

Writing Guide: **Comma Splices**

A **comma splice** is a **grammatical error** in which two independent clauses (word groups that could stand alone as sentences) are separated by only a comma.

Here are some examples of comma splices:

For a while the word “gnarly” was in style, now it’s considered uncool.

The burritos are delicious, the gyros are terrible.

He loves horror films, his wife can’t stand them.

They figured it every way they knew, the bank statement wouldn’t balance.

George’s alarm clock failed to go off, he would be late for work again.

In each of these examples above, **two independent clauses are separated by only a comma**. These are **comma splices**. **Try to avoid them in your writing**.

Here are five ways to fix a comma splice:

1. **Replace the comma with a period, making two sentences.**

For a while the word “gnarly” was in style. Now it’s considered uncool.

2. **Add a coordinating conjunction (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) after the comma.**

The burritos are delicious, but the gyros are terrible.

3. **Replace the comma with a semicolon, which you can use to separate two closely related independent clauses.**

He loves horror films; his wife can’t stand them.

4. **Replace the comma with a semicolon and a transition (*nevertheless, for example, on the other hand, consequently*) that’s followed by a comma.**

They figured it every way they knew; however, the bank statement wouldn’t balance.

5. **Subordinate one of the clauses by using *because, since, although, after, when*, or some other word.**

Because his alarm clock failed to go off, George would be late for work again.