

Broken Sentences!

A sentence (also known as an *independent clause*) has to have three parts: **A subject, a predicate, and it expresses a complete thought.**

1. The Sentence Fragment (F) - Occurs when a group of words contains a subject but no predicate or a predicate with no subject.

1. The man driving the big garbage truck. (No predicate.)
2. Wandered aimlessly around the crowded mall. (No subject.)

The Fix! Add the part that's missing.

1. The man driving the big garbage truck **stopped at our house.**
2. **The little girl** wandered aimlessly around the crowded mall.

2. The Unfinished Thought (UT) - They do not express a complete idea. They are *dependent clauses* because they can't make sense on their own - they need to be attached to an *independent clause* to complete their meaning.

Look for "**dependent marker words.**" **After, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order to, since, though, unless, until, whatever, when, whenever, whether, and while.**

- UT: After we went to the party.

Fix #1! Attach the *dependent clause* to the beginning of an independent clause *using a comma!*

- After we went to the party, **we stopped for something to eat.**

Fix #2! Attach the *dependent clause* to the end *without a comma!*

- We stopped for something to eat **after we went to the party.**

3. The Run-on (or fused) sentence (RO)

Although a run-on sentence sounds like it's just a really long sentence, that's not the case. Run-ons can be *really* short. **A run-on sentence is when two independent clauses (sentences) are incorrectly connected. Run-ons express more than one complete thought and need to be fixed.**

1. We took our dog to the park he had a blast with the other dogs.

Fix #1! Place a period at the end of the first independent clause. Capitalize the beginning of the second independent clause.

1. We took our dog to the park. He had a blast with the other dogs.

Fix #2! If the content of the two independent clauses are closely related, place a semicolon (;) at the end of the first independent clause. DO NOT capitalize the beginning of the second independent clause.

1. We took our dog to the park; he had a blast with the other dogs.

Fix #3! Use a comma and one of the FANBOY conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so). (Note: The examples below are a little clunky because you usually use this fix when the independent clauses are longer. They're correct, but they sound a little choppy.)

1. We took our dog to the park, and he had a blast with the other dogs.
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4. The Comma Splice (CS)

A comma splice is very much like a run-on. The difference is that this error occurs when you incorrectly join two independent clauses (sentences) using ONLY a comma. The fixes for this problem are exactly the same as the fixes for the run-ons.

1. Sarah loved to play her piano, performances made her nervous.

The fixes all applied at once:

1. Sarah loved to play her piano, performances made her nervous.
 - a. Fix 1: Sarah loved to play her piano. Performances made her nervous.
 - b. Fix 2: Sarah loved to play her piano; performances made her nervous.
 - c. Fix 3: Sarah loved to play her piano, but performances made her nervous.
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5. The Comma/Conjunction error (CC)

A comma/conjunction error actually looks like Fix #3 for run-ons and comma splices. **When you use Fix #3, you use a comma and one of the FANBOY conjunctions, BUT, when you use a comma and a FANBOY, you absolutely must have an independent clause on both sides of that comma/conjunction.** If you have an independent clause on only one side of the sentence, then you have a CC error.

Example: Our team won the tournament, and we celebrated with ice cream.
This sentence is correct. There is an independent clause on each side of the CC.

Example: Our team won the tournament, and celebrated with ice cream.
This sentence is INCORRECT. There's not an independent clause on the right side.

Fix #1! Add the part that's missing, which is usually the subject of the second clause.

Example: Our team won the tournament, and WE celebrated with ice cream.

Fix #2! Drop the comma. That'll make it a sentence with a compound verb.

Example: Our team won the tournament celebrated with ice cream.