

Writing Success Tips Series: Comma Splices, Run-Ons, Fragments

Commas splice (CS): A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses are joined by only a comma.

Comma splice: IC, IC.

Example: We hiked in the Blue Ridge Mountains for three weeks, we were very tired.

Some Easy Ways to Correct Comma Splices

1. Change the comma to a period and capitalize the next word. (IC. IC.)

Correct: We hiked in the Blue Ridge Mountains for three weeks. We were very tired.

2. Change the comma to a semicolon. (IC; IC.)

Correct: We hiked in the Blue Ridge Mountains for three weeks; we were very tired.

3. Add a coordinating conjunction before the second independent clause.

Coordinating conjunctions: and, or, but, nor, for, so, yet. (IC, CC IC)

Correct: We hiked in the Blue Ridge Mountains for three weeks, so we were very tired.

A fused sentence (or run-on) occurs when two independent clauses are joined without punctuation or without a coordinating conjunction.

Fused sentence: Independent clause independent clause. **At first I wanted to be a doctor now I don't.**

Some easy ways to correct a fused sentence are as follows:

1. Add a period after the first independent clause and capitalize the next word. (IC. IC)

At first I wanted to be a doctor. Now I don't.

2. Add a semicolon after the first independent clause. (IC; IC) **At first I wanted to be a doctor; now I don't.**

3. Add a comma and a coordinating conjunction after the first independent clause. (IC, CC IC)

At first I wanted to be a doctor, but now I don't.

A fragment is a dependent clause or phrase that has been mistakenly used as a complete sentence.

A fragment is sometimes missing a subject:

Went with my mother to the school.

Sometimes a fragment would be a complete sentence if it did not begin with a dependent word or phrase.

Frag: After I went to the school with my mother.

Correct sentence: I went to the school with my mother.

Some easy ways to correct a fragment are as follows:

1. Add an independent clause to the dependent clause.

After I went to the school with my mother, I dropped by a friend's house.

2. Remove the dependent word or phrase.

I went to the school with my mother.

Keep in mind that a sentence must have a subject, have a verb, and express a complete thought.

Remember that the "ing" form of a verb is not a true verb unless it is preceded by a helping verb.

Remember that the "to" form of the verb (the infinitive) is not a verb.

