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. The 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:** For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So.

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.

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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.