

Run-on Sentences

The run-on sentence occurs when two independent clauses (sentences) are joined without proper punctuation to separate them or a conjunction to connect them. Run on sentences keep readers from understanding the sentence, forcing them to re-read it.

Example: The Congo knows civil war it's been going on for over 14 years.

The sentence above fuses two independent clauses, "The Congo knows civil war" and "it's been going on for over 14 years." Each of these sentences can be understood by themselves, which is why it becomes a run on.

Four ways exist to correct this example:

All of the four methods will produce a grammatically correct sentence, but they are not interchangeable. Choosing the best correction method depends on the structure of sentences in the paragraph containing the run-on sentence.

1. Insert a Period:

By using a period to separate them, each sentence exists as its own idea.

Example: The Congo knows civil war. It's been going on for over 14 years.

2. Insert a Semicolon

The semi-colon can be used to show the reader that both sentences are closely related, but still separate ideas.

Example: The Congo knows civil war; it's been going on for over 14 years.

3. Insert a Comma and Coordinating Conjunction

Coordinating conjunctions (also known as FANBOYS: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So) show the reader various relationships between the two independent sentences based on which one is chosen.

Example: The Congo knows civil war, and it's been going on for over 14 years.

4. Turn One Independent Clause into a Dependent Clause

In this example, the subject of the second clause (it's) is replaced by "which." By doing this, the subject of the second clause is implied.

Example: The Congo knows civil war, which has been going on for over 14 years.