**What is a run-on sentence?**

An independent clause is a word group with a subject and a verb that can stand alone as a sentence. A run-on sentence incorrectly joins two independent clauses with no punctuation or conjunction. The following are rules for separating or joining independent clauses.

Example:

*A run-on sentence consists of two or more independent clauses they need to be separated by a period, comma, or semicolon.*

Both “halves” of this sentence could stand alone as individual sentences, so these independent clauses need to be grouped separately by dividing them with a period (.) or semicolon (;), or linking them with a comma (,) and a conjunction.

**How can I tell if I have a run-on sentence?**

1. Does your sentence contain two independent clauses (groups of words that could stand alone as a sentence)? If you answered
   - NO, then you don’t have a run-on. If you answered
   - YES, then go on to number 2.

2. Are the clauses in your sentence joined with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so [hint: remember FAN BOYS])? If you answered
   - YES, then you don’t have a run-on. If you answered
   - NO, then go on to number 3.

3. Are the clauses in your sentence separated by a period or semicolon? If you answered
   - YES, then you don’t have a run-on. If you answered
   - NO, then you need to revise your sentence; it’s a run-on.

**Ok, so I have a run-on. What can I do to fix it?**

You have four choices:

1. Make the independent clauses into separate sentences.
   
   *A run-on sentence consists of two or more independent clauses. They need to be separated by a period, comma, or semicolon.*

2. Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).
   
   *A run-on sentence can be corrected by using a comma and conjunction to link independent clauses; but most sentences have no more than two clauses linked this way.*

3. Use a semicolon.

   *A run-on may be divided by a semicolon into independent clauses; this punctuation suggests the clauses are closely related.*

4. Restructure the sentence so that you no longer have two independent clauses.

   *Although your thoughts may flow without punctuation, readers need independent clauses to be separated by a period, semicolon, or a comma and conjunction.*