Run-on Sentences

To use this handout, you must first understand the difference between an independent clause and a dependent clause.

- An independent clause is a phrase that contains a subject and verb and that can stand alone as a complete sentence.

- A dependent clause is a phrase that does not contain a subject and a verb, cannot stand alone as a complete sentence, and must be reworded or attached to an independent clause to form a complete sentence.

A run-on sentence is two independent clauses that have been put together as a single sentence. Without changing the wording or adding proper punctuation, it can be difficult to determine where one sentence ends and the next sentence begins.

Ways to identify and correct run-on sentences:

- Add a period, turning each independent clause into a sentence:
  
  Run-on: My dog is a creature of habit she expects me to feed her promptly at six o'clock.
  Sentence: My dog is a creature of habit. She expects me to feed her promptly at six o'clock.

- Add a semicolon between two independent clauses that have been run-on:
  
  Run-on: She is also demanding she barks loudly and persistently until her food is served.
  Sentence: She is also demanding; she barks loudly and persistently until her food is served.

- Add a comma plus a coordinating conjunction (i.e., for, and, or, nor, but, so, or yet) between the two independent clauses:
  
  Run-on: I scold her when she barks she pays no attention to me.
  Sentence: I scold her when she barks, but she pays no attention to me.

- Add a "transition" word such as although, therefore, however, consequently, and for example (plus a comma after those words) to connect the two independent clauses into one complete sentence.
  
  Run-on: Barking is an annoying habit she's still a great pet.
  Sentence: Barking is an annoying habit; however, she is still a great pet.