



Writing Centre

The Comma Splice

WHAT IS A COMMA SPLICE?

A comma splice happens when two thoughts are joined together in a sentence without a conjunction (words such as "and", "or", "but"). The comma is not strong enough to join two thoughts on its own, and it needs a helper word to create a full sentence.

Let's take a look at an *example* of a comma splice:

I ran to school, I was late.

Within this sentence, there are two thoughts:

- i) I ran to school
- ii) I was late

These two thoughts are joined together by a comma but do not have a conjunction (words such as "and", "or", "but") to help the comma connect the sentences.

Solutions to Fix this Comma Splice Error

1. The first way to fix this error is to take out the comma (,) and put in a period (.).

Example: **I ran to school. I was late.**

There are 3 times when a period (.) may be the best choice:

- i) There is a logical connection between the two thoughts and the connection is obvious.



- ii) Either one or both of the thoughts are too long.
 - iii) The thoughts are two completely different thoughts.
2. The second way to fix this error is to take out the comma (,) and use a semi-colon (;) instead.

Example:

I ran to school; I was late.

It is best to use a semi-colon when these two conditions occur:

- i) The logical connection between the two ideas is very clear.
- ii) The ideas are very closely related.

3. The third way to fix this error is to leave the comma (,) and add a coordinating conjunction (e.g. "and", "but") after the comma.

There are 7 coordinating conjunctions:

- 1. And 5. for
- 2. But 6. so
- 3. Or 7. yet
- 4. not

Example:

I ran to school, yet I was late.



4. The fourth way to fix this error is to add a subordinating conjunction (e.g. while, although, because, if, since, unless, whether, when, why, as, before, after, if, whether, that, once)

Example:

I ran to school because I was late.

Source: "Comma Splice." (n.d.). Retrieved from www.utoronto.ca/ucwriting/commasplice.html

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