Comma Splices and Run-On Sentences

Writing a complete sentence with proper punctuation is often a challenge for students at any stage of their writing experience. Two common errors that students make are commas splices and run-on sentences, which are errors that incorrectly link two independent clauses.

An independent clause is a phrase that has a subject and a verb and makes complete sense on its own. It is a complete thought. For example: "The student reads."

Comma Splices

Comma splices occur when two independent clauses are incorrectly linked by a comma.

> Family Day is a statutory holiday in many Canadian provinces**,** the day is called Louis Riel Day in the province of Manitoba.

Run-On Sentences

Run-on sentences occur when more than one independent clause is in a sentence without the correct punctuation or conjunctions.

> Family Day is a statutory holiday in many Canadian provinces the day is called Louis Riel Day in the province of Manitoba.

Five Ways to Fix Comma Splices and Run-On Sentences

1. **Use a period**

   > Family Day is a statutory holiday in many Canadian provinces**. T**he day is called Louis Riel Day in the province of Manitoba.

2. **Use a semicolon**

   > Family Day is a statutory holiday in many Canadian provinces**;** the day is called Louis Riel Day in the province of Manitoba.

3. **Use a comma and coordinating conjunction**

   > Family Day is a statutory holiday in many Canadian provinces**, but** the day is called Louis Riel Day in the province of Manitoba.
   >
   > *Note:* One quick and easy way to remember coordinating conjunctions is the acronym **FANBOYS**: **F**or, **A**nd, **N**or, **B**ut, **O**r, **Y**et, **S**o.

4. **Use a subordinating clause**

   > Whether Canadians call it Family Day or Louis Riel Day, it is a statutory holiday throughout most of the country.

5. Use a period or semicolon and a coordinating adverb

Family Day is a statutory holiday in many Canadian provinces**. However,** the day is called Louis Riel Day in the province of Manitoba.

Family Day is a statutory holiday in many Canadian provinces**; however,** the day is called Louis Riel Day in the province of Manitoba.