

Comma Splice and Fused Sentence

1. Fused sentences are not as common in writing as comma splices. But when they do occur, they are even more of a stumbling block than comma splices are, because the main ideas are not separated to allow the reader to distinguish between two ideas. Instead, readers have to stumble through the “sentence” several times and try to create their own meaning of the ideas. Note the example of a fused sentence below:

INCORRECT: Two suspects were arrested last week one of them was blind.

2. A comma splice occurs when independent clauses are joined with a comma only. This structure always occurs in compound sentences. A comma splice is not only an error in punctuation. See the example below:

INCORRECT: Two suspects were arrested last week, one of them was blind.

3. Both fused sentences and comma splices can be remedied in the following ways:

A. Independent clauses can be joined by a coordinate conjunction (**and, but, or, for, nor, yet, so**) with a comma before the conjunction.

CORRECT: Two suspects were arrested last week, and one of them was blind.

B. Or independent clauses can be joined by a semicolon. When a semicolon is used, it must have independent clauses on both sides of it.

CORRECT: Two suspects were arrested last week; one of them was blind.

C. Or independent clauses can be joined by subordinating one of the independent clauses, using a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun.

Some subordinate conjunctions:

after	how	unless
although	if	until
as	in order that	what
as if	provided that	whatever
as far as	since	when
as long as	so that	whenever
as soon as	that	where
because	though	wherever
before	why	whether
		while

Relative pronouns

that	which	who
whoever	whom	whomever

CORRECT: Two suspects were arrested last week because one of them was blind.

D. Finally, a comma splice or fused sentence can be corrected by simply making two sentences of the independent clause.

CORRECT: Two subjects were arrested last week. One of them was blind.

All of the following sentences are either fused sentences or comma splices. Indicate whether each item is either a fused sentence or a comma splice, and correct it, using one of the previously mentioned solutions.

1. Margaret, Debby, and George found Derek in the library, he was reading *Walden*.
2. The Hounds ran over the shrubs, around the pond, and into the woods, the rabbit had no chance at all.
3. Up to the government building marched the union protesters, singing and shouting they ended the march.
4. After the game, the team rested on the sidelines drank some lemonade.
5. The psychiatrist listened carefully for many hours the patient talked.
6. Later in the day they rode horses the sun set slowly.
7. Everyone ate quickly, after the play they fell asleep.
8. Long after dawn the fog held tight to the mountain tops, it hugged the crags.
9. Come home with me, give me your hand you are my friend.
10. The deer ran in front of the car the brakes screeched, Rachel screamed.

Some of the following sentences are correct. If they are, then place a C next to that sentence. If, however, they are incorrect, make the necessary changes, using one of the four solutions.

1. Bob went home. Linda stayed with Mary, and Joe left the country.
2. The faculty voted Millie the scholarship money, after the meeting was over she resigned from the organization.
3. The boy deflated the tires of his brother's bicycle all by himself, his father reinflated them.
4. The angry Indians chased the calvary far across the mountains, before dawn the calvary regrouped and attacked.
5. Write carefully and clearly indent paragraphs punctuate as necessary.
6. Uncle Sam needs you; you need Uncle Sam.
7. He started the motorboat and road quickly after his brother, the boat took him rapidly out of sight into the sun it sank suddenly hiding the disappearing silhouette.

8. The city was confusing with its sights and sounds Roberta was unprepared for this excitement.
9. The storm destroyed all before it and left the people sobbing in the mud.
10. The fire truck reached the fire too late, the house burned down. The embers glowed all night.

