreen.
3. Successful auctions often depend on experienced auctioneers they encourage the audience to keep bidding.
4. The tide goes out in the late afternoon, we can collect shells.
5. Kevin's arm span is greater than his height, he has a positive "ape index."

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Run-Ons

◆ **PRACTICE 21-7**

Correct each of the following run-ons in one of these four ways: by creating two separate sentences, by using a coordinating conjunction, by using a semicolon, or by using a semicolon followed by a transitional word or phrase. Remember to put a semicolon before, and a comma after, each transitional word or phrase.

Example: Twenty-five percent of Americans under the age of fifty have one or more tattoos, ^{and} 50 percent of Americans under the age of twenty-five have one or more tattoos.

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1. Coffee came to Italy in 1600 Pope Clement "baptized" the Muslim beverage for Christians.
2. Skateboarding is a male-dominated sport only 26 percent of skateboarders are women.
3. Some heavy metal musicians have been influenced by classical music however they have taken their music in a very different direction.
4. *I Know What You Did Last Summer* breaks teen horror movie stereotypes eventually the main characters save their friends and take responsibility for their actions.
5. Some people believe that the Harry Potter books promote witchcraft other feel that the books promote positive values, such as as friendship and courage.
6. Shakespeare portrayed Richard III as evil the Richard III Society claims that Richard was a virtuous king.
7. Iceland is the country with the highest percentage of children born out of wedlock the figure is 62 percent. © CourseSmart
8. Philip K. Dick was a science fiction writer his book *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* was made into the movie *Blade Runner*.
9. David Beckham is a soccer star from England he came to the United States to help promote soccer here.
10. Asperger's syndrome is a form of autism people with Asperger's have high intelligence but poor social skills.