**COMMA SPLICES AND RUN-ON SENTENCES!**

*Shudder* The bane of every student’s existence

What Are They?

**Run-Ons** and **Comma Splices** occur when a writer accidentally joins two or more complete sentences (also called Independent Clauses) incorrectly. **Run-Ons** contain two or more complete sentences joined without any punctuation. **Comma Splices** occur when the writer connects the two sentences with just a comma. This handout discusses first, how to identify these mistakes, and second the 5 ways to correct them!

Examples of Run-Ons:
- Amanda likes Taylor he likes Shawna.
- I turned left the GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today they were out!

Examples of Comma Splices:
- Amanda likes Taylor, he likes Shawna.
- I turned left, the GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today, they were out!

How Can I Correct Them?

There are several ways to join sentences; some can even help add meaning to the sentence.

1. The first way to combine sentences is by using a comma (like the Comma Splice) **with** a Coordinating Conjunction. This is the most common way to join two sentences. The seven Coordinating Conjunctions are easy to remember with the Acronym “FANBOYS”:
   - For
   - And
   - Nor
   - But
   - Or
   - Yet
   - So

The corrected examples using a **comma + coordinating conjunction** look like this:
- Amanda likes Taylor, **yet** he likes Shawna.
- I turned left, **and** the GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today, **but** they were out!
2. The second way to correctly join two complete sentences is to use a semicolon (;). Here are the corrected sentences using a semicolon:

- Amanda likes Taylor; he likes Shawna.
- I turned left; the GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today; they were out!

3. Another way to join two sentences is using a **semi-colon + conjunctive adverb**. This usually shows the relationship between the two sentences, adding meaning.

   Here are some **Conjunctive Adverbs** you can use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To show more of the same:</th>
<th>Still</th>
<th>Nevertheless</th>
<th>Hence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Also</td>
<td>Conversely</td>
<td>To show order/time:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furthermore</td>
<td>Nonetheless</td>
<td>Next</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreover</td>
<td>Instead</td>
<td>Then</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Besides</td>
<td>Otherwise</td>
<td>Meanwhile</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To compare:</td>
<td>To show cause/effect:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similarly</td>
<td>Therefore</td>
<td>Finally</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likewise</td>
<td>Thus</td>
<td>Subsequently</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To contrast:</td>
<td>Consequently</td>
<td>To add emphasis:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>However</td>
<td>Accordingly</td>
<td>Indeed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Certainly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   The corrected sentences using this method:

- Amanda likes Taylor; **however**, he likes Shawna.
- I turned left; **therefore**, the GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today; **however**, they were out!

   **NOTICE:** the conjunctive adverbs however, therefore, and finally are followed by a comma. This is absolutely necessary; otherwise, the writer has created another comma error!

4. Sentences can also be joined by turning one of the independent clauses into a dependent clause. This is done by using a **subordinating conjunction** at the beginning of the sentence or separating the two sentences.

   Here are some **Subordinating Conjunctions** you can use:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After</th>
<th>Although</th>
<th>As far as</th>
<th>As soon as</th>
<th>As if</th>
<th>Because</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>Even though</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td>If</td>
<td>In case</td>
<td>In order</td>
<td>Now that</td>
<td>Once</td>
<td>Since</td>
<td>So that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supposing</td>
<td>Than</td>
<td>That</td>
<td>Though</td>
<td>Until</td>
<td>Unless</td>
<td>When</td>
<td>Whenever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>Wherever</td>
<td>Whether</td>
<td>Which</td>
<td>While</td>
<td>Who</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The corrected sentences with the **subordinating conjunction at the beginning** of the sentence:

- **Although** Amanda likes Taylor, he likes Shawna.
- **After** I turned left, the GPS told me to turn right.
- **When** I went to the store for ice cream today, they were out!

*NOTICE:* when the subordinating conjunction comes at the beginning of the sentence, a comma is necessary to separate the first clause from the second. However, when the subordinating conjunction comes between the two clauses punctuation is not necessary.

The corrected sentences with the **subordinating conjunction between the two clauses:**

- Amanda likes Taylor **even though** he likes Shawna.
- I turned left **while** the GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today **although** they were out!

5. The final way you can correct run-ons and comma splices is by separating the two clauses into independent sentences. This is done with the common, lowly **period (.)**.

The corrected sentences using a **period:**

- Amanda likes Taylor. He likes Shawna.
- I turned left. The GPS told me to turn right.
- I went to the store for ice cream today. They were out!

**In Review:**

You can correct Run-ons and Comma Splices in 5 ways:

- ✓ Using a **comma + coordinating conjunction** (FANBOYS word)
- ✓ Using a **semicolon (;)** to join the two independent clauses
- ✓ Using a **semicolon + conjunctive adverb** (followed by a comma)
- ✓ Adding a **subordinating conjunction** at the beginning of the sentence (with a comma between the clauses) or between the two independent clauses (with no punctuation)
- ✓ Or finally, using a **period** to create two independent sentences.