

**APSU Writing Center**  
Comma Splice

## **Comma Splice**

A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses (two complete sentences) are joined by a comma. This is a punctuation error because the reader expects the sentence to continue, but instead encounters another complete idea.

- **Comma Splice Example:** The students finished class at 12:30, they rushed to go home.

## **Independent Clause**

- A group of words that expresses a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence.
  - **Example:** The students finished class at 12:30.

## **Dependent Clause**

- A group of words that contains a subject and a verb but cannot stand alone as a complete sentence. It depends on an independent clause to make sense.
  - **Example:** Because the students finished class at 12:30.

## **Correcting Comma Splices**

Simply removing the comma does not correct the problem, as it creates a run-on sentence.

Below are ways to fix comma splices.

### **1. Use a Semicolon, Colon, or Dash**

These marks can properly connect two closely related sentences.

- **Semicolon:** The students finished class at 12:30; they rushed to go home.
- **Colon:** The students finished class at 12:30: they rushed to go home as a result.
- **Dash:** The students finished class at 12:30—they rushed to go home.

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**2. Use a Period**

Write the two clauses as separate sentences.

- **Example:** The students finished class at 12:30. They rushed to go home.

**3. Add a Coordinating Conjunction**

Insert a conjunction (and, but, or, for, yet, so, nor) after the comma.

- **Example:** The students finished class at 12:30, so they rushed to go home.

**4. Make One Clause Dependent**

Turn one sentence into a dependent clause using a subordinating word such as because, when, or after.

- **Example:** Because the students finished class at 12:30, they rushed to go home.

**5. Use a Semicolon and a Conjunctive Adverb**

Combine two complete ideas with a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb such as therefore, however, and moreover.

- **Example:** The students finished class at 12:30; therefore, they rushed to go home.