RUN-ONS AND COMMA SPLICES

Run-on sentences and comma splices are closely related errors. A **run-on sentence** occurs when multiple independent clauses are unpunctuated or lack connections in a single sentence, while a **comma splice** occurs when a comma is used to separate two independent clauses. Both of these kinds of errors detract from the overall clarity of your writing because they create **faulty sentences** that contain **more than one idea**.

Correcting these errors starts with identifying clauses within sentences, but it also relies on using conjunctions and/or punctuation that accurately reflect the relationship between the information you are presenting.

Comma Splices Explained

A comma splice occurs when **two independent clauses** (complete sentences) are joined with a **comma**, as in the following sentence:

\[ e.g., I am drinking a lot of coffee today, I was up too late last night. \]

While the ideas in the above sentence are somewhat connected in content, each clause is actually independent. It is a comma splice.

Fixing Comma Splices

There are a few ways to resolve comma splices when they occur. Using the above example, we can fix the error by:

1. **Replacing the comma with terminal punctuation**

   Because the clauses on either side of a comma splice are independent, the error can be fixed by replacing the comma with a **period** or a **semicolon**.

   \[ e.g., I am drinking a lot of coffee today. I was up too late last night. \]
   \[ e.g., I am drinking a lot of coffee today; I was up too late last night. \]

In some cases, to provide the above solutions with stronger flow and connection, you can add a **transition word** or **phrase** (with a **comma**) to the second clause:

\[ e.g., She drank her tea too quickly; as a result, she burned the roof of her mouth. \]
Use the acronym F.A.N.B.O.Y.S. to identify conjunctions that you can use to eliminate comma splice errors:

- **F** (for)
- **A** (and)
- **N** (nor)
- **B** (but)
- **O** (or)
- **Y** (yet)
- **S** (so)

**Run-on Sentences Explained**

Run-on sentences occur when **two or more independent clauses** are joined together **without any punctuation or conjunction**, as in the following sentence:

*e.g., The results were tabulated they turned out to be statistically significant.*

1. First independent clause
2. Second independent clause

**Fixing Run-on Sentences**

The strategies for resolving run-on sentences are generally the same as the ones for comma splices; for the above example, we can fix the error by:

1. **Inserting terminal punctuation (with or without a transition) between the two independent clauses**
   
   *e.g., The results were tabulated; ultimately, they turned out to be statistically significant.*

2. **Placing a comma and coordinating conjunction between the two independent clauses**
   
   *e.g., The results were tabulated, and they turned out to be statistically significant.*