



## Run-Ons and Comma Splices

Run-ons and comma splices are related problems in writing. Both combine two independent clauses (or complete sentences) incorrectly; a run-on does so without adding a proper punctuation mark, and a comma splice does so without adding a coordinating conjunction.

### RUN-ON SENTENCES

**Definition:** A run-on sentence occurs when two complete independent clauses are mistakenly combined into one sentence without any punctuation. The sentence doesn't have to be long to be a run-on.

The ice cream melted in the sun and it ran down my hand.  
*Independent Clause (IC)*                      *Independent Clause (IC)*

**Possible fixes:** Here, two sentences are combined with a coordinating conjunction, but a comma is missing. Separate the two independent clauses using a semi-colon or a coordinating conjunction, or use a period if the two thoughts are unrelated.

The ice cream melted in the sun; it ran down my hand.  
*(IC) semi-colon (IC)*

The ice cream melted in the sun, **and** it ran down my hand.  
*(IC) comma + conjunction (IC)*

### COMMA SPLICES

**Definition:** A comma splice occurs when two complete independent clauses are mistakenly combined into one sentence using only a comma.

Sharks are fish, whales are mammals.  
*(IC)*                      *(IC)*

**Possible fixes:** Here, two sentences are combined using only a comma. Like in a run-on sentence, you can fix the problem by separating the two independent clauses using a semi-colon or a coordinating conjunction, or using a period if the two thoughts are unrelated.

Sharks are fish; whales are mammals.  
*(IC) semi-colon (IC)*

Sharks are fish, **and** whales are mammals.  
*(IC) comma + conjunction (IC)*