

Lesson Plan: Comma splices

Level: Advanced (C1 +)

Time: 60 minutes

Topic: Avoiding comma splices in writing

Objective:

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to identify comma splices in writing, understand why they are incorrect, and revise sentences to correct them using appropriate punctuation or conjunctions.

Materials Needed:

- Whiteboard/markers or digital board
- Handouts (comma splice exercises)
- Sample paragraph with errors
- Projector (if digital content is used)

Lesson Stages:

1. Warm-Up / Lead-In (10 mins)

- Ask: "What is a comma splice?"
- Display two sentences:
 - *"She loves reading. She goes to the library often."*
 - *"She loves reading, she goes to the library often."*
- Ask students: What's wrong with the second sentence?

2. Presentation (10 mins)

- Definition: A comma splice occurs when two independent clauses are joined only with a comma.

- Explanation with examples:

- ✗ "He was tired, he went to bed early."

- ✓ "He was tired. He went to bed early."

- ✓ "He was tired, so he went to bed early."

- ✓ "Because he was tired, he went to bed early."

- ✓ "He was tired; he went to bed early."

- Discuss solutions:

- Separate with a period.

- Use a semicolon.

- Add a coordinating conjunction.

- Use a subordinating conjunction.

3. Guided Practice (15 mins)

- Hand out a worksheet with 10 sentences containing comma splices.

- In pairs, students identify and correct each one.

- Example:

- INCORRECT: "The test was difficult, many students failed."

- CORRECT: "The test was difficult. Many students failed." / "The test was difficult, so many students failed." / etc.

4. Production (15 mins)

- Provide a short paragraph (150 words) with multiple comma splices.

- Students rewrite the paragraph in small groups, correcting the errors.

- Optionally, each group shares their revised version with the class.

5. Error Hunt / Game (5 mins)

- Project a paragraph with comma splices and other sentence errors.
- Teams race to identify and correct all comma splices in under 3 minutes.

6. Wrap-Up & Homework (5 mins)

- Recap key points: What are the four ways to fix a comma splice?
- Homework: Write a 200-word journal entry, checking for comma splices before submission.

Assessment:

- Ongoing during guided and independent practice.
- Optional: Collect and mark journal homework for feedback on comma use.