Avoiding Fragments and Run Ons

A sentence consists of a subject, a verb, and a complete thought. Without these three elements, you are writing a fragment, or a piece of a sentence.

For example:

The cat

This is a fragment. It consists of only a subject.

However:

The cat returned home.

This is a complete sentence. It has a subject and a verb. It also expresses a complete thought.

If any of these elements are missing, correct your fragment by adding all necessary parts.

There are four types of sentences:

1. The simple sentence meets the basic requirements of a sentence. It has a subject, a verb, and expresses a complete thought.
2. A compound sentence has two or more simple sentences (or independent clauses) joined together with a coordinating conjunction. Coordinating conjunctions are: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so (FANBOYS).

For example:

The cat returned, but its owner had moved.

1. A complex sentence consists of an independent clause and a dependent clause.

For example:

Although the cat returned, its owner had moved.

1. A compound-complex sentence consists of both a compound and a complex sentence.

For example:

Although the cat returned, its owner had moved, so it found a new home.

If you have a run on sentence in which you add two simple sentences together, whether they are fused or separated by a comma, model your sentence after one of these previous sentence types to correct it.

For example:

The cat returned, its owner had moved.

Should be:

The cat returned, but its owner had moved.