

# Comma Splice and Sentence Fusion Errors

## What is a Comma Splice?

- A comma splice is the improper use of a comma to join two independent clauses. This means you put two complete sentences or ideas together to make one sentence using only a comma in between them. While the comma might represent a natural pause in speech, it is not a strong enough punctuation mark to use in writing.

Incorrect Example: *You are happy and content, things couldn't be going better with Mr. Wonderful to your left.*

Correct Example: *You are happy and content; things couldn't be going better with Mr. Wonderful to your left.*

## What is a Fused Sentence?

- A fused sentence is a sentence that joins two independent clauses without the use of any punctuation. This means you put two complete sentences or ideas together to make one sentence without using anything to separate them. The result creates confusion and ambiguity in your writing.

Incorrect Example: *Slowly, small bubbles of air seem to work their way down your large intestine despite your greatest efforts some of these bubbles eek out.*

Correct Example: *Slowly, small bubbles of air seem to work their way down your large intestine, and despite your greatest efforts some of these bubbles eek out.*

## How to recognize sentences that have comma splices or fused sentences:

- When examining your sentences, look for these clues to tell you whether or not you have used a comma splice or fused sentence

\* The main idea/clause is the same as the subject

Example: ***My phone** vibrated vigorously, **it** fell off my desk.*

\* The main idea/clause is illustrated by another idea or clause

Example: *The dog ran out of the house, he was two blocks away by the time I put on my shoes.*

\* Two or more main ideas/clauses with contrasting ideas are present in the sentence

Example: *The literature majors are critical thinkers regarding social issues, the math majors lack awareness regarding anything social.*

\* Two or more main ideas/clauses with related ideas are present in the sentence

Example: *I slept through my test, I don't know what I'm going to do.*

## How to fix comma splices or fused sentences:

- If you find that your writing has comma splice errors or sentence fusion, use these techniques to make your sentences stronger and clearer

Incorrect Example: *The birth of the baby brought joy to the whole family, we would see even happier times in the future also.*

- \* create separate sentences

*The birth of the baby brought joy to the whole family. We would also see even happier times in the future.*

- \* use a conjunction

*The birth of the baby brought joy to the whole family, **but** we would see even happier times in the future.*

- \* use a semicolon

*The birth of the baby brought joy to the whole family; we would also see even happier times in the future.*

- \* use a semicolon and conjunctive adverb/transitional expression

*The birth of the baby brought joy to the whole family; **however**, we would see even happier times in the future.*

- \* subordinate one of the clauses

***While** the birth of the baby brought joy to the whole family, we would see even happier times in the future.*

- \* use a colon

*The birth of the baby brought joy to the whole family: even happier times awaited the future.*