Avoiding Run-Ons and Fragments

The Run-On Sentence

*What it is:* A combination of two or more sentences without appropriate punctuation and/or conjunctions to connect them together, which prevents your reader from “taking a breath.”

*Example:* “Bob loves to play piano he is a talented musician.”

*What you can do about it:*

1. Split the run-on into two complete sentences with a period.
   “Bob loves to play piano. **He** is a talented musician.”

2. Join the two independent clauses with a semicolon.
   “Bob loves to play piano; **he** is a talented musician.”

3. Join the two clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction.
   “Bob loves to play piano, **and** he is a talented musician.”

4. Add a subordinating conjunction and a comma.
   “**Because** Bob loves to play piano, he is a talented musician.”

5. Join the two clauses with a semicolon and a transitional word (usually a conjunctive adverb or introductory adverb).
   “Bob loves to play piano; **incidentally,** he is a talented musician.”

The Sentence Fragment

*What it is:* A partial sentence, usually a dependent clause, that lacks one or more parts of a complete sentence, preventing your reader from understand what point is being made.

*Example:* “Because Bob plays piano.”

*What you can do about it:*

1. Include the missing subject or verb
   “Plays piano.” → “**Bob** plays piano.”

2. Add an independent clause to support the dependent clause
   “Because Bob plays piano.” →
   “Because Bob plays piano, **he can easily entertain a crowd.**”
   “playing the piano” →
   “**Bob entertained us all night,** playing the piano.”

3. Remove the coordinating conjunction or add another independent clause to connect with the coordinating conjunction (for, and, but, or, yet, so)
   “So Bob played the piano.” →
   “Bob played the piano.”
   or  “**We wanted to be entertained,** so Bob played the piano.”