Sentence Fragments, Run-on Sentences, and Comma Splices

Sentence Fragments
A sentence fragment is a portion of a sentence punctuated as a sentence.

A sentence fragment often lacks a subject, a verb, or both.

Fragment: Walked toward the street. [lacks subject]
Revised: He walked toward the street.

Fragment: The telephone with two outside lines. [lacks verb]
Revised: The telephone has two outside lines.

Fragment: A new television. [lacks both a verb and a subject]
Revised: Susan purchased a new television.

A sentence fragment is a subordinate clause not attached to a complete sentence.

Fragment: Since I enrolled at Tulsa Community College.
Revised: Since I enrolled at Tulsa Community College, I have declared a major.

Three Tests to Check for Sentence Fragments

1. Is there a verb in the group of words?

   Fragment: The office building at the end of the street.
   Revised: The office building was built at the end of the street.

2. Is there a subject in the group of words?

   Fragment: Accepted the job with enthusiasm.
   Revised: Sam accepted the job with enthusiasm.

3. Does the group of words start with a subordinating term and lack an independent clause?

   Fragment: As Jane left the house.
   Revised: As Jane left the house, it began to snow.

Look for the following subordination words: after, although, as, because, before, even, though, if, once, since, so that, unless, until, when, whenever, where, whether, while
**Run-on Sentences**

A run-on sentence consists of two complete sentences not separated by punctuation. (Remember, a complete sentence has both a subject and a verb.)

To revise, insert a period, semicolon, or a comma with a coordinating conjunction.

**Run-on:**  I tried to feed my pet gorilla a tortilla he refused my treat.

**Revisions:**  I tried to feed my pet gorilla a tortilla. **He** refused my treat.  
[period inserted]

I tried to feed my pet gorilla a tortilla; he refused my treat.  
[semicolon inserted]

I tried to feed my pet gorilla a tortilla, **but** he refused my treat.  
[coordinating conjunction inserted]

Common coordinating conjunctions: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so* (FANBOYS)

**Comma Splices**

Comma splices consist of two complete sentences that are improperly connected by a comma. To revise, replace the comma with a period, semicolon, a comma with a coordinating conjunction, or a subordinating conjunction.

**Comma Splice:** I like pizza with anchovies, he likes pizza with pineapple.

**Revisions:**  I like pizza with anchovies. **He** likes pizza with pineapple.  
[period inserted]

I like pizza with anchovies; he likes pizza with pineapple.  
[semicolon inserted]

I like pizza with anchovies, **but** he likes pizza with pineapple  
[coordinating conjunction inserted]

I like pizza with anchovies **while** he likes pizza with pineapple.  
[coordinating conjunction inserted]

**While** I like pizza with anchovies, he likes pizza with pineapple.  
[subordinate conjunction inserted]

Common subordinating conjunctions: *after, although, as, because, before, even, though, if, once, since, so that, unless, until, when, whenever, where, whether, while*