

English 092 Unit 1.5

A Quick Review of Comma Splices and Run-On Sentences

Here are a few tips on recognizing and correcting comma splices and run-on sentences. A comma splice occurs when two separate complete (or independent) sentences are joined together with a comma. A comma splice is considered to be a sentence error. A run-on sentence occurs when two independent sentences are joined with no punctuation.

Example:

He's an excellent swimmer, he won an Olympic medal.

In this example two independent clauses are joined together with a comma.

There are six main ways to fix a comma splice:

1. Use a semicolon between the independent clauses.

a. He's an excellent swimmer; he won an Olympic medal.

2. Add a coordinating conjunction between the two clauses.

The coordinating conjunctions are **and**, **or**, **for**, **but**, **so**, **yet**, and **nor**.

He's an excellent swimmer, and he won an Olympic medal.

3. Make two independent sentences by inserting a period.

He's an excellent swimmer. He won an Olympic medal.

4. Join the sentences with an adverbial conjunction or a transitional expression

Adverbial conjunctions include **also**, **anyway**, **besides**, **furthermore**, **incidentally**, **moreover**, **otherwise**, **thus**, **however**, and **in addition**. Place a semicolon before and comma after the adverbial conjunction.

He's not a good swimmer; however, he enjoys the water.

Transitional expressions include **after all**, **in contrast**, **for example**, **in other words**, and **on the other hand**.

He's a great swimmer. After all, he won an Olympic medal.

5. Make one of the independent clauses into a dependent clause.

Use a connecting word(s) like **because**, **while**, **unless**, **if**, **although**, **whether**, **when**, **as soon as**, etc. (subordinating conjunctions).

He is recognized as a great swimmer because he won an Olympic medal.

6. Make the two independent clauses into one independent clause.

His great swimming ability won him an Olympic medal.

Sentences for Practice

Decide whether there is a punctuation error in the following sentences and then choose the best punctuation. If OK write OK. Add any necessary words.

1. I hate computers they're really complicated to use.
2. General Motors is the world's biggest car manufacturer, but General Motors' cars are not as good as Toyota's.
3. The car won't run, the transmission is shot.
4. When you are shopping for a new car there are many things to consider the most important is the price.
5. He studies all the time he's doing really well in math
6. I've always wanted to be a musician unfortunately I have no musical talent.
7. *Pulp Fiction* is my favourite movie I've seen it five times.
8. I think you should hire her she's the best candidate for the job.
9. I like cooking I hate washing dishes.
10. The doctor gave me some medicine to reduce my infection the symptoms should disappear in a few days.
11. Victoria is the capital of BC Vancouver is the largest city.
12. He recently lost his job, but he's had several interviews for another one.
13. The BC economy is booming few people credit the government.
14. I haven't seen the movie *Titanic* yet it's something to do with a boat isn't it?
15. The guests arrived late there was no food left.
16. He likes to read his wife likes to watch football on TV.
17. Some people use punctuation without any understanding of the rules of grammar, they put in a comma every time they take a deep breath.
18. My neighbours had a loud party last night I hardly got any sleep.

Sentences for Practice - Answers

There are a number of correct answers for most of these sentences.

1. I hate computers; they're really complicated to use.
2. General Motors is the world's biggest car manufacturer, but General Motors' cars are not as good as Toyota's. **OK**
3. The car won't run; the transmission is shot.
4. When you are shopping for a new car there are many things to consider. **T**he most important is the price.
5. He studies all the time, **so** he's doing really well in math
6. I've always wanted to be a musician; unfortunately, I have no musical talent.
7. *Pulp Fiction* is my favourite movie. I've seen it five times.
8. I think you should hire her **because** or ; she's the best candidate for the job.
9. I like cooking, **but** I hate washing dishes.
10. The doctor gave me some medicine to reduce my infection. **T**he symptoms should disappear in a few days.
11. Victoria is the capital of BC, **but** Vancouver is the largest city.
- 12.** He recently lost his job, but he's had several interviews for another one. **OK**
13. The BC economy is booming; **however**, few people credit the government.
14. I haven't seen the movie *Titanic* yet. **I**t's something to do with a boat, isn't it?
15. The guests arrived late, **so** there was no food left.
16. He likes to read; his wife likes to watch football on TV.
17. Some people use punctuation without any understanding of the rules of grammar. **T**hey put in a comma every time they take a deep breath.

18. My neighbours had a loud party last night; I hardly got any sleep.