Sentence Structure
Fragments, Run-Ons, and Comma Splices

Sentence Fragments

⇒ A sentence fragment is not a complete sentence. It can be missing a subject, a verb, or a complete thought.
⇒ To fix a fragment, add what is missing.
[See G5 in A Writer’s Reference for additional information.]

FRAGMENT (no subject): Ran to the store.
CORRECTED (subject added): My mother ran to the store.

FRAGMENT (no verb): My friend at school.
CORRECTED (verb added): My friend at school bumped her head.

FRAGMENT (not a complete thought): Because it rained.
CORRECTED (complete thought added): Because it rained, I got wet.

Run-On Sentences

⇒ A run-on sentence runs too many sentences together without punctuation.
⇒ To fix a run-on, add punctuation.
[See G6 in A Writer’s Reference for additional information.]

RUN-ON: I like cake I also like ice cream.
CORRECTED: I like cake. I also like ice cream.
CORRECTED: I like cake, and I also like ice cream.
CORRECTED: I like cake; I also like ice cream.

Comma Splices

⇒ A comma splice recognizes the need for separation of ideas but inappropriately tries to connect 2 sentences with a comma alone. A comma does many things, but it is not strong enough (by itself) to connect 2 sentences.
[See G6 in A Writer’s Reference for additional information.]

COMMA SPLICE: I have three cats, I have three gerbils.
CORRECTED: I have three cats. I have three gerbils.
CORRECTED: I have three cats, and I have three gerbils.
CORRECTED: I have three cats; I also have three gerbils.