

Fused Sentences

Definition of a fused sentence: A fused sentence (FS) is similar to a comma splice in that you have joined two sentences (independent clauses), but this time without any punctuation at all.

Example of a fused sentence: Americans seldom acknowledge other nationalities' presence on this planet one must wonder if the "global economy" is going to remedy or exacerbate this problem.

Analysis of a fused sentence: If a fused sentence is two sentences joined without any punctuation, then you have to understand what a complete sentence is.

Specifically, a complete sentence must:

- 1) have a subject (even if implied);
- 2) have a verb; and
- 3) convey a complete thought.

You can see that "Americans seldom acknowledge other nationalities' presence on this planet" is a complete sentence; there is a subject, "Americans," and a verb, "acknowledge," and it conveys a complete thought. Likewise, "one must wonder if the 'global economy' is going to remedy or exacerbate this problem" is a complete sentence. In this case, "one" is the subject and "wonder" is the verb. And again the thought is complete; this clause could stand alone.

Detection of a fused sentence: Once you understand what a sentence is and what a fused sentence is, you probably will begin to see your own errors fairly easily. To help detect fused sentences, consider reading the last sentence of your paper first, then reading the next-to-last sentence, and so on, moving through the paper backwards. The key here is to look at your writing objectively and to focus on grammar rather than content or the flow of your words. Be especially watchful of long sentences (although long sentences ARE NOT necessarily wrong!); look carefully to determine if you have merged two independent clauses.

Correction of a fused sentence: To correct a fused sentence, you have to eliminate the problem of having two complete sentences, two independent clauses. You can do this in a number of ways:

- Use a semi-colon to join the two independent clauses.
Example: Americans seldom acknowledge other nationalities' presence on this planet; one must wonder if the "global economy" is going to remedy or exacerbate this problem.
- Use a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) to make one clause dependent.
Example: Americans seldom acknowledge other nationalities' presence on this planet, so one must wonder if the "global economy" is going to remedy or exacerbate this problem.

- Subordinate one of the independent clauses.

Example: Because Americans seldom acknowledge other nationalities' presence on this planet, one must wonder if the "global economy" is going to remedy or exacerbate this problem.

- Use a period to create two sentences.

Example: Americans seldom acknowledge other nationalities' presence on this planet. One must wonder if the "global economy" is going to remedy or exacerbate this problem.

As you can see here, by adding coordinating conjunctions and subordinators to eliminate a fused sentence, you may actually enhance your sentence's meaning by clarifying the connection between the two ideas. Even if you seldom fuse sentences, using semi-colons, conjunctions, and subordinators should increase the fluidity of your writing.

Fused Sentence Practice: Proofread the following paragraph for fused sentences. Correct them in any way that you feel helps the paragraph make sense. (Watch out that you don't add commas to connect the sentences--you would be making another major error, a comma splice.)

University students must master the art of time management this is especially difficult for first-year students because many have been under their parents' close supervision, they are shocked to discover the responsibility which accompanies independence suddenly these individuals must choose to attend classes and study unfortunately for many the social scene is more appealing than the academic they may become so far behind in their courses that they cannot recover. A course in study skills might prove helpful however, accepting responsibility is the only real answer.