

Comma Splices

A comma splice is one serious sentence error that students sometimes make when writing sentences. Namely, they may write two sentences that are related in meaning without a period or a full stop. However, a comma is put between the two sentences instead of a full stop.

Examples:

Comma splice: Susan usually gets up at 6, she goes to school at 7.

Comma splice: Bobby was sick, he could not come to class yesterday.

In the two examples above, two simple sentences are incorrectly joined by a comma. There are two ways to fix a comma splice.

1. Change the comma to a full stop.

Susan usually gets up at 6. She goes to school at 7.
Bobby was sick. He could not come to class yesterday.

2. Keep the comma and add a coordinating conjunction.

Susan usually gets up at 6, and she goes to school at 7.
Bobby was sick, so he could not come to class yesterday.

Exercise: 1. Find the comma splices in the following sentences. Mark X if there is a comma splice and / if the sentences are correct.

2. Correct the mistakes. Use both methods 1 and 2 above.

Example :

 X Mike plays football every week, Bob swims every day.
 Mike plays football every week, but Bob swims every day.
 Mike plays football every week. Bob swims every day.

 1. The party began at 8 p.m., Anne arrived at the party at 9 p.m.

 2. KMUTT students usually work hard, most of them get good grades.

 3. George swims very well. So he usually wins the university swimming contest.

 4. No one visits Uncle John, he lives a lonely life.

 5. Don't stop when someone bumps your car from behind, drive to the police station.

Answer Key

- X 1. The party began at 8 p.m., Anne arrived at the party at 9 p.m.
The party began at 8 p.m., but Anne arrived at the party at 9 p.m.
The party began at 8 p.m . Anne arrived at the party at 9 p.m.
- X 2. KMUTT students usually work hard, most of them get good grades.
KMUTT students usually work hard, so most of them get good grades.
KMUTT students usually work hard . Most of them get good grades.
KMUTT students usually work hard. So most of them get good grades.
- / 3. George swims very well. So he usually wins the university swimming contest.
- X 4. No one visits Uncle John, he lives a lonely life.
No one visits Uncle John, so he lives a lonely life.
No one visits Uncle John. So he lives a lonely life.
No one visits Uncle John. He lives a lonely life.
- X 5. Don't stop when someone bumps your car from behind, drive to the police station.
Don't stop when someone bumps your car from behind, but drive to the police station.
- Don't stop when someone bumps your car from behind. Drive to the police station.*