WORKSHOP ON COMMA SPLICES AND RUN-ON (FUSED) SENTENCES

An independent clause is a group of words that contain a subject, verb, and a complete thought. Two independent clauses can be written as two different sentences, be joined with a semicolon, or united with a comma and a coordinating conjunction. They may not be just “run together” or joined with only a comma.

Incorrect	Ted served in the navy for six years he never learned how to swim. RUN-ON SENTENCE
Incorrect	Ted served in the navy for six years, he never learned how to swim. COMMA SPLICE

TO CORRECT, YOU MAY
1. write the two independent clauses as two separate sentences – Ted served in the navy for six years, he never learned how to swim
2. join the two with a semicolon – Ted served in the navy for six years; he never learned how to swim.
3. use a comma and a coordinating conjunction to join the two clauses – Ted served in the navy for six years, but he never learned how to swim. Use one of the FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)

To identify run-ons or comma splices, take two steps:
1. Read the sentence carefully. Determine if it is actually two independent clauses.
   Carrie moved to Manhattan but came home after two months.
   Sara works two shifts she wants another job.
2. If you have two or more independent clauses, determine if they should be connected. Is there a logical relationship between them? What is the best way of the three ways of connecting them?
   Sara works two shifts, but she wants another job.

Don’t forget to check for a subject, verb, and a complete thought in order to identify an independent clause. If a group of words lacks one of the above, it is a FRAGMENT if written as a sentence.

Although he was running a fever all day. FRAGMENT
Trapped by falling debris after the earthquake. FRAGMENT

If you have one independent clause and one dependent clause, do NOT separate into two sentences, use a semicolon, or join with a comma and a conjunction.

Because I missed the bus, I was late for school. (One dependent clause and one independent clause. If the dependent clause comes first, use a comma after it.)
I was late for school because I missed the bus. (One independent clause and one dependent clause. If the independent clause comes first, do not use a comma.)

Many dependent clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions such as after, although, because, if, since, when and while.

Connelly, Mark. Get Writing.2007; The Thomson Corporation.
Writing Center Workshop—Sentence Errors!
Practice identifying and correction comma splices, and fused/run ons

- Determine whether number of clauses—look for main verb and subject
- Determine whether the clause(s) is (are) dependent—look for introductory word (subordination conjunction or an interrogative without a question)
- Look at punctuation.

1. The laundry has been done I did it yesterday

2. Harry has only one tooth, perhaps he will get some more soon

3. He picked up his bag and walked out, he felt lousy.

4. The dog chewed its bone then he buried it

5. He first decided that he wanted to leave; when he met his new neighbor

6. Tom plays tennis, Will plays golf

7. I don’t want to give you the wrong impression I like cats.

8. Because John is always late for work.

9. Driving the car is fast and comfortable riding a bicycle is better for one's health

10. Yesterday I bought a new back pack, I could afford it because it was on sale.
IDENTIFYING FRAGMENTS, COMMA SPLICES, AND RUN-ONS

No. of fragments _______ No. of comma splices _______ No. of run-on sentences _______

Booker T. Washington was born a slave, he rose to become a leading African American educator and leader. He headed the Tuskegee Institute and made many speaking tours in the North to gain support for black causes. His autobiography, *Up from Slavery*, an international best-seller. Washington toured European capitals, and he became, after the death of Frederick Douglass, the most well-known black figure in America. Washington became the first African American to be invited by the president to visit the White House he advised Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Howard Taft on racial issues.

Washington first received national attention and national criticism after he addressed the 1895 Atlanta Exposition his speech was later denounced as the "Atlanta Compromise." Speaking before an audience of Southern whites, Washington proposed that blacks could advance economically but remain socially separate. This approach was widely supported by whites Washington was criticized by black leaders for accepting segregation.

Washington's supporters defended his position as being practical. Given the political realities of the South. His emphasis on self-reliance and black business ownership stimulated the growth of African American enterprise. Washington built a powerful organization in his later years it was challenged by newer organizations like the NAACP. Booker T. Washington died in 1915, in 1940 he became the first African American to appear on a U.S. postage stamp.
SENTENCE ERRORS

• FRAGMENT – PUNCTUATED LIKE AN INDEPENDENT CLAUSE, BUT IT IS NOT.
  TO CORRECT: CHANGE THE PUNCTUATION TO CONNECT TO AN INDEPENDENT CLAUSE OR MAKE THE FRAGMENT INDEPENDENT BY OMITTING THE SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION.

• COMMA SPLICE – TWO INDEPENDENT CLAUSES INCORRECTLY JOINED WITH A COMMA.
  TO CORRECT: CHANGE THE COMMA TO A PERIOD OR SEMICOLON OR ADD A FANBOYS CONJUNCTION.

• FUSED OR RUN-ON – TWO INDEPENDENT SENTENCES INCORRECTLY WRITTEN TOGETHER WITHOUT ANY PUNCTUATION. TO CORRECT: ADD THE CORRECT PUNCTUATION OF A PERIOD, SEMICOLON, OR COMMA AND A FANBOYS CONJUNCTION.