

The Writing Center

Fixing Run-Ons

What is a Run-On? A run-on sentence is two or more independent clauses improperly joined

How do I fix this?

Run-on sentences can be fixed by

- Creating two sentences
- Adding a comma and a conjunction (subordinating or coordinating)
- Adding a semicolon

Example: I love to write papers I would write one every day if I had the time.

- *Create two sentences:* I love to write papers. I would write one every day if I had time.

You must have multiple independent clauses (clauses that can stand on their own) to separate them into multiple sentences. “If I had time” is a dependent clause and could not be separated.

- *Add a comma and a conjunction (subordinating or coordinating):* I love to write papers, so I would write one every day if I had time.

See Run-On Sentence Video for explanation of the difference between subordinating and coordinating conjunctions.

- *Add a semicolon:* I love to write papers; I would write one every day if I had time.

Again, a semicolon can only separate two complete independent clauses. See the Colons and Semicolons Handout for a more in-depth look at semicolons.

Practice

Use one of the three ways to fix run-on sentences on the sentences below. If the sentence is complete, write complete.

1. Bob was planning to mow the lawn today the rain ruined this plan.
2. When Jenny saw a snake on the sidewalk, she ran away so fast that she left her shoes behind.
3. Apparently, 20 pounds of animal crackers have been consumed in the Writing Center this shows that students need fuel and know where to find it.
4. I love going to the Writing Center, I go whenever I can, and I eat so many animal crackers.
5. I really need help with this paper, all of these sentences are very long and I don't know how to tell if they are run-on sentences.
6. At the Writing Center, I learned how to fix all of my run-on sentences there are three main ways to fix them.

Conjunctive Adverbs

Conjunctive adverbs connect words, phrases, or clauses together

Examples:

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| - Accordingly | - However | - Nonetheless |
| - Also | - Indeed | - Otherwise |
| - Besides | - Instead | - Similarly |
| - Consequently | - Likewise | - Still |
| - Conversely | - Meanwhile | - Subsequently |
| - Finally | - Moreover | - Then |
| - Furthermore | - Nevertheless | - Therefore |
| - Hence | - Next | - Thus |

Conjunctive adverbs can be punctuated in three different ways.

1. A conjunctive adverb can be used to separate two independent clauses. In this situation, you use a semicolon and comma to separate the conjunctive adverb.
 - a. Independent clause; conjunctive adverb, independent clause.
 - b. Ex: The results of the study were inconclusive; **therefore**, more research needs to be done on the topic.
2. A conjunctive adverb will also introduce, interrupt, or conclude a *single* main clause. In this situation, you will often need commas to separate the conjunctive adverb from the rest of the sentence.
 - a. Ex: After mowing the yard in the hot sun, Pedro was too hungry to shower. He did wash his dusty hands, **however**.
3. A conjunctive adverb can also create a weak break within an independent clause. In this situation, no punctuation is used to separate the conjunctive adverb.
 - a. Ex: Anna called to say her car would not start. Rafael will **therefore** have to pick her up on his way to school.