

Writing and Tutorial Center

Run-On Sentences and Comma Splices

A BROOKLYN DESIGNER'S GUIDE

(Because sentences—like prints—shouldn't smudge together.)

WHAT'S A RUN-ON?

A run-on sentence happens when two or more independent clauses (complete sentences) are joined incorrectly.

My friend silk-screened a T-shirt I designed it went viral on TikTok.

My friend silk-screened a T-shirt I designed. It went viral on TikTok.

WHAT'S A COMMA SPLICE?

A comma splice is a type of run-on where the two independent clauses are glued together with just a comma—which is not strong enough.

The studio smelled like oil paint, we opened all the windows.

The studio smelled like oil paint; we opened all the windows.

SPOT THE SMUDGE

Underline the comma splices and run-ons in the following sentences. Then, rewrite each using one of these fixes:

Period (.)

Semicolon (;)

Em Dash (—)

The MFA crit went on for three hours nobody cried this time.

I took the G to Greenpoint, my sketchbook was on the roof of the train.

She embroidered the word “ghost” on a thrifted curtain it looked amazing in the installation.

We ran out of risograph ink, luckily someone had some magenta left over from last semester.

The mural on Wyckoff is finished it glows under the streetlight.

I wanted to use gold leaf, it cost more than my monthly MetroCard.

YOU'RE THE EDITOR

Rewrite these poorly-punctuated sentences to make them grammatically correct. Keep the creative voice—but fix the punctuation!

My collage was supposed to be dreamy it ended up looking like a nightmare.

They carved lino blocks all night, the floor was covered in shavings.

We watched Koyaanisqatsi in class today I think my brain is still vibrating.

There was a pigeon in the print lab it walked across someone's monotype.

MIX IT UP

Now, try fixing these two different ways. First with a period. Then with a semicolon or dash.

The gallery smelled like fresh drywall, the show wasn't even open yet.

I tried to critique gently the painting looked like a melted emoji.

BONUS: ART-IS-TIC LICENSE

Write your own comma splice or run-on sentence about something you've seen in Brooklyn. Then rewrite it correctly two different ways.

My messy version:

Fixed version 1:

Fixed version 2: