

## Knowing When to Break It Off . . . fused sentences, comma splices, and paragraphing

When independent clauses are joined incorrectly, the result can be confusing or distracting to the reader. Often a comma splice or a fused sentence forces the reader to reread sentences several times in order to figure out what they mean. The following paragraph suffers from several errors. As you read through it, see if you can guess if each sentence is correct, or if it needs correction. After you guess, hold your cursor over the comment icon to see if your guess is correct.

People who climb the rugged mountains of northwestern United States and Canada are highly skilled and extremely courageous, performing feats that most of us would never dare attempt. Waiting for them on the highest peaks, however, are ordinary-looking animals who move easily from rock to rock, they climb in areas that are impossible for humans to reach. These creatures, they make adventurers looks like amateurs, are mountain goats. What does the mountain goat have that even the best climbers do not have? Plenty! In the first place, the goats' legs are very short, keeping their bodies close to the ground and improving their balance, at the end of those legs are hooves made of leather-like pads surrounded by firm, hard edges. The pads keep the goats from slipping, the edges help them dig into ice and snow. Travel is not the only use for these hooves, however, they also come in handy when the goats get hungry. It is not easy to find plants to eat when there is a ten-inch snowcover. Human hands are no match for the mountain goat's hooves nor are human-made clothes a match for the mountain goat's coat. Two layers of hair, one of them has hollow strands that hold heat, protect the animal in temperatures as low as -50 degrees. The protection and the ability that nature provides free for the mountain goat would cost a human being hundreds of dollars and months of training. And even with the clothing and the skill, the best a human can hope for is to get close enough to catch a glimpse of the sturdy mountain goat casually strolling through terrain that would challenge the bravest climber.