

Name: _____
Date: _____
Period: _____

English 10
Grammar Unit

Run-on Sentences

A **run-on sentence** is two or more complete sentences that are written as one sentence. Because run-on sentences don't show where one idea ends and another begins, they are confusing to the reader. There are two kinds of run-on sentences: the *fused sentence* and the *comma splice*.

In a **fused sentence**, the writer has joined two or more sentences with no punctuation between them.

RUN ON Measurements originally were related to the sizes of people's hands, arms, and feet an inch was the width of a thumb.

CORRECT Measurements originally were related to the sizes of people's hands, arms, and feet. **An** inch was the width of a thumb.

In a **comma splice**, the writer has joined two or more sentences with only a comma to separate them.

RUN-ON A foot was the length of a person's foot, a yard was the distance from a man's nose to the end of his thumb when his arm was outstretched.

CORRECT A foot was the length of a person's foot. **A** yard was the distance from a man's nose to the end of his thumb when his arm was outstretched.

Writing Note:

To identify run-on sentences, try reading your writing aloud. A natural, distinct pause in your voice usually means that you've come to the end of a thought. If your voice pauses but your sentence keeps going, you may have a run-on.

Another way to spot run-ons is to look for subjects and verbs. This will help you see where one complete thought ends and another one begins.

Revising Run-on Sentences

There are several ways to revise a run-on sentence. As shown in the examples above, you can always make two separate sentences. But you can make a compound sentence if the independent clauses in the run-on are closely related.

1. You can make a compound sentence by adding a comma and a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, yet, or nor*).

RUN-ON Spanish is the official language of Guatemala many Guatemalans speak Maya Indian languages.

REVISED Spanish is the official language of Guatemala, **but** many Guatemalans speak Maya Indian languages.

2. You can make a compound sentence by adding a semicolon.

RUN-ON About half the people in Guatemala are descended from Maya Indians about half have mixed Spanish and Indian ancestry.

REVISED About half the people in Guatemala are descended from Maya Indians; about half have mixed Spanish and Indian ancestry.

3. You can make a compound sentence by adding a semicolon and a **conjunctive adverb** – a word such as *therefore, instead, meanwhile, still, also, nevertheless, or however*. A conjunctive adverb needs to be followed by a comma.

RUN-ON Guatemala's rich soil is its greatest natural resource, agriculture is one of the country's main industries.

REVISED Guatemala's rich soil is its greatest natural resource; **therefore**, agriculture is one of the country's main industries.