

When independent clauses (sentences that have a main subject and verb and express a complete thought) are joined together, a stronger punctuation mark than the comma is required.

INCORRECT: Rain and lightning abounded, the boys were still out in the boat.

This common punctuation mistake is called a *comma splice*. There are **5 quick fixes** for it.

- Replace the comma with a *period*.

Rain and lightning abounded. The boys were still out in the boat.

- Replace the comma with a *semicolon*.

Rain and lightning abounded; the boys were still out in the boat..

- Replace the comma with a *semicolon and a conjunctive adverb*. Conjunctive adverbs include: however, therefore, consequently, nevertheless. (See the current English handbook for a more complete list).

Rain and lightning abounded; **nevertheless**, the boys were still out in the boat.

- Keep the comma and insert a *coordinating conjunction* after it. The coordinating conjunctions are: and, but, or, so, for, nor, and yet.

Rain and lightning abounded, **but** the boys were still out in the boat.

- Keep the comma and convert the first independent clause to a dependent or subordinate clause by adding a **subordinating conjunction** in front of it. Subordinating conjunctions include: although, since, while, during, because, after. (See the current English handbook for a more complete list).

Although rain and lightning abounded, the boys were still out in the boat.

The following examples are also comma splice mistakes:

Rain and lightning abounded, they were still out in the boat.

The surf was fierce, strong winds forced them to abandon the boat.

A storm was brewing, this concerned the parents of the boys still out in the boat.