

THE FUSED SENTENCE

Recognize a fused sentence when you find one.

A fused sentence, also called a *run-on*, occurs when a writer has connected two **main clauses** with no punctuation. A main clause provides a complete thought, so you cannot have two such clauses carelessly collide in one **sentence**.

The error has this pattern:

Main Clause + ∅ + **Main Clause** .

Here is an example:

Driving home from school, Brett vowed to protect the fragile ecosystem all the while the tires of his SUV flattened the toads hopping on the wet streets.

The first main clause is ***Brett vowed to protect the fragile ecosystem***, and the second is ***the tires of his SUV flattened the toads hopping on the wet streets***. Notice that the two clauses run together with no punctuation.

Know how to fix a fused sentence.

Correcting a fused sentence is easy. Just choose one of these four strategies:

PERIOD + CAPITAL LETTER

First, you can break the error into two separate sentences, like this:

Driving home from school, Brett vowed to protect the fragile ecosystem. All the while, the tires of his SUV flattened the toads hopping on the wet streets.

COMMA + COORDINATING CONJUNCTION

Another good option is to connect the two main clauses with a **comma** and a **coordinating conjunction**:

Driving home from school, Brett vowed to protect the fragile ecosystem, **yet** all the while, the tires of his SUV flattened the toads hopping on the wet streets.

SEMICOLON

You can also use a **semicolon** (;), a mark of punctuation as strong as a period:

Driving home from school, Brett vowed to protect the fragile ecosystem; all the while, the tires of his SUV flattened the toads hopping on the wet streets.

SUBORDINATION

Your last option is to use a **subordinate conjunction**. This method reduces one of the two main clauses to a **subordinate clause**, an *incomplete* thought:

Driving home from school, Brett vowed to protect the fragile ecosystem **as** the tires of his SUV flattened the toads hopping on the wet streets.

All four strategies above will fix a fused sentence. Each individual error that you correct, however, will require that you analyze all the elements—length of passage, length of other sentences, repetition of words, cadence, etc.—as you pick the best strategy for that specific piece of writing.

