



The Learning Centre

Grammar Rules **Comma Splices**

A **comma splice** is a grammatical error that occurs when a comma, with no additional form of punctuation or conjunction, is used to separate two independent clauses or sentences. This is what a comma splice looks like:

Bo's mom was disappointed in him, he was a bully. ✕

In this comma splice, "Bo's mom was disappointed in him" is an independent clause, and "He was a bully" is an independent clause. The two independent clauses are separated only with a single comma, but this is the wrong way to use a comma. Typically, a comma is used when a natural pause occurs within the sentence, but that thought or list *continues* after the pause occurs. Therefore, it is incorrect to use a single comma to suggest completion at the end of an independent clause.

How to Fix Comma Splices

If you've identified a comma splice in your writing, you can fix the error in a number of ways:

- **Make two sentences using a period**

Example

Comma splice:

Bo's mom was disappointed in him, he was a bully. ✕

Correction:

Bo's mom was disappointed in him. He was a bully. ✓

- **Replace the comma with a different form of punctuation**

Example

Comma splice:

Bo's mom was disappointed in him, he was a bully. ✕

Correction:

Bo's mom was disappointed in him; he was a bully. ✓

- **Replace the comma with a conjunction**

Example

Comma splice:

Bo's mom was disappointed in him, he was a bully. ✕

Correction:

Bo's mom was disappointed in him because he was a bully. ✓

- **Add a conjunction in addition to the comma**

(*this option may require you to change the structure of your sentence)

Example

Comma splice:

Bo's mom was disappointed in him, he was a bully. ✕

Correction:

Because Bo was a bully, his mom was disappointed in him. ✓

- **Replace the comma with a different form of punctuation and add a conjunction**

Example

Comma splice:

Bo's mom was disappointed in him, he was a bully. ✕

Correction:

Bo was a bully; consequently, his mom was disappointed in him. ✓