

A **comma splice** (abbreviated CS) is a type of run-on sentence in which two independent clauses—or two complete sentences—are joined incorrectly by only a comma. Writers usually make this mistake because the two independent clauses are related to each other.

Question: Why is it a mistake to join two complete sentences with only a comma?

Answer: A comma is not strong enough to join 2 sentences by itself.

Example of a Comma Splice

Today I am tired , I will take a nap later.

This example is a comma splice because it has two related independent clauses (or complete sentences) incorrectly joined by only a comma.

Reasoning: The first part of the sentence (“Today I am tired”) is an independent clause or complete sentence, and the second part (“I will take a nap later”) is also an independent clause or complete sentence. The two sentences need to be joined by more than just a comma because a comma is **not strong enough!!!**

How to Fix a Comma Splice

There are four ways to correct a comma splice, and they are similar to the four ways of correcting a run-on.

1. Replace the comma with a period and make two separate sentences.

Today I am tired . I will take a nap later.

2. Add an appropriate coordinating conjunction (one of the FANBOYS) after the comma.

Today I am tired , so I will take a nap later.

3. Replace the comma with a semicolon (;).

Today I am tired ; I will take a nap later.

4. Turn one of the clauses into a subordinate clause (by adding an appropriate subordinating conjunction to the beginning of it).

Since I am tired today , I will take a nap later.

Exercise

Identify and correct the comma splices in the following sentences.

Ex: Ponyboy Curtis is a greaser, he lives in the poor part of town and is harassed by Socs.

These are all corrected versions of the above sentence. Which one works best?

- A. Ponyboy Curtis is a greaser . He lives in the poor part of town and is harassed by Socs.
- B. Ponyboy Curtis is a greaser , and he lives in the poor part of town and is harassed by Socs.
- C. Ponyboy Curtis is a greaser ; he lives in the poor part of town and is harassed by Socs.
- D. Ponyboy Curtis is a greaser who lives in the poor part of town and is harassed by Socs.
- E. Ponyboy Curtis is a greaser, since he lives in the poor part of town and is harassed by Socs.

Remember that there are at least four ways to fix a comma-splice. Fix each sentence below in the way that works best ; make the corrections with your pen or pencil.

1. I used to be a motocross racer, however, I quit after I crashed eighty-seven times.
2. I don't know why Tom went insane, maybe his pants were too tight.
3. Having Maria join the group makes our band complete, we're going to go on tour soon.
4. Did you hear about Jethro, I think he ran off with the circus.
5. Joey Schmoie doesn't like enchiladas, he much prefers quesadillas.
6. Hey, that guy stole my rare Albanian monkey-fur hat, go get him!
7. Perhaps you think I'm wrong, I think you should eat more sausages.
8. The book *Shogun* is great, it shows many interesting aspects of ancient Japanese culture.
9. Barb seems well-adjusted, she has made one friend and no enemies during her time here.
10. Some people like rap music, however, other people like country, pop, or rock.