

Run-ons

By Dr. Karen Petit, Coordinator of the Writing Center, CCRI Knight Campus

Definition of a Run-on

A run-on is one kind of a sentence structure error. A run-on is made up of two or more independent clauses that are incorrectly put together.

A run-on may lack correct joining words between the clauses:

Grammar exercises often are fun they can improve one's analytical skills.

A run-on also may be incorrectly punctuated, whether or not any joining words are being used:

We can do interactive grammar exercises, we first need to find a good website.

We can do interactive grammar exercises, however we first need to find a good website.

Kinds of Run-ons

1. A **fused sentence** contains two independent clauses that are put together with no joining words and with no punctuation:
Learning grammar by doing online quizzes can be fun interactive quizzes can be found on many websites.
2. A **comma splice** contains two independent clauses that are connected with just a comma:
Learning grammar by doing online quizzes can be fun, interactive quizzes can be found on many websites.

How to Revise Run-ons

1. A semi-colon or a period can be used:
Learning grammar by doing online quizzes can be fun; interactive quizzes can be found on many websites.
Learning grammar by doing online quizzes can be fun. Interactive quizzes can be found on many websites.
2. A coordinating conjunction with a comma can be used:
Grammar exercises often are fun, and they can improve one's analytical skills.
3. Many kinds of coordinate and subordinate structures can be used to restructure one or both of a run-on's clauses, such as these examples illustrate:
Grammar exercises often are fun and can improve one's analytical skills.
Grammar exercises often are fun; furthermore, they can improve one's analytical skills.
Grammar exercises often are fun because they can improve one's analytical skills.
Grammar exercises, which often are fun, can improve one's analytical skills.

Websites with Practice Quizzes

From Capital Community College: <<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/index2.htm>>

From Diana Hacker: <<http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/rules6e/Player/pages/Main.aspx>>

From The Internet TESL Journal: <<http://a4esl.org/>>

From John Langan: <http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0073384100/student_view0/index.html>