The Complete Sentence Quick Guide

In order to avoid common grammatical errors, you must first know what makes up a complete sentence.

**Elements of a Complete Sentence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Complete thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person or thing doing the action</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Any additional information needed for the sentence to make sense</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: The social worker visited her clients home.

If any of the elements (subject, verb, or complete thought) are missing, the sentence is considered a fragment, which is another word for an incomplete sentence.

Example of fragment sentence: The social worker said.

**Run-ons**

Sometimes, you will want to combine two or more complete sentences together in the same sentence. When these two sentences are not joined with punctuation or coordinating conjunction, they become a run-on. The two main types of run-ons are:

**Comma splice**

A comma splice occurs when two complete sentences are join together by a comma.

Example: The evidence from the study was conclusive, it showed that the mother’s depression affected the child.

**Fused sentence**

A fused sentence occurs when two complete sentences are joined by no punctuation.

Example: The evidence from the study was conclusive it showed that the mother’s depression affected the child.
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To fix a comma splice to fused sentence, try one of three things:

1. Add a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so). An easy way to remember coordinating conjunctions is to use the acronym FANBOYS.

   **Example:** The evidence from the study was conclusive, **and** it showed that the mother’s depression affected the child.

2. Use a semicolon.

   **Example:** The evidence from the study was conclusive; it showed that the mother’s depression affected the child.

3. Separate the two sentences with a period.

   **Example:** The evidence from the study was conclusive. **It** showed that the mother’s depression affected the child.