



Comma Splice?

Have you ever gotten feedback from your instructor that just said "comma splice"? Ever wondered what that is, and how you can fix it? This handout is designed as a quick "fact sheet" about this very common grammar mistake and a tutorial for how to correct it.

Simply put, the comma splice is when two independent clauses (sentences) are smashed together as a single sentence without adequate punctuation. Usually writers stick a comma between them and leave it at that. However, more "solid" punctuation, or else tweaking of the clauses, is needed to make the sentence complete and correct.

Science fiction from the 1970s is fantastic, I have so many favorites from that time period.

In this example, we have two sentences: "science fiction from the 1970s is fantastic" and "I have so many favorites from that time period." **They each have a subject and a verb and form a complete thought**, thus each one can stand alone. When placed together into a single sentence, and separated by no more than a comma, creates a comma splice (the comma "splices" the two sentences together).

How do we fix it?

To fix this error, we would have three main options:

Add a conjunction after the comma

NOTE: Using conjunctions allows you to show the relationship between the two sentences. Here are the conjunctions you can choose from: **for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so** (F.A.N.B.O.Y.S).

Each of these options can benefit your writing differently, so make sure you consciously choose the best one for your sentence. Good writers use all three methods—not just one!

End the sentence and begin a new one

NOTE: Ending your sentence and beginning a new one is an easy fix, but if done too often it could make your writing choppy.

Substitute a semicolon for the comma

NOTE: Using a semicolon is a great way to add sophistication to your writing, but use them too frequently and your writing becomes wordy and difficult to read.

So, with that said, here are the different ways we could fix that sentence:

Semicolon. Science fiction from the 1970s is fantastic; I have so many favorites from that time period

New sentence. Science fiction from the 1970s is fantastic. I have so many favorites from that time period.

Conjunction. Science fiction from the 1970s is fantastic, and I have so many favorites from that time period.