**COMMA SPLICE/RUN-ON SENTENCES**

A **COMMA SPLICE** occurs when a comma separates clauses that could each stand alone as a sentence.

**Example:**

Albert Einstein flunked math in school**,** he was a brilliant scientist.

The comma separates two complete sentences, creating a COMMA SPLICE.

Another common error is the **RUN-ON.** This is when two or more independent clauses that could each stand alone as a sentence are **FUSED** together with no punctuation or words to link them; thus, the clauses **RUN ON** sentence.

**Example:**

Albert Einstein was a brilliant scientist he flunked math in school.

This sentence joins two main clauses without punctuation or linking word (conjunction), creating a **RUN-ON**.

**BEFORE YOU GO ON, REVIEW THESE TERMS:**

Coordinating conjunctions:*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so* (Some students find the acronym FANBOYS helps them to remember these.)

A coordinating conjunction combines ideas in a sentence, giving the ideas *equal* emphasis.

Subordinating conjunctions:There are many, but here are some common ones: *after, although, as, because, before, even though, unless, when, where, while, until, in order that, if, since, once,* etc.

A subordinating conjunction emphasizes one idea *more* than another.

Conjunctive adverbs:There are many, but here are some common ones: *however, furthermore, therefore, likewise, accordingly, similarly, consequently, moreover,* etc.

A conjunctive adverb shows the relationship between independent clauses.

There are several ways to fix **COMMA SPLICES** and **RUN-ON**

SENTENCES:

· Substitute a period for the comma to create two separate sentences.

· Put a coordinating conjunction—for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so—after the comma.

· Use a subordinating conjunction to link the independent clauses.

· Change the comma to a semicolon.

· Use a semicolon with a conjunctive adverb to show the relationship between the ideas in the two clauses.

***Remember, not all methods are equally effective for every COMMA SPLICE.***

1. Albert Einstein flunked math in school**. H**e was a brilliant scientist.

2. Albert Einstein flunked math in school**,** **but** he was a brilliant scientist.

3. **Although** Albert Einstein flunked math in school**,** he was a brilliant scientist.

4. Albert Einstein flunked math in school**;** he was a brilliant scientist.

5. Albert Einstein flunked math in school**;** **nevertheless**, he was a brilliant scientist.

All five sentences are correct; however, you should know that if you use a semicolon to join independent clauses, they should be *closely related* in idea. For example, since the following two sentences are unrelated, linking them with a semicolon is illogical:

I am trying to decide on a college major**;** I hope the dorms have a laundry facility.

Such a sentence leaves the reader confused.

**Practice I:** Punctuate the following sentences using the comma rules:

1. When the 1989 earthquake shook Santa Cruz Peter decided to move back to New York.

2. No I’m not ready to make a serious commitment.

3. Peter is majoring in Elementary Education isn’t that right?

4. In Robin’s opinion baseball is ten minutes of excitement packed into three hours.

5. Tim made a three-layer chocolate cake and Nina tuned up the Bronco.

6. In the school’s cafeteria one can hear students speaking Spanish Japanese Italian Arabic Russian Portuguese Farsi and many other languages.

7. Lars has been studying Chinese for more than ten years but he’s never had the opportunity to visit China.

8. When I entered the house was in darkness.

9. Her brother insisted that she be on time yet when she arrived he wasn’t there.

10. To be perfectly frank students need to know the fundamentals of grammar before they can write acceptable college papers.

**Practice II:** Separate FIVE of the following Comma Splices and Run-Together Sentences with a period, and combine FIVE of them correctly using a comma and coordinating conjunction (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*).

1. She doubted the value of yoga she decided to try it just once.

2. I asked the guard for directions, she told me what time it was.

3. California is suffering an energy crisis, everyone needs to conserve.

4. Ruby is tiny she is less than five feet tall and weighs ninety-five pounds.

5. First we hiked in the forest, we drove up to Mount Baker.

6. Television commercials can have an adverse impact on children, it’s hard to prevent them from watching TV.

7. I loved the movie, most of my friends hated it.

8. He has never won a dime playing the lottery every week he spends ten dollars on tickets.

9. My high school adviser was close to me she was almost my best friend.

10. Writing is sending, reading is receiving.

**Practice III:** Punctuate the following sentences using the comma rules.

1. College students of course need the fundamentals of grammar.

2. Grammar alone which can be rather tedious does not make a person a good writer.

3. What is necessary experts agree is for students to write more in all their classes.

4. “One doesn’t know anything clearly” S.I. Hayakawa said “unless one can state it in writing.”

5. Yes William you will have to do a lot of writing in law school.

6. Every profession I think requires some sort of writing at some time.