Avoiding Run-on Sentences

VOCABULARY

Independent Clause

A group of words, including a subject and verb, which can stand alone as a complete sentence.

Subordinate Clause

A group of words, including a subject and verb, which cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.

Coordinating Conjunction

A word that joins together two or more equal ideas in a sentence (and, but, or, nor, for, so, and yet).

THE RULE

A comma and a coordinating conjunction OR a semi-colon must be used to join two independent clauses into one sentence.

PRACTICE Fixing a Comma Splice

Error: Many students believe a monster lives in Cedar Lake, the administration laughs at the idea.

Correction: Many students believe a monster lives in Cedar Lake, **but** the administration laughs at the idea.

Correction: Although many students believe a monster lives in Cedar Lake, the administration laughs at the idea. (*Note how you can subordinate one clause to fix the comma splice*).

PRACTICE Fixing a Fused Sentence

Error: Other students want to see the monster's photograph posted on Facebook they could then make the photograph go viral in one short evening.

Correction: Other students want to see the monster's photograph posted on Facebook; they could then make the photograph go viral in one short evening. (A semi-colon joins two complete thoughts that relate to each other.)

Correction: Other students want to see the monster's photograph posted on Facebook, so they could then make the photograph go viral in one short evening. (A coordinating conjunction and comma fuse two sentences properly.)

