Georgia State University | WRITING STUDIO

Avoiding Run-On Sentences and Comma Splices

The Rule for Run-Ons:
Run-ons are those long sentences with two complete thoughts that are not linked by a connecting word (a conjunction) or proper punctuation. There are often difficult to read and to comprehend.

As a refresher:
- An independent clause is a sentence in its own right. It has a subject and verb.
- Independent clauses are linked by conjunctions best remembered by the acronym FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.
- Independent clauses can be divided by proper punctuation such as a semicolon, period, comma, or (rarely) a colon.

Run-on examples:
Incorrect: *Writing Studio tutors do not criticize you they help you write better papers.*
Correct: *Writing Studio tutors do not criticize you. They help you write better papers.*
Correct: *Writing Studio tutors do not criticize you; they help you write better papers.*
Correct: *Writing Studio tutors do not criticize you, but they help you write better papers.*

The Rule for Comma Splices:
When a writer connects two independent clauses with a comma but does not use a coordinating conjunction (remember FANBOYS?), the result is called a comma splice.

Comma splice examples:
Incorrect: *He enjoys exploring ancient ruins, he often runs into trouble during his adventures.*
Correct: *He enjoys exploring ancient ruins, **but** he often runs into trouble during his adventures.*

Incorrect: *Jim spends his time playing video games, Bill uses his time to study.*
Correct: *Jim spends his time playing video games, and Bill uses his time to study.*

Incorrect: *The car down the street is for sale, Sarah is going to test drive it tomorrow.*
Correct: *The car down the street is for sale, so Sarah is going to test drive it tomorrow.*

(FANBOYS: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So)

Need more help? Schedule an appointment with the Writing Studio in 2420, 25 Park Place at
http://gsu.mywconline.net/