

Run-on Sentences and How to Fix Them

Problem #1: FANBOYS Error

To join two sentences with a coordinating conjunction—also called the FANBOYS conjunctions—you must use a comma before the conjunction.

Here is an example of an incorrect sentence with only a FANBOYS conjunction:

Marty found money but he ate it.

To correct such a sentence, insert a comma before the FANBOYS conjunction:

Marty found money, but he ate it.

<u>Coordinating Conjunctions</u>
For
And
Nor
But
Or
Yet
So

Problem #2: Fused Sentence

Do NOT join sentences with neither punctuation nor a conjunction. This is called a fused sentence.

Here is an example of an incorrect fused sentence:

That squirrel is in the attic again we must get it out.

To fix the sentence, either write it as two sentences, or join it properly with a comma and a FANBOYS conjunction, as below:

- 1) That squirrel is in the attic again. We must get it out.
- 2) That squirrel is in the attic again, and we must get it out.

(over)

Problem #3: Comma Splice

Do NOT join sentences with just a comma. This is called a comma splice.

Here is an example of a sentence with an incorrect comma splice:

That squirrel is in the attic again, we must get it out.

Fix it in the same manner as you would fix a fused sentence. See Problem #2: Fused Sentence.

Problem #4: Stringy Sentence

Even when using a comma with each FANBOYS conjunction, avoid linking three or more complete sentences while repeating a conjunction. This often creates a stringy sentence.

Here is an example of an incorrect stringy sentence:

The first part of my day was fine, and the second was okay, and the third was okay, too.

To correct a stringy sentence, either break it into separate sentences, or break it and combine parts of it PROPERLY so that no more than two sentences are linked together.

- 1) The first part of my day was fine. The second was okay. The third was okay, too.
- 2) The first part of my day was fine, and the second was okay. The third part was okay, too.
- 3) The first part of my day was fine. The second was okay, and the third was okay, too.

Note: If each conjunction is repeated only once, it is possible to connect more than two sentences without creating a stringy sentence.

Example of multiple sentences connected correctly:

The first part of my day was fine, and the second was okay, but the third was fantastic, so I had a good day overall.