



WRITING CENTER QUICK REFERENCE COMMA SPLICES

WHAT IS A COMMA SPLICE?

A comma splice is a comma used incorrectly in the place of a period or semi-colon.

EXAMPLES OF SENTENCES CONTAINING COMMA SPLICES:

1. *The film is scheduled for tomorrow evening, the club expects a large audience.*
2. *The professor collected the tests, she noticed one was missing.*

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THESE SENTENCES?

In the first sentence, a misplaced comma joins two independent clauses that should not be joined. The clauses contain related content but are grammatically two sentences. Again, in the second example, the two independent clauses should not be joined within a single sentence by a comma.

HOW CAN YOU FIX THESE SENTENCES?

In the first example, the comma splice might be repaired by a period or a semicolon. A period would separate the two clauses into two separate sentences:

The film is scheduled for tomorrow evening. The club expects a large audience.

A semicolon would adequately separate two distinct thoughts but emphasize they are related:

The film is scheduled for tomorrow evening; the club expects a large audience.

The second example might be rewritten as one sentence. For example:

When the professor collected the tests, she noticed one was missing.

Or, it might be rewritten with the addition of a conjunction to appropriately join the clauses. For example:

The professor collected the tests, and she noticed one was missing.