Fragments, Run-ons, and Comma Splices

Sentence Fragments
A fragment is an incomplete statement. It’s a statement with too little. Every sentence needs a subject and a verb, and if one of these elements is missing, the meaning is unclear. A fragment is missing either a subject or a verb, making it just a fragment of a sentence rather than a complete statement.

1. The assignment sheet was very unclear. Another reason we were so confused.

Looking at the second sentence, we can tell it’s incomplete. There’s no verb included. It’s easy to tell that the second sentence goes with the first. Combining the sentence with a comma and adding a verb will fix the fragment:

   Ex. The assignment sheet was very unclear, which was another reason we were so confused.

2. We talked to Professor Peterson, and she was quite helpful. Explaining to us her expectations.

   Again, the second sentence is incomplete. This time there’s no subject included. Combining these sentences to show that Professor Peterson is the subject will fix the problem. All we need to add is a comma:

   Ex. We talked to Professor Peterson, and she was quite helpful, explaining to us her expectations.

3. Knowing we did our best.
Sometimes a fragment can’t easily be combined with another sentence. In these cases, the fragment just needs words changed or added. Here are some examples of how to fix this third fragment:

Ex. Knowing we did our best was satisfying

*We knew we did our best.*

*We turned the essay in, knowing we did our best.*

**Run-on Sentences**

A run-on sentence includes two complete independent clauses, or sentences, in one statement without any punctuation. It’s a sentence with too much. A run-on essentially combines two sentences in one. Here is an example of a run-on:

*My sister-in-law was a conservation major she works for the Peace Corps now.*

When reading this sentence, it’s easy to tell that it has two complete statements. The easiest way to correct this run-on would be to divide it into two sentences:

Ex. My sister-in-law was conservation major. She works for the Peace Corps now.

The run-on could also be corrected by adding a comma and a conjunction. (and, but, or, etc):

Ex- My sister-in-law was conservation major, *and* she works for the Peace Corps now.

Another way to correct the run-on would be to use a semicolon, since semicolons combine independent clauses, or sentences, whose ideas are connected:

Ex. My sister-in-law was conservation major; she works for the Peace Corps now.
Comma Splices

Like a Run-on, a comma splice is a sentence with **too much**. A comma splice is a sentence in which two independent clauses, or sentences, are spliced together with a comma. This is incorrect because commas do not work this way. A comma provides only a pause, but independent clauses or sentences, need a full stop between them. Here is an example of a comma splice:

> Charles Dickens is thought of as a Victorian author, his best known works were published during Victoria’s reign.

Just like the run-on, this comma splice has two complete statements in one sentence. Comma splices are corrected in the same ways that run-ons are. The easiest way to correct this comma splice would be to divide it into two sentences.

> Ex.- Charles Dickens is thought of as a Victorian Author. His best known works were published during Victoria’s reign.

This splice could also be corrected by adding a comma and a conjunction.

> Ex.- Charles Dickens is thought of as a Victorian Author, since his best-known works were published during Victoria’s reign.

Another way to correct the comma splice would be to use a semicolon, since semicolons combine independent clauses, or sentences, whose ideas are connected:

> Charles Dickens is thought of as a Victorian author; his best-known works were published during Victoria’s reign.

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