

COMMA SPLICES AND RUN-ON SENTENCES!

Shudder The bane of every student's existence

What Are They?

Run-Ons and **Comma Splices** occur when a writer accidentally joins two or more complete sentences (also called Independent Clauses) incorrectly. **Run-Ons** contain two or more complete sentences joined without any punctuation. **Comma Splices** occur when the writer connects the two sentences with just a comma. This handout discusses first, how to identify these mistakes, and second the 5 ways to correct them!

Examples of Run-Ons:

- Amanda likes Taylor he likes Shawna.
- I turned left the GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today they were out!

Examples of Comma Splices:

- Amanda likes Taylor, he likes Shawna.
- I turned left, the GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today, they were out!

How Can I Correct Them?

There are several ways to join sentences; some can even help add meaning to the sentence.

1. The first way to combine sentences is by using a comma (like the Comma Splice) **with** a Coordinating Conjunction. This is the most common way to join two sentences. The seven Coordinating Conjunctions are easy to remember with the Acronym "**FANBOYS**":

For
And
Nor
But
Or
Yet
So

The corrected examples using a **comma + coordinating conjunction** look like this:

- Amanda likes Taylor, **yet** he likes Shawna.
- I turned left, **and** the GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today, **but** they were out!

2. The second way to correctly join two complete sentences is to use a semicolon (;). Here are the corrected sentences using a **semicolon**:

- Amanda likes Taylor; he likes Shawna.
- I turned left; the GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today; they were out!

3. Another way to join two sentences is using a **semi-colon + conjunctive adverb**. This usually shows the relationship between the two sentences, adding meaning.

Here are some **Conjunctive Adverbs** you can use:

<u>To show more of the same:</u>	Still	Hence
Also	Nevertheless	Then
Furthermore	Conversely	<u>To show order/time:</u>
Moreover	Nonetheless	Next
Besides	Instead	Then
<u>To compare:</u>	Otherwise	Meanwhile
Similarly	<u>To show cause/effect:</u>	Finally
Likewise	Therefore	Subsequently
<u>To contrast:</u>	Thus	<u>To add emphasis:</u>
However	Consequently	Indeed
	Accordingly	Certainly

The corrected sentences using this method:

- Amanda likes Taylor; **however**, he likes Shawna.
- I turned left; **therefore**, the GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today; **however**, they were out!

*NOTICE: the conjunctive adverbs *however*, *therefore*, and *finally* are followed by a comma. This is absolutely necessary; otherwise, the writer has created another comma error!

4. Sentences can also be joined by turning one of the independent clauses into a dependent clause. This is done by using a **subordinating conjunction** at the beginning of the sentence or separating the two sentences.

Here are some **Subordinating Conjunctions** you can use:

After	How	Supposing	Where
Although	If	Than	Wherever
As far as	In case	That	Whether
As soon as	In order	Though	Which
As if	Now that	Until	While
Because	Once	Unless	Who
Before	Since	When	
Even though	So that	Whenever	

The corrected sentences with the **subordinating conjunction at the beginning** of the sentence:

- **Although** Amanda likes Taylor, he likes Shawna.
- **After** I turned left, the GPS told me to turn right.
- **When** I went to the store for ice cream today, they were out!

*NOTICE: when the subordinating conjunction comes at the beginning of the sentence, a comma is necessary to separate the first clause from the second. However, when the subordinating conjunction comes between the two clauses punctuation is not necessary.

The corrected sentences with the **subordinating conjunction between the two clauses:**

- Amanda likes Taylor **even though** he likes Shawna.
- I turned left **while** the GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today **although** they were out!

5. The final way you can correct run-ons and comma splices is by separating the two clauses into independent sentences. This is done with the common, lowly **period (.)**.

The corrected sentences using a **period:**

- Amanda likes Taylor. He likes Shawna.
- I turned left. The GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today. They were out!

In Review:

You can correct Run-ons and Comma Splices in 5 ways:

- ✓ Using a **comma + coordinating conjunction** (FANBOYS word)
- ✓ Using a **semicolon (;)** to join the two independent clauses
- ✓ Using a **semicolon + conjunctive adverb** (followed by a comma)
- ✓ Adding a **subordinating conjunction** at the beginning of the sentence (with a comma between the clauses) or between the two independent clauses (with no punctuation)
- ✓ Or finally, using a **period** to create two independent sentences.