

# Comma Splice

## Definition of Comma Splice

A comma splice is known as a grammatical error, or a misuse of commas. It occurs in a [sentence](#) when an author inserts a comma incorrectly between two main (independent) clauses to separate them. Two main clauses can be joined with a comma or a [conjunction](#). For instance, in the example “The air was soggy, the season was exhausted” (*Hub Fans Bid The Kid Adieu*, by John Updike), the sentence can be corrected by using either a period or the conjunction “and” to separate the two independent clauses.

## Common Examples of Comma Splice

1. My mother and sister bake nearly every evening, we then enjoy eating together.

**Correction:** My mother and sister bake nearly every evening. We then enjoy eating together.

Here the comma splice is replaced with a period that breaks the sentence into two.

2. I liked the novel, it was very informative.

**Correction:** I liked the novel because it was very informative.

The sentence is corrected by using the [subordinating conjunction](#) “because,” which joined the sentence, making its meaning more understandable.

3. My favorite dishes are all chicken-related, chicken is a good source of protein.

**Correction:** My favorite dishes are all chicken-related. Chicken is a good source of protein.

In this sentence, the comma splice is corrected by adding a period between two independent clauses.

4. The cat leaves paw prints on the drawing room floor. Emma gets tense.

**Correction 1:** The cat leaves paw prints on the drawing room floor, and Emma gets tense.

**Correction 2:** The cat leaves paw prints on the drawing room floor; Emma gets tense.

These types of sentences are corrected with the use of either a [coordinating conjunction](#), or a semi-colon after the first [clause](#).

5. Farah wore a black dress. Maria wore a white one.

**Correction 1:** Farah wore a black dress; Maria wore a white one.

**Correction 2:** Farah wore a black dress, but Maria wore a white one.

These sentences are corrected with the use of a semi-colon, or a coordinating conjunction, “but,” with a comma.

## Examples of Comma Splice in Literature

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### Example #1: *Hamlet* (By William Shakespeare)

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Hamlet: “The adventurous knight shall use his foil and target,  
the lover shall not sigh gratis, the humorous man shall end his  
part in peace, the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are  
tickle o’ th’ sear ...”

In these lines, Hamlet has used a number of comma splices, which can be corrected by using a semi-colon after the first clause, and the coordination conjunction “and” between the third and the final clause.

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### Example #2: *A Report in the Spring* (by E.B. White)

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“By day the goldfinches dip in yellow light, by night the frogs sing the song that never goes out of favor.”

This example also has a comma splice that needs correction. Simply using the coordinating conjunction “and,” or a semi-colon, can correct the comma splice.

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**Example #3: *To Kill a Mockingbird* (by Harper Lee)**

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“He was middle-aged then, she was fifteen years his junior ...The Radleys, welcome anywhere in town, kept to themselves, a predilection unforgivable in Maycomb.”

In this sentence, the comma splice can be replaced with a coordinating conjunction “and.” There are too many commas in the second sentence. The correct sentence would be if comma splice in the underlined second clause is replaced with a semi-colon.

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**Example #4: *One Vote for this Age of Anxiety* (by Margret Mead)**

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This is what we have arrived at with all our vaunted progress, our great technological advances, our great wealth—everyone goes about with a burden of anxiety so enormous that, in the end, our stomachs and our arteries and our skins express the tension under which we live...

In this excerpt, after the underlined first clause, the comma splice can be removed by adding a semi-colon, because all the clauses are inter-related.

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**Example #5: *Goodnight, Old Daisy* (by John Wain)**

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“Then he straight ended up and took a long, calm look out of the window, first on the platform side, then on the off side ...His mind was already back in his office, looking at balance-sheets ...”

In the first underlined clause, the coordinating conjunction “and” needs to be added, while a semi-colon can replace the comma splice in the second underlined clause.

## **Function**

Comma splices are just like run-on sentences, as they incorrectly join independent clauses. Writers only use them to connect long independent clauses within a sentence. They should avoid using them, and use periods, conjunctions, or semi-colons instead. However, sometimes it becomes necessary to use a comma splice to show the linguistic capability of the character, or his specific speech pattern. As each independent clause conveys a complete idea, and running two complete ideas or thoughts can blur the idea, it is considered an error in grammar.