

A run-on sentence is a sentence in which two or more independent clauses (complete sentences) are joined without the correct punctuation or conjunction. A run-on is one incorrect sentence that should actually be broken into two (or more) sentences.

Example: It is nearly half past five we cannot reach town before dark.

Correction: It is nearly half past five. We cannot reach town before dark.

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There are a few types of punctuation one can use to separate clauses in a sentence. Here are some basics of when to use which punctuation mark:

Comma ( , )

- Used to separate elements in a series (three or more things)  
i.e. Curtis got out of bed, brushed his teeth, and went downstairs.
- Used to connect two independent clauses  
i.e. I want to go to the mall with you, but I have to do my homework.

Colon ( : )

- Most often used before a list  
i.e. I need to get these things at the store: milk, eggs, bread, and soap.

Semicolon ( ; )

- Used to separate clauses that are closely related. The second part of the sentence, after the semicolon, explains the first part.  
i.e. My brother hates going to bed early; he's afraid he'll miss out on something.
- Used to sort out a huge list  
i.e. The players are from Richmond, Virginia; Boston, Massachusetts; Providence, Rhode Island; and Orlando, Florida.

Remember, a good sentence must:

- 1) Begin with a capital letter
  - 2) End in a period, exclamation or question mark
  - 3) Contain a verb
  - 4) Express a complete idea
  - 5) Make sense standing by itself
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Correct the punctuation errors in these run-on sentences:

1. I love to write papers I would write one every day if I could
2. Darien likes to play sports he's on a baseball team.
3. The weather is really nice today we should go outside.

4. You weren't back in time I had to go to the concert alone
5. Please stop chewing so loud I hate it.
6. I want to go to college in Maine I heard it's beautiful there.
7. I am going to the store to buy milk crackers cheese and yogurt.
8. I need 2 hours to finish my book there are only a few chapters left.
9. The summer is a great time to do outdoor activities. Soccer, swimming, and basketball.
10. I wanted to go to the party I had cheer practice at the same exact time though.
11. Mom wants you to get the following from the mall, a birthday present for Sarah, lipstick, and a movie for tonight.
12. The recipe calls for milk. 2 cups.
13. Kevin doesn't want to see the movie tonight: He has a big test to study for.
14. The professor handed out the tests. Set the timer and told the class to begin.
15. When her phone went off in class she decided not to pick it up.

## Answer Key:

The following are suggested answers, although there are multiple answers to the previous questions.

1. I love to write papers; I would write one every day if I could.
2. Darien likes to play sports. He's on a baseball team.
3. The weather is really nice today; we should go outside.
4. You weren't back in time. I had to go to the concert alone.
5. Please stop chewing so loud; I hate it.
6. I want to go to college in Maine; I heard it's beautiful there.
7. I am going to the store to buy the following: milk, crackers, cheese, and yogurt.
8. I need 2 hours to finish my book; there are only a few chapters left.
9. The summer is a great time to do outdoor activities: soccer, swimming, and basketball.
10. I wanted to go to the party. I had cheer practice at the same exact time though.
11. Mom wants you to get the following from the mall: a birthday present for Sarah, lipstick, and a movie for tonight.
12. The recipe calls for milk: 2 cups.
13. Kevin doesn't want to see the movie tonight; he has a big test to study for.
14. The professor handed out the tests, set the timer, and told the class to begin.
15. When her phone went off in class, she decided not to pick it up.