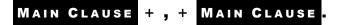
The Comma Splice

Recognize a *comma splice* when you see one.

A comma splice, also called a *run-on*, occurs when a writer has connected two main clauses with a comma alone. A main clause makes a complete thought, so you should not find a wimpy comma struggling to join two such powerful clauses.

The problem looks like this:



Here is an example:

Fanning the slice of pizza with a napkin, Jolene waited for it to cool, she had already burned the roof of her mouth with the fried cheese sticks.

The first main clause is *Jolene waited for it to cool*, and the second is *she had already burned the roof of her mouth with the fried cheese sticks*. Notice that the two clauses have only a comma connecting them.

Fixing a comma splice is easy. All you have to do is pick one of the four available strategies.

First, you can break the error into two separate sentences, like this:

Fanning the slice of pizza with a napkin, Jolene waited for it to *cool*. *She* had already burned the roof of her mouth with the fried cheese sticks.

Another good option is to connect the two main clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction:

Fanning the slice of pizza with a napkin, Jolene waited for it to *cool, for* she had already burned the roof of her mouth with the fried cheese sticks.

You can also use a semicolon, a mark of punctuation as powerful as a period:

Fanning the slice of pizza with a napkin, Jolene waited for it to *cool*; *she* had already burned the roof of her mouth with the fried cheese sticks.

Your last option is to use a subordinate conjunction. This method reduces one of the two clauses to an *incomplete* thought:

Fanning the slice of pizza with a napkin, Jolene waited for it to *cool since she* had already burned the roof of her mouth with the fried cheese sticks.

