

THE LAZY EDITOR: "What Killed the Birds of Beebe?" • SKILL: Run-on Sentences, page 1 of 2

# Run-on Repair

A run-on sentence combines two or more independent clauses incorrectly. (An independent clause is a group of words that contains a subject and verb, and expresses a complete thought—in other words, a sentence.) Consider the following run-on sentence:

Gray clouds rolled in, darkening what had been a bright-blue sky, we still had fun.

"Gray clouds rolled in, darkening what had been a bright-blue sky" and "we still had fun" are both independent clauses—each can stand on its own as a sentence. A comma is not enough to join the two clauses. Following are three ways to correct a run-on sentence:

1. Divide it into separate sentences.  
*Example:* Gray clouds rolled in, darkening what had been a bright-blue sky. We still had fun.
2. Use a comma and a conjunction such as **for**, **and**, **nor**, **but**, **or**, **yet**, or **so**.  
*Example:* Gray clouds rolled in, darkening what had been a bright-blue sky, but we still had fun.
3. Use a semicolon and a transitional word or phrase such as **however**, **moreover**, **furthermore**, **as a result**, **consequently**, **meanwhile**, **first**, **next**, **finally**, or **in addition**.  
*Example:* Gray clouds rolled in, darkening what had been a bright-blue sky; however, we still had fun.

**Directions:** Rewrite the following run-on sentences, using one of the solutions above.

1. I would love to have a cat or a dog, I'm allergic to their fur.

*Correct:* \_\_\_\_\_

2. I go to sleep very late on Saturday nights, I am always really tired on Sundays.

*Correct:* \_\_\_\_\_

3. Ali and Phoebe are twins, they are nothing alike.

*Correct:* \_\_\_\_\_

4. Carlos reeled in a huge fish, he threw it back in the water.

*Correct:* \_\_\_\_\_

5. The creatures arrived in a spaceship from a distant galaxy, they came in peace.

*Correct:* \_\_\_\_\_

6. Jackson is running for class president, he has a lot of great ideas on how to improve our school.

*Correct:* \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Phil ate the leftover pizza, he had some chips and salsa.**

*Correct:* \_\_\_\_\_

**8.** Tomorrow Hannah is getting new glasses, she accidentally stepped on her old ones.

*Correct:* \_\_\_\_\_

Rambling sentences are related to run-on sentences. Rambling sentences may be grammatically correct, but they go on for too long and cause confusion for the reader. Rambling sentences contain TOO MANY independent clauses joined by conjunctions such as *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, or so*. For example:

After school, Beatriz rides the bus home, and when she gets there she walks her dog, Fluffy, and after she walks Fluffy, she does her homework, and she's usually hungry so she often eats a snack at the same time, and then at 4 o'clock, her mom drives her to dance class, which lasts until 5:30.

Oof! That's an awful lot to pack into one sentence! It would be much easier to read if you turned it into a few shorter sentences. Here's one way to do it:

After school, Beatriz rides the bus home. When she gets there, she walks her dog, Fluffy. Next, Beatriz does her homework. She's usually hungry, so she often eats a snack at the same time. At 4 o'clock her mom drives her to dance class, which lasts until 5:30.

**Directions:** Rewrite the rambler below. Break it into several shorter sentences.

Yesterday was my school play, *Peter Pan*, and I had a really big part, I was Peter Pan, and I did a great job and I got a standing ovation at the end of the play, and almost my whole family was there, including my cousins, but my grandma and grandpa weren't there because they live very far away and it would have been really hard for them to get here, yet fortunately the play was recorded, so I'm going to send a DVD to my grandparents so they can see my magnificent performance.

[illegible]