

ESL Grammar – Comma Splices

TOPIC: Comma Splices

APPLICABLE COURSES: All (but designed for non-native speakers)

LEARNING OUTCOME: (What will students be able to do by the end of the workshop?)

Students will be able to recognize comma splices.

Students will be able to identify comma splices.

Students will be able to name three ways to fix comma splices.

Students will be able to fix comma splices.

CONTENT: (What do students need to know to accomplish the outcome?)

Some English.

Grammar Terminology – Subject, Verb, Object

METHOD: (How will the instructor deliver content? Short lecture, handouts, Powerpoint, other audio-visual presentation)

Handouts for Students provided) – Who Has More Power?

Comma Splice Powerpoint

ACTIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES: (How will students apply their knowledge? Solve a problem, create a project, analyze a case, explain a process?)

Groups – Discuss the power of commas

Pairs – Work together after the powerpoint and figure out how to fix comma splices – review as class

Practice I– Pairs - Using the sentences on the worksheet but first given as sentence strips (tactile), students work to find and fix the mistakes.

Practice II – worksheet – same sentences but on paper and now individually

ASSESSMENT METHOD: (How will the instructor know that the students met the outcome? Check for understanding.)

Students will also be informally assessed during the activity portion of the workshop.

T will use some of the examples, project them and do an impromptu group quiz. T must collect examples as students are working.

SELF-REFLECTION ACTIVITY: (What will the instructor do to get students to reflect on how they learned the content? What they learned, how they learned it, how they will apply it in their coursework)

Do you think you will be able to recognize comma splices in your own writing? When will you recognize them – as you write or after?

Sentence Strips – You will need to copy and cut

We never buy anything over the phone, maybe these companies will all get the message and leave us alone.

She married an Italian, they had a son and planned to return to the United States.

There will be travel agents, and they will specialize in space travel.

The neighbors bought a minivan, now they take short trips every weekend.

Because I am a student, I am still learning.

The salespeople don't call during the day, nobody is home.

My mother spends long hours every spring gardening; in the summer she enjoys the beautiful flowers that result from her spring work.

It's not just a job, it's an adventure.

Education is an elusive word, for it often means different things to different people.

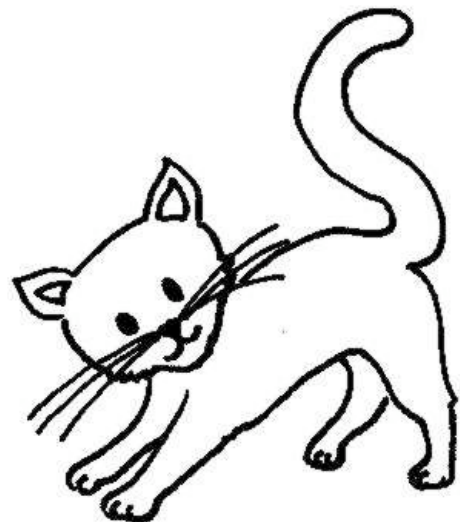
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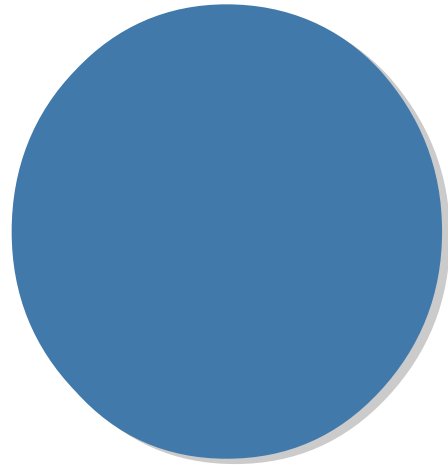
The photograph is not realistic, it even uses dreamlike images to convey its message.

ESL Grammar Workshop
Student Handout – Comma Splices

In groups decide the following:

Who has more power?





So which has more power, a period or a comma? Explain your answer.

Now, we will talk about comma splices and learn how many students give the comma too much power.

In pairs/groups, come up with a definition and example of:

1. Comma Splice

Powerpoint Presentation

This is a simple introduction to comma splices Please ask questions as you listen. Were your definitions similar, better, or completely different?

Write any questions you have here.

Now, of course we must practice. After understanding what these two grammatical terms are, we must learn to identify and to correct. The powerpoint showed ways to fix these problems. Can you remember what they were? Write them down.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Now, we must practice. Find the errors on the worksheet and fix them.

The following worksheet is adapted from Ellen Franklin's Grammar Connor. Her references have been kept.

Worksheet for **Comma Splice**

Indicate whether the following sentences are **correct** or are a **comma splice** by placing a **C** or a **CS** in the blank preceding the sentence. Then, correctly punctuate the sentences that contain a comma splice.

- _____ 1. The salespeople don't call during the day, nobody is home.
- _____ 2. She married an Italian, they had a son and planned to return to the United States.
- _____ 3. There will be travel agents, and they will specialize in space travel.
- _____ 4. The neighbors bought a minivan, now they take short trips every weekend.
- _____ 5. Because I am a student, I am still learning.
- _____ 6. My mother spends long hours every spring gardening; in the summer she enjoys the beautiful flowers that result from her spring work.
- _____ 7. It's not just a job, it's an adventure.
- _____ 8. *Education* is an elusive word, for it often means different things to different people.
- _____ 9. The photograph is not realistic, it even uses dreamlike images to convey its message.
- _____ 10. We never buy anything over the phone, maybe these companies will all get the message and leave us alone.

Quick Notes for **Comma Splice**

- Results when
 - original sentence is incorrectly punctuated
 - fused sentence is “fixed”by placing only a comma between two independent clauses
- The “Fixes”
 - create separate sentences
 - use a semicolon
 - coordinate the sentences, i.e., use a comma with a coordinating conjunction [FANBOYS]
 - make one of the independent clauses into a dependent clause
 - Rework the sentence to change word order, add words, or eliminate words without changing meaning
- **Conjunctive adverbs** [some common ones]: consequently, furthermore, finally, hence, however, moreover, nevertheless, next, similarly, then, therefore, thus
- **Coordinating conjunctions** [FANBOYS]
 - **for** indicates a reason
 - **and** indicates an addition
 - **nor** indicates a negative choice
 - **but** indicates a contrast
 - **or** indicates a choice
 - **yet** indicates a contrast
 - **so** indicates a result
- **Subordinating conjunctions** [some common ones]: after, although, as [as if, as though], because, before, if, once, since, so that, than, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while
- Sources:
 - Langan, John, and Janet M. Goldstein. *English Brushup*. 3rd Ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2003.
 - Lunsford, Andrea A. *The Everyday Writer*. 3rd Ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2005.
 - Wilson, Paige, and Teresa Ferster Glazier. *The Least You Should Know about English: Writing Skills. Form A*. 8th Ed. Boston: Thomson/Heinle, 2003.

A few last questions to consider

How does knowing what comma splices are and how to fix them help you write?

How do you apply what you learned today to the rest of your writing?

At the end of the workshop, please go to www.professorheather.com, click on quizzes and take the comma splice quiz.