

The Comma Splice Repair Guide

What is a comma splice?

Comma splices occur when two independent clauses are joined by a comma. Independent clauses are complete thoughts; in other words, they are sentences that can stand alone.

How can I identify comma splices in my writing?

Whenever a comma appears in your writing, check the environment of that comma. If an independent clause is written on both the left and right sides of the comma, you have a comma splice.

I found a comma splice! How can I fix it?

There are five ways to correct a comma splice, each with different punctuation. The method that you choose will depend upon the length of your two independent clauses and the types of sentences that you have used in the rest of your paragraph. Remember, your writing will always be better if you vary sentence types.

Here is a practice comma splice:

The students are working on sentence structure, they are learning how to repair comma splices.

Here are five ways to fix it:

1. Replace the comma with a period and capitalize the first word of the second independent clause. This method works best with longer sentences. If used with two short sentences, the result may sound choppy.

The students are working on sentence structure. They are learning how to repair comma splices.

2. Replace the comma with a semi-colon. If your sentences are closely related, this method works well. If you can replace the semi-colon with *and*, then the semi-colon is a good choice.

The students are working on sentence structure; they are learning how to repair comma splices.

3. Add a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS = *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) after the comma.

The students are working on sentence structure, so they are learning how to repair comma splices.

4. Use a conjunctive adverb or transitional phrase, such as *therefore, additionally, or however*, in one of two ways:
 - a. Put a semi-colon after the first independent clause. Add an uncapitalized conjunctive adverb followed by a comma at the start of the second independent clause.

The students are working on sentence structure; thus, they are learning how to repair comma splices.

- b. Put a period after the first independent clause. Add a capitalized conjunctive adverb followed by a comma at the start of the second independent clause.

The students are working on sentence structure. Thus, they are learning how to repair comma splices.

5. subordinate one of the independent clauses by using a subordinating conjunction such as *because, since, or when*. The subordinate clause can be placed at the beginning or end of the sentence using different punctuation and sometimes a change in pronoun placement.

Unlike an independent clause, a subordinate (dependent) clause cannot stand alone and must be connected to an independent clause.

Because the students are working on sentence structure, they are learning how to repair comma splices.

The students are learning how to repair comma splices because they are working on sentence structure.