

Student to Student

Peer Tutor Column



*Sporty, Baby, Ginger, Posh & Scary.
Comma Spice?*

Okay, so there is no Comma Spice. However, there is a sentence error known as a **comma splice**. Peer tutor Jana Clark, a junior English major, addresses this common writing error.

A comma splice is one type of a run-on sentence. A comma splice occurs when a writer joins two independent clauses with a comma and no coordinating conjunction (the FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).

Here is a comma splice with two independent clauses, a comma, and no coordinating conjunction: The Spice Girls found success with their feminist message about girl power, they also appealed to a broader audience with their sexy image and just-have-fun attitude.

Here is a comma splice with two independent clauses, a comma, and a connecting word that is not a coordinating conjunction: The Spice Girls found success with their feminist message about girl power, however they also appealed to a broader audience with their sexy image and just-have-fun attitude.

There are four ways to fix a comma splice.

- 1) Use a coordinating conjunction (a FANBOY):
The Spice Girls found success with their feminist message about girl power, **but** they also appealed to a broader audience with their sexy image and just-have-fun attitude.
- 2) Use a period to make two sentences: The Spice Girls found success with their feminist message about girl power. They also appealed to a broader audience with their sexy image and just-have-fun attitude.
- 3) Use a semicolon or a colon with a transitional word or phrase (a conjunctive adverb): The Spice Girls found success with their feminist message about girl power; **however**, they also appealed to a broader audience with their sexy image and just-have-fun attitude.
- 4) Use a subordinating conjunction to restructure the sentence: **Even though** the Spice Girls found success with their feminist message about girl power, they also appealed to a broader audience with their sexy image and just-have-fun attitude.

Writing Centered

Writing Workshops – Spring 2008

Place: CAS 162; Time: 3 – 4 PM

- 4/2- Staying Active: Sentence Conciseness And Vigor with The Paramedic Method
- 4/9- Punctuation: Road Signs for the Reader
- 4/16-Quotation, Paraphrase, Summary: A “How To” and “When To”
- 4/23-Writing the Research Question and Thesis Sentence: Start thinking now about your Senior Seminar!
- 4/30-Argument Skills: Asking the Right Questions as you Write

The Writing Center is located on the second floor of the Main Library, within the Center for Academic Development. We are open 56 hours per week: Monday through Thursday, 9 am – 8 pm; Friday 9 am – 3 pm; and Sunday 2 pm – 8 pm. Our mission is to help all RWU students with any writing-related assignment. The tutors work with students to help them become better writers, not just to produce better papers. It is a fundamental belief in the Writing Center that students learn through the writing process; they learn about writing technique, they learn about the subject they are exploring, and they learn about what they believe and what they know.

Students can walk in and see a peer tutor without an appointment. To see a faculty tutor, students should sign up in the appointment book on the secretary’s desk in the front reception area of the CAD.

The Writing Center also offers an e-mail tutoring service, E-Help. Students can go to the following web address and e-mail their papers:
<http://writingcenter.rwu.edu/ehelp>. We will attempt to respond, Monday through Thursday, within 48 hours.

All of the services of the Writing Center are free.

Writing Happens

Students – Faculty – Staff:

Do you have a question for the Writing Center? We would love to answer it. Perhaps you would like to know something basic about our operation, or, perhaps, you have a question about how the Writing Center can help with an assignment. E-mail your question to Karen Bilotti at kbilotti@rwu.edu. In each issue, we will choose one or two questions to answer. You let us know if you would like us to use your name in the question or keep the question anonymous.

Last fall, Dr. Don Whitworth called the Writing Center, asking whether our tutors could provide some help to a graduate student in Psychology.

Answer: The Writing Center tutors are available to help all RWU students, and that does include graduate students. We do recommend that graduate students sign up to see a faculty tutor. In fact, the graduate student, who likely has a longer paper to go over, should probably sign up for 2 half-hour appointments instead of the usual single half-hour appointment. It is also sometimes helpful, if the graduate student knows who the faculty tutor is going to be, to meet briefly with him or her. The faculty tutor might find it beneficial if the graduate student emails the paper in advance of the appointment. Finally, while the faculty tutor can be of great help in areas such as organization, documentation, sentencings, conventions of written English, and logical progression of ideas, the tutor is ultimately not responsible for content.

The Independent Clause is published through the Roger Williams University Writing Center. The newsletter is published twice a year, fall and spring. Questions or comments, contact Karen Bilotti at kbilotti@rwu.edu.