

Writing Center

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Fused (Run-On) Sentence-Comma Splice Guidelines

A **fused (run-on) sentence** error occurs when sentences or independent clauses are improperly connected.

Examples of Run-On (Fused) Sentence Errors:

The clouds were dark we thought it would rain.
I bought a coat however it did not fit.

A **comma splice** error occurs when sentences or independent clauses are improperly connected by a comma alone.

Examples of Comma Splice Errors:

The clouds were dark, we thought it would rain.
I bought a coat, however, it did not fit.

Correcting Fused Sentences and Comma Splices

Correct fused (run-on) sentence and comma splice errors in any of the following ways. Be sure to choose the method appropriate for the meaning of the idea being expressed.

1. If the clauses are not closely related, separate them and punctuate at two separate sentences.
The clouds were dark. We thought it would rain.
I bought a coat. However, it did not fit.
2. If the clauses are closely related, use a comma plus a coordinating conjunction to connect them.
The clouds were dark, so we thought it would rain.
I bought a coat, **but** it did not fit.
3. If the clauses are closely related, use a semicolon to connect them. You may wish to add a conjunctive adverb or transition to help explain the connection between the two clauses.
The clouds were dark; we thought it would rain.
The clouds were dark; **therefore**, we thought it would rain.
I bought a coat; **however**, it did not fit.
I bought a coat; it did not fit, **however**.
4. If one of the clauses provides background information or secondary information, you may wish to convert that clause to a dependent clause by using a subordinator. The resulting sentence will contain a dependent clause and an independent clause.
Because the clouds were dark, we thought it would rain.
We thought it would rain, **when the clouds were dark**.
I bought a coat **which did not fit**.
The coat **that I bought** did not fit.