Identify Run-On Sentences

1. Focus

Explain Run-On Sentences

Say: A run-on sentence is not necessarily a long sentence that goes on and on. It can be a long sentence, but it can also be short. A run-on sentence is a sentence that does not have the correct punctuation. For example, “My grandma lived next door my aunt lived across the street.” There are two complete clauses here. Luckily, there are a lot of ways to fix a run-on sentence. Just two ways include adding a period to make two sentences (“My grandma lived next door. My aunt lived across the street.”), or adding a comma and a conjunction (“My grandma lived next door, but my aunt lived across the street.”) Run-on sentences are all too common, but very easy to avoid! Today I’m going to show you how to identify and fix run-on sentences, so you can make sure that your writing is always punctuated correctly.

Model Identifying Run-On Sentences

Display the modeling text (without revisions) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to listen for run-on sentences as you read the passage from “From Colombia, 1969” aloud.

We lived in a neighborhood with loads of kids. We we had a very large extended family living near us. There were more than twenty cousins right in the neighborhood! Life was great, and then I turned eight.

Modeling Text

Say: There are two complete thoughts in the first sentence, but it’s hard to understand them because they are written as a run-on sentence. (Reread the first sentence.) What can we do to fix it? We can add a period after the first clause, and capitalize the first word of the new sentence: “We lived in a neighborhood with loads of kids. We had a very large extended family living near us.” Now the sentences are easy to understand. Listen to the last sentence again: “Life was great then I turned eight.” Even though this sentence is short, it contains two complete clauses and lacks punctuation. We could divide this into two sentences like we did in the first example, but a better solution might be to add a comma and the conjunction and: “Life was great, and then I turned eight.” This makes the relationship between the two ideas clearer.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Learn about run-on sentences.
• Practice identifying and correcting run-on sentences.
• Discuss how they can apply this strategy to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Mentor text: “From Colombia, 1969” from Newcomers to America
• Chart paper and markers
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text and practice text (without revisions) onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.
2. Rehearse

Practice Identifying Run-On Sentences

Display the practice text (without revisions) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

I feel like New York City has always been my home. After after all, my English is close to perfect. I doubt that anyone could detect an accent, and only a few people know that I’m originally from Colombia.

Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner to identify the run-on sentences and revise them. Remind students that they can divide run-ons into two sentences or add punctuation and a conjunction. Pairs should write down their sentences and be prepared to read them to the class and explain how correcting run-on sentences improved the text.

Share Practice Sentences

Bring students together and invite partners to read aloud their sentences and explain their revisions. Discuss whether other methods of fixing the run-ons would have worked as well. Record students’ sentences and post these as models for students to use as they draft or revise their memoirs.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned what run-on sentences are and how to correct them. As you draft and revise your memoirs, watch for run-on sentences. Remember, you can fix them by dividing them into two or more sentences, or by adding punctuation and a conjunction, such as a comma and the word and.

Encourage students to identify and correct run-on sentences in their memoirs. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share examples of run-on sentences they were able to correct.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

While other students complete the partner practice activity, work with beginning ELs to practice saying and writing complete sentences using color words. Write the name of each color using the corresponding color marker on chart paper for students to refer to. Point to each color and ask students to name a classroom object of that color. Then help them form a complete sentence using the name of the color. For example: I have a red pencil. She has a red skirt. He has a blue book. Use gestures to ensure comprehension. Write the sentences on paper and read them aloud with students.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner activity.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: conjunction/la conjunción; memoirs/las memorias; punctuation/la puntuación.