

*Proofreading Skills Tutorial:*

## **Tutorial #2:**

# **Run-Together Sentences**

**Identifying Run-Together Sentences**

**Correcting Run-Together Sentences**

**Proofreading for Run-Together Sentences**

**Writing Center**

**English 800 Center**

**All notes and exercises can be done on separate sheets of paper, which you should bring to your conference with an instructor in the center.**

**As you work through the tutorial, make sure to see an instructional aide at the front desk in the Writing Center or English 800 Center if you have any questions or difficulties.**

## Run-Together Sentences

Before you begin this tutorial, we recommend that you complete the *Introductory Tutorial: Recognizing Verbs and Subjects*. This tutorial will demonstrate strategies for:

1. **identifying run-together sentences**
2. **correcting run-together sentences**
3. **proofreading for run-together sentences.**

As you do this tutorial and learn about different types of run-together sentences, be sure to notice the kind of run-together sentences that your teacher has pointed out in your writing. That way, you can learn how to proofread your own essays more effectively.

Before we describe run-together sentences and how to fix them in your own writing, let's review some information that is so basic you might have forgotten it.

### What is a sentence?

Sentences are the building blocks of writing. To improve your writing, you must understand the sentence and its two main parts, the verb and the subject.\*

A complete sentence is not only a group of words with a capital letter at the beginning and a period at the end. A **complete sentence** must also always:

- have a subject
- have a verb
- be a complete idea. (That is, it can stand alone and makes sense by itself.)

Some sentences can be very short, with only a few words expressing a complete idea, like this:

Jing likes reading.

She reads two books a week.

The first example is a complete sentence because it meets all three requirements—it has a subject (Jing), it has a verb (likes), and it is a complete idea (that is, “Jing likes reading”). And the second example is a complete sentence because it meets all three requirements, too—it has a subject (She), it has a verb (reads), and it is a complete idea (that is, “She reads two books a week”).

Run-together sentences (RTSs for short) occur when two complete sentences are joined with no punctuation between them or with only a comma connecting them. The next section, Part One, begins with some examples of run-together sentences.

\*Note: If you need to review how to identify a verb and subject, see the *Introductory Tutorial*” *Recognizing Verbs and Subjects*.

## **Part One: Identifying Run-Together Sentences**

Consider these sentences:

Incorrect:     Jing likes reading she reads two books every week.

                  Jing likes reading, she reads two books every week.

In your own words, explain exactly what is wrong with these two groups of words.

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These two groups of words are run-together sentences. Let’s discuss exactly why they are incorrect.

Jing	likes	reading	she	reads	two books every week.
<i>subject</i>	<i>verb</i>		<i>subject</i>	<i>verb</i>	

Jing	likes	reading,	she	reads	two books every week.
<i>subject</i>	<i>verb</i>		<i>subject</i>	<i>verb</i>	

In the examples above, the word “reading” ends the first sentence, and “she” begins the second sentence. Inexperienced writers often write **run-together sentences** when they see that two complete ideas belong together *logically*. However, they don’t realize that these complete ideas are separate sentences *grammatically*.

As you recall, a complete sentence must always:

- have a subject
- have a verb
- be a complete idea. (That is, it can stand alone and makes sense by itself.)

“Jing likes reading” and “she reads two books every week” are both complete sentences because they each meet all three requirements—they each have a subject (“Jing” and “she”), they each have a verb (“likes” and “reads”), and they each express a complete idea (that is, “Jing likes reading” and “she reads two books every week”). However, they are both incorrect.

In Example 1, “Jing likes reading she reads two books every week,” the writer recognized that these ideas were related logically but failed to add a period after the first complete sentence “Jing likes reading.” Also, the writer did not capitalize the first letter of the next complete sentence “she reads two books every week.” That is, the writer didn’t realize that these complete ideas were separate sentences grammatically.

In Example 2, “Jing likes reading, she reads two books every week,” the writer not only recognized that these ideas were related logically but also realized that they should be separated with punctuation. However, instead of adding a period after the first complete sentence “Jing likes reading,” the writer incorrectly added a comma and did not capitalize the first letter of the second sentence “she reads two books every week.” Often, inexperienced writers use only a comma to join two complete sentences, but a comma is never adequate to show that one sentence has ended and the next one has begun.

Run-together sentences (RTSs) are often confusing to the reader, who normally does not expect to see sentences joined this way and must stop to sort out what’s going on. In fact, run-together sentences are considered errors not only in the writing that you do for your English classes but also in all your college and professional writing. This is why it is important to learn how to identify and correct run-together sentences in your own writing.

**Principle I. One way to correct a run-together sentence is by adding a period at the end of the first sentence and a capital letter at the beginning of the second.**

Here is a corrected version of the sentences above:

Jing likes reading. She reads two books every week.

Adding a period at the end of the first sentence and a capital letter at the beginning of the second is one way to correct a run-together sentence. However, writers can use more effective ways to correct run-together sentences that both show the logical relationship between ideas and make the sentences flow more smoothly.

## **Part Two: Correcting Run-Together Sentences**

As we reviewed in Part One, usually a run-together sentence occurs because the two ideas within it are so closely related to each other that they logically belong in the same sentence. Short, isolated sentences can make your writing sound less fluent or choppy. That is why writers often use joining words to show the logical connections between ideas. As a writer, your goal should be to logically connect long complex sentences and punctuate them correctly.

Here are some ways of connecting logically related ideas to avoid using run-together sentences.

### **Coordinators and Subordinators**

- **Join the two sentences with a comma followed by a coordinator.** Coordinators are an effective way to correct run-together sentences because they give writers the ability to show their readers how two ideas are logically related. Here are two versions of the original run-together sentence that have been corrected by using coordinators:

Jing likes reading, so she reads two books a week.

Jing reads two books a week, for she likes reading.

A useful method to remember coordinators is that the first letter of each one together spells **FANBOYS**. See the following chart.

<b>Coordinator</b>	<b>Expresses this Logical Relationship Between Ideas (or Sentences)</b>
<u>F</u> or	cause
<u>A</u> nd	addition
<u>N</u> or	addition of negatives
<u>B</u> t	contrast
<u>O</u> r	alternative
<u>Y</u> et	contrast
<u>S</u> o	result

Notice that when we join two sentences with a coordinator, a comma *always* appears before the coordinator.

- **Join the two sentences with a subordinator.** Like coordinators, subordinators are joining words, which show a variety of relationships between two ideas. Here are two revised versions of the original run-together sentence that have been corrected by using subordinators:

**Because** Jing likes reading, she reads two books a week.

Jing reads two books a week **because** she likes reading.

Here are some commonly used subordinators:

Subordinators	Express this Logical Relationship Between Ideas (or Sentences)
although      while though        whereas even though    even if	contrast
because        as since	cause
if                provided that unless	condition
so that	result
as soon as     since until            while before          when after            whenever once             as	time/sequence

Note: When you use a subordinator at the beginning of a sentence, you *must* use a comma to separate the two clauses. However, you do *not* use a comma if the dependent clause comes at the end of the sentence:

**Although** Ricky wants to go to the movies, he can't afford to go.

Ricky can't afford to go to the movies **although** he wants to go.

**Principle II. Correct a run-together sentence by adding a joining word, either a coordinator (FANBOYS) or a subordinator, to show the logical relationship between the two sentences.**

Note: Please refer to Tutorial 15: *Joining Ideas (Coordination and Subordination)* for more information about coordinators and subordinators.

### Exercise 1

**Instructions:** Using Principle II, correct each of the following run-together sentences below by adding the appropriate **coordinator (FANBOYS)**. Think carefully about the logical relationship between each of the two related sentences. Remember the comma always comes **before** the coordinator. The first sentence has been done for you.

1. Carlos likes his new job, he hates commuting.  
Carlos likes his new job, **but** he hates commuting.
2. He always has to stand on BART, all the seats are already taken by the time he gets on the train.
3. He doesn't like driving, he hates taking the bus.
4. Last week the BART trains were running late, Carlos was late to work.
5. Carlos decided to buy a new car, he doesn't have enough money saved up.
6. Carlos may buy a Prius, he may lease a Mercedes sports car.

### Exercise 2

**Instructions:** Using Principle II, correct each of the following run-together sentences by adding a **subordinator**. Remember when you use a subordinator at the beginning of a sentence, you must use a comma to separate the two clauses. However, do not use a comma if the dependent clause comes at the end of the sentence. As you did in Exercise 1, think carefully about the logical relationship between each of the two related sentences. The first sentence has been done for you.

1. **Because** Joaquin was an experienced cashier, he had no trouble finding a job at the local 7-11 convenience store.
2. Lakisha still gets nervous performing in front of an audience \_\_\_\_\_ she has played the piano for many years.
3. Nicole did not believe in "love at first sight" \_\_\_\_\_ she met Bob.

4. Maryam never had any money \_\_\_\_\_ she won the \$30 million lottery jackpot.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Manolo is a high school student, she takes a class at the local community college.
6. Olga plans to apply to the University of California \_\_\_\_\_ her grade point average improves.

### Semicolons

Now that you have practiced using coordinators (FANBOYS) and subordinators to correct run-together sentences, it is time to learn how to use semicolons for the same purpose.

- **Simply add a semicolon between the two sentences.** The semicolon is used to join two related sentences when you choose not to use a coordinator or subordinator. You do not need to capitalize the first letter of the second sentence when you use a semicolon. Often such sentences will have different subjects. One way of looking at a semicolon is to think of it as a heavy-duty comma, strong enough to join sentences:

Jing likes reading; she reads two books a week.

It was nearly sundown; my shadow stretched far ahead on the sidewalk.

Ricky wants to go to the movies; he can't afford to go.

Note: It is important to remember that the semicolon should be used far less frequently than coordinators and subordinators. Limiting yourself to two or three semicolons per essay is a good rule.

**Principle III. Correct a run-together sentence by adding a semicolon but only if the logical relationship between the two sentences cannot be fixed with a coordinator or subordinator. Be careful not to overuse semicolons.**

### Exercise 3

**Instructions:** Using Principle III, correct each of the following run-together sentences below by adding a semicolon where the sentences run together. The first run-together sentence has been corrected for you.

1. The sunset was very beautiful, strands of purple and red were woven against the dark blue of the sky.  
  
The sunset was very beautiful; strands of purple and red were woven against the dark blue of the sky.
2. The new little cafe was very successful, every morning people waited outside in line for their special chocolate chip espresso waffles.
3. Thanh wrote in his journal every night one day he hoped to become a writer.
4. Apolinario is moving to New Jersey, the transfer that he requested finally came through.
5. Yaping is very familiar with snow, sleet, and winter weather on the east coast of the United States she grew up in New York.
6. The governor proposed a reduction in salaries the teachers union vehemently opposed it.

### Semicolons with Transition Words

Semicolons with transition words are another effective way to correct run-together sentences.

- **Add a semicolon, a transition word(s), and a comma between the two sentences.**

Consider these sentences:

Jing likes reading; **as a result**, she reads two books a week.

It was nearly sundown; **thus**, my shadow stretched far ahead on the sidewalk.

Ricky wants to go to the movies; **however**, he can't afford to go.

Like coordinators and subordinators, transition words express the logical relationships between ideas, but they **do not** join sentences; therefore, you must *always* use a **semicolon** with a transition word to link two sentences together. For this reason, coordinators and subordinators join sentences more effectively, and writers should be careful not to overuse semicolons with transition words. See the following chart that lists some common transition words.

Transition Words	Express this Logical Relationship Between Ideas (or Sentences)
likewise similarly in comparison also	comparison
however still nonetheless otherwise nevertheless in contrast	contrast
therefore thus consequently hence as a result	result
on the other hand	alternative
otherwise	condition
then next previously subsequently afterwards	time or sequence

Please refer to Tutorial 15: *Joining Ideas (Coordination and Subordination)* for more information about using semicolons with transition words.

**Principle IV. Correct a run-together sentence by using a semicolon and transition word(s) followed by a comma. Transition words by themselves don't correct run-together sentences. Again, be careful not to overuse semicolons and transition words.**

## Exercise 4

**Instructions:** Using Principle IV, correct each of the following run-together sentences by adding a semicolon, appropriate transition word(s), and comma. The first run-together sentence has been corrected for you.

1. Hola is planning to transfer to a four-year college she has been spending all her free time writing personal statements for college applications.

Hola is planning to transfer to a four-year college; **therefore**, she has been spending all her free time writing personal statements for college applications.

2. Yi wants to go trekking in the Himalayas, she has enrolled in a mountaineering class.
3. Ahmed is taking eighteen units this semester he is working forty hours a week.
4. DeShawn failed all his classes the first semester, he is on probation.
5. Jessica can't swim, she has decided to go snorkeling in Mexico.
6. Anna Maria had not slept for three days she was extremely exhausted.
7. Akamu figured the ball game would cost him about eight dollars, he didn't consider the price of food and drinks.

## Exercise 5

**Instructions:** Using Principles I, II, III, and IV, correct the following run-together sentences. You should use coordinators (FANBOYS) and subordinators for most of your corrections and no more than **two** semicolons in this exercise. The first run-together sentence has been corrected for you.

1. Frank had the mumps, he couldn't chew.  
**Because** Frank had the mumps, he couldn't chew.
2. Yasmin is a baseball fan her brother Salamis is a big football fan.
3. That restaurant is very popular, you have to make reservations three weeks in advance.
4. Although his parents want him to take over the family business, Shaquand really wants to be an engineer, he is taking lots of math and science.
5. The losing candidate heard the results of the presidential election he called the newly elected President to congratulate him.
6. All of my friends loved the movie *Iron Man 3*, Benny really hated it.
7. California is subject to earthquakes, it's a good idea to keep an Earthquake Survival Kit on hand.

## Exercise 6

**Instructions:** Using Principles I, II, III, and IV, correct all the run-together sentences that you find in this passage. You should use coordinators (FANBOYS) and subordinators for most of your corrections and no more than **two** semicolons in this exercise.

In February of 2013, American movie star Angelina Jolie had a preventative double mastectomy at the age of 37. Earlier, she had undergone genetic testing and learned that she had an 87% risk of developing breast cancer because of an inherited defective BRCA1 gene. The BRCA1 gene is passed down in families, one generation to the next, and dramatically increases a woman's chance of developing breast and ovarian cancer. Jolie's mother had breast cancer and died from ovarian cancer at the age of 56, her maternal grandmother had ovarian cancer and died aged 45. Her maternal aunt was also diagnosed with breast cancer, she died at age 61. After Jolie had the operation, testing of the tissue showed no signs of cancerous cells, and with the mastectomy she now has less than a 5 percent chance of developing breast cancer. Jolie intends to undergo a preventive operation soon to remove her ovaries she still has a 50% risk of developing ovarian cancer due to the same genetic abnormality. She kept the operation a secret until she had recovered from subsequent reconstructive surgery. Then she announced that she'd had a preventative mastectomy, the announcement received a great deal of public attention. Jolie was on the cover of *Time* magazine, countless articles were written about her on the web and in print. Many public figures said that she was brave to undergo the operation and bring public attention to BRCA1 gene testing. Health activists praised her for raising awareness of the options available to those at risk, however some medical experts feared that women would overestimate their chance of having the BRCA mutation and would misunderstand the risks of developing breast cancer if they tested negative for the mutation. In fact, less than 1% of all breast cancer cases are due to BRCA1.

## Exercise 7

### Instructions:

1. Review an essay where your teacher has graded and marked your run-together sentences (or RTS). Are there any similarities in your run-together sentences? For example, is there always a comma in the middle? If there is a comma, does the same word ever follow the comma? The words *it*, *then*, and *however* often follow the comma in the run-together sentences that students write. Knowing what to look for during proofreading can make it easier to find your run-together sentences.
2. Look back at the principles and exercises in this tutorial and make notes on a separate sheet of paper. You will bring these notes and the essay to your conference.
3. Make an appointment for a conference with an instructor in the Writing Center (18-104) or English 800 Center (18-102). To make this appointment, stop by the Centers or call (650) 574-6436. During this appointment, the professor will make sure you understand the concepts covered in this tutorial, answer any questions that you might have, review your answers to these exercises, and check to see if you can incorporate the skill into your writing.

### Reminder:

For this appointment, bring

- any notes about the tutorial that you have taken
- your completed tutorial exercises
- and the essay