

Comma Splices



A comma splice consists of two complete sentences joined or “spliced” together with a comma. A comma is not the proper way to join two sentences.

Here is an example of a comma splice:

Mary decided to feed her horse, she went to the barn to give him his oats.

Ways to Correct Comma Splices

- The simplest way is to break the one sentence into two separate sentences:
Mary decided to feed her horse. She went to the barn to give him his oats.
- If two sentences are closely related in thought, they can be joined by a semi-colon:
Mary decided to feed her horse; she went to the barn to give him his oats.
- The two sentences could also be joined by a conjunction:
Mary decided to feed her horse so she went to the barn to give him his oats.
- One sentence could be converted into a subordinate clause and attached to the other:
When Mary decided to feed her horse, she went to the barn to give him his oats.

Practice

Choose the best way to correct the following comma splices.

1. I know John Martin pretty well, he comes into my shop all the time.
2. Rowles is married to the former Virginia Davis, they have three children.
3. You don't believe me, I don't really care.
4. Mary felt a cold coming on, she skipped the party and went straight home.
5. No single text was assigned, the students found explanations in different books, each of these explanations was different.
6. Since you're new here, you're allowed a few mistakes, too many, though, may cost you your job.
7. The Sox went out to a big lead, they never lost it.
8. The Patriots kept on scoring touchdowns, they never let up on the attack.
9. I don't understand why he did it, there was just no reason for it.

Answers

1. I know John Martin pretty well, he comes into my shop all the time
 - I know John Martin pretty well. He comes into my shop all the time.
 - I know John Martin pretty well; he comes into my shop all the time.
 - I know John Martin pretty well because he comes into my shop all the time.
2. Rowles is married to the Virginia Davis, they have three children.
 - Rowles is married to Virginia Davis. They have three children.
 - Rowles is married to Virginia Davis; they have three children
 - Rowles is married to Virginia Davis and they have three children.
3. You don't believe me, I don't really care.
 - You don't believe me. I don't really care.
 - You don't believe me and I don't really care.
4. Mary felt a cold coming on, she skipped the party and went straight home.
 - Mary felt a cold coming on. She skipped the party and went straight home.
 - Mary felt a cold coming on; she skipped the party and went straight home.
 - Mary felt a cold coming on so she skipped the party and went straight home.
 - Since Mary felt a cold coming on, she skipped the party and went straight home.
5. No single text was assigned, the students found explanations in different books, each of these explanations was different.
 - No single text was assigned so the students found explanations in different books; each of these explanations was different.
 - No single text was assigned and the students found different explanations in different books. Each of these explanations was different.
6. Since you're new here, you're allowed a few mistakes, too many, though, may cost you your job.
 - Since you're new here, you're allowed a few mistakes. Too many, though, may cost you your job.
 - Since you're new here, you're allowed a few mistakes; too many, though, may cost you your job.

Answers

7. The Sox went out to a big lead, they never lost it.

- The Sox went out on a big lead. They never lost it.
- The Sox went out on a big lead; they never lost it.
- After the Red Sox went out on a big lead, they never lost it.

8. The Patriots kept on scoring runs, they never let up on the attack.

- The Patriots kept on scoring touchdowns. They never let up on the attack..
- The Patriots kept on scoring touchdowns; they never let up on the attack.
- The Patriots kept on scoring touchdowns and they never let up on the attack.

9. I don't understand why he did it, there was just no reason for it.

- I just don't understand why he did it. There was just no reason for it.
- I just don't understand why he did it; there was just no reason for it.
- I just don't understand why he did it since there was just no reason for it.