Identifying Independent and Dependent Clauses

A comma splice is the use of a comma between two independent clauses. You can usually fix the error by changing the comma to a period and therefore making the two clauses into two separate sentences, by changing the comma to a semicolon, or by making one clause dependent by inserting a dependent marker word in front of it.

The following sentences in italics are incorrect. In the first question, fix the comma splice

1. *Incorrect: I like this class, it is very interesting.*

Repair the Fused Sentence

Fused sentences happen when there are two independent clauses not separated by any form of punctuation. This error is also known as a run-on sentence. The error can sometimes be corrected by adding a period, semicolon, or colon to separate the two sentences.

2. *Incorrect: My professor is intelligent I've learned a lot from her.*

Exercise : Run-ons, Comma Splices, and Fused Sentences

Run-ons, comma splices, and fused sentences are all names given to compound sentences that are not punctuated correctly. The best way to avoid such errors is to punctuate compound sentences correctly by using one or the other of these rules.

Join the two independent clauses with one of the coordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet), and use a comma before the connecting word.

_____, and _____.

1. He enjoys walking through the country. He often goes backpacking on his vacations.

When you do not have a connecting word (or when you use a connecting word other than and, but, for, or nor, so, or yet between the two independent clauses) use a semicolon (;).

_____;_____.

2. He often watched TV when there were only reruns. She preferred to read instead.

or

_____; however,_____.

So, run-ons and fused sentences are terms describing two independent clauses that are joined together with no connecting word or punctuation to separate the clauses. The following sentences are both examples that are missing the connecting words and/or the appropriate punctuation.

3. They weren't dangerous criminals they were detectives in disguise.

4. I didn't know which job I wanted I was too confused to decide.