Run-on Sentences:
Comma Splices and Fused Sentences
Our Goals Today

• Define and identify an independent clause
• Identify run-on errors: comma splices and fused sentences
• Learn ways to correct comma splices and fused sentences
What’s an Independent Clause?

• An independent clause is a group of words that can exist on its own as a complete sentence.

Characteristics of an Independent Clause

- Contains at least one subject and one verb
- Expresses a complete thought
- Doesn’t rely on another clause or part of the sentence to be complete
Examples of Independent Clauses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 1</th>
<th>Example 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diane kicked the soda machine.</td>
<td>Simon and Michele are skipping their chemistry class to go to the beach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diane = the subject; kicked = the verb.</td>
<td>Simon, Michele = the subjects; are skipping = the verb.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note that these two examples can stand alone as complete sentences, and they express a complete thought.*
What’s a Run-on?

• A run-on is a type of sentence error that occurs when two or more independent clauses are incorrectly joined together.

• There are two types of run-on sentences: **comma splices** and **fused sentences**
Comma Splices

• A comma splice occurs when independent clauses are incorrectly joined together by a comma.
• Here’s an example of a comma splice:
  
  *Note: These two examples could be sentences on their own.*
A fused sentence occurs when independent clauses are **incorrectly joined together without any punctuation**.

Example of a fused sentence:

*She writes the songs* *he plays the guitar.*

There is no punctuation between the two independent clauses, so the sentences are being brought together without any clear ending or beginning.
How to Revise Run-ons:

Five ways writers can fix comma splices and fused sentences
Ways to Fix Comma Splices and Fused Sentences

1. **Add a period**: separate two independent clauses into their own sentences with a period.

   *She writes the songs.* *He plays the guitar.*

   A period has been added to create two complete sentences.
Ways to Fix Comma Splices and Fused Sentences

2. Add a coordinating conjunction: connect two independent clauses using a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).

She writes the songs, and he plays the guitar.

A comma and a coordinating conjunction have been added to correct the sentence.
Coordinating Conjunctions

• **Coordinating conjunctions** can coordinate two separate sentences into one sentence.

• To remember them, use the acronym FANBOYS.

  ✓ I like going to museums, **but** she likes going to concerts.

  ✓ She read the article three times, **so** she remembers specific details.

  ➢ A comma must precede the coordinating conjunction in these cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fanboys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ways to Fix Comma Splices and Fused Sentences

3. **Add a semi-colon**: connect the independent clauses with a semicolon.

   *She write the songs; he plays the guitar.*

   A semicolon has been added to correct the sentence.
Ways to Fix Comma Splices and Fused Sentences

4. **Add a semi-colon and a conjunctive adverb:** connect two independent clauses using a semicolon, a conjunctive adverb, and a comma.

*She write the songs; however, he plays the guitar.*

A semicolon, a conjunctive adverb, and a comma have been added to correct the sentence.
Conjunctive Adverbs

• Conjunctions connect words, phrases, and clauses. They provide transitions between ideas.

• When an adverb connects two independent clauses, use a period or a semicolon between the two clauses.

  ✓ We prepared for the test; therefore, we are calm.
  ✓ We prepared for the test. Therefore, we are calm.

  ➢ Both examples are correct.

Common Conjunctive Adverbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>also</th>
<th>finally</th>
<th>therefore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>however</td>
<td>likewise</td>
<td>hence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>otherwise</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>nevertheless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>consequently</td>
<td>furthermore</td>
<td>thus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>similarly</td>
<td>moreover</td>
<td>nonetheless</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ways to Fix Comma Splices and Fused Sentences

5. **Add a subordinating conjunction:** reduce one of the independent clauses into a dependent clause by adding a subordinating conjunction.

   *Although* she writes the songs, *he plays the guitar.*

   A subordinating conjunction has been added to revise the sentence.
Helpful Reminders

• An independent clause is a group of words that can exist on its own as a complete sentence.
• Comma Splices and fused sentences are two types of run-on errors that can occur when writers do not punctuate their sentences correctly.
• To correct run-ons, writers can use punctuation (a period, a comma and a coordinating conjunction, or a semicolon).