

The Run-on Sentence: From Here To Eternity & What if Someone Doesn't Like My Cause: Bringing Out One's Unique Features

If you find your sentences filled with commas, and they went from one topic to another, then you, like many people, may be guilty of writing run-on sentences.

The run-on sentence is annoying. The run-on is boring. Most important, utilizing run-ons in your work is a sure-fire way of losing your reader.

The run-on works in one instance – if it is part of one of your character's personality. For instance, if you are writing dialogue spoken by a typical teenage girl, run-ons would be acceptable (“Well, we went, you know, to the mall, and, like, we tried on some clothes and makeup, and then Sheila saw this really cute guy in The Gap, so we went over and like, started talking, and ...” you get the picture.)

Curing a mania for run-ons may be as simple as implementing an outline for your work. Break each topic down into logical, organized subtopics and details. Relegate each thought to a single sentence. When a topic or subtopic requires further discussion, create unique sentences containing each of these details (or group related details) after your lead-in sentence.

If your topic ultimately branches out to other major topics, reference those topics in your initial paragraph, but address them in other paragraphs (or chapters.) This acts as a “teaser” to your audience, leaves them wanting more, and motivates them to read on.

These instructions sound like high school stuff, but I recently edited a college-level text written by a Ph D that was fraught with run-ons. The subject matter was economics. The combination was deadly from the standpoint of maintaining consciousness. So for the sake of your readers, form a working relationship with semicolons and periods, and leave run-ons to the Valley Girls.

What if Someone Doesn't Like My Cause: Bringing Out One's Unique Features

What if somebody doesn't like my cause? Or religion? Or hobby? Or nationality? Or height?

I can't believe how many times clients have said to me, “But what if the adcom doesn't like _____ [fill-in-the-blank: tennis players, Iranians, Christians, Republicans, other].

I'll tell you something. I can guarantee that somebody somewhere won't like something that is important to you. Does that mean you shouldn't write about it?

No.

Except for criminal pursuits, your distinctive interests, special experiences, and background distinguish you from your competition. Those singular passions tell the admissions committees that you can contribute a unique perspective to your class. Leaving out those exceptional elements from your essay and application may mean that you don't trigger a mildly negative reaction in a few individuals who “don't like” whatever it is you are writing about. The omission will also ensure that your essay(s), personality, and individual viewpoint blur into the great, gray mass of blob-like applicants. Far more damaging. Completely counter-productive.

Bring out your distinct values, causes, and motivations by discussing your initiatives and accomplishments in different arenas. I do, however, have one caveat: No soapboxes please. Don't preach to the adcoms. Liked this tip? The above tip and many, many more can be found in [Submit a Stellar Application: 42 Terrific Tips to Help You Get Accepted](#).

About the Author

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