

Sentence Fragments & Run-ons

While different, sentence fragments and run-on sentences are errors that violate the rule of what is a complete sentence.

Complete Sentence

A complete sentence is not merely a group of words with a capital letter at the beginning and a period or question mark at the end. A complete sentence has three components:

1. A subject (the actor in the sentence)
2. A predicate (the verb or action), and
3. A complete thought (it can stand alone and make sense—it's independent)

Fragments

A sentence fragment is missing an ingredient to produce a complete sentence. Sentence fragments are often the result of the following issues:

1. Lacking a subject
2. Lacking a verb
3. Expressing an incomplete thought

Often, fragments can be fixed by combining it with another sentence.

Examples of fragments:

- Barthes claims that some composers' works are better played than listened to. Schumann's, for example.
- Carbon dioxide emissions are the leading cause of global warming. So that our government must invest more money in the development of hybrid vehicles.
- Although the weather was terrible and I was very tired.

Fragments corrected:

- Barthes claims that some composers' works, Schumann's, for example, are better played than listened to.
- Since carbon dioxide emissions are the leading cause of global warming, our government must invest more money in the development of hybrid vehicles.
- Although the weather was terrible and I was very tired, I decided to go for a short run anyway.

Run-on Sentences

A run-on happens when you put two complete sentences (a subject and its predicate and another subject and its predicate) together in one sentence without separating them properly. There are two main types of run-on sentences:

Fused sentence

- *My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus it is very garlicky.*

Comma Splice

- *My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus, it is very garlicky.*

Ways to fix these errors:

1. You could use a semicolon:

My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus; it is very garlicky.

2. You could use a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so):

My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus, and it is very garlicky.

3. You could use a subordinating conjunction:

My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus because it is very garlicky.

4. You could make it into two separate sentences with a period in between:

My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus. It is very garlicky.

5. You could use an em-dash (a long dash) for emphasis:

My favorite Mediterranean spread is hummus—it is very garlicky.