

Comma Splice Answer key/Teaching Tips, <http://www.grammar-worksheets.com>
This answer key/tip sheet contains the answer key and teaching tips for both the primary comma splice worksheet and the supplemental exercise sheet.

Primary Worksheet

Exercises: Each sentence below is wrong; it has a comma splice. Please correct it.

1. Each sentence below is wrong, it has a comma splice.

Two sentences: Each sentence below is wrong. It has a comma splice.

Semicolon: Each sentence below is wrong; it has a comma splice.

Subordinating Conjunction: Each sentence below is wrong because it has a comma splice.

Conjunctive Adverb: Each sentence below has a comma splice; therefore, it is wrong.

Coordinating Conjunction: Each sentence below has a comma splice, so it is wrong.

Teaching Tip: I wouldn't ask the students to rewrite the sentence using each technique. I would point out that they cannot be mechanical about comma splices. As writers, they must pay attention to the nuances of rhythm; they must "listen" and let the punctuation and syntax rise organically from the meaning.

Also, notice that last two examples, we required a slight alteration of the sentences so that we might use the conjunctive adverb and the coordinating conjunction. That's okay.

The best advice I can offer is to have the students look at the meaning of the original "sentence" and to use a combination of punctuation and conjunctions to establish **the relationship between the two ideas** and to arrange the sentences so that the relationship is obvious to a reader.

In the rest of the sentences, I'll just give the responses, unless some special commentary is warranted.

2. Eliza ran to the store, then she bought some candy.

Two sentences: Eliza ran to the store. Then she bought some candy.

Semicolon: Eliza ran to the store; then she bought some candy.

Subordinating Conjunction: When Eliza ran to the store, she bought some candy.

Conjunctive Adverb: Eliza ran to the store; then she bought some candy.

Coordinating Conjunction: Eliza ran to the store, and then she bought some candy.

Teaching Tip: In this sentence, stress that the word "then," despite its being short, is a conjunctive adverb and thus should not be used only with a comma to join two independent clauses.

The second clause seems only to add information to the first clause. The relationship is, if anything, chronological. I would suggest that "When Eliza..." is a good answer, as is ", and then..."

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3. The stock market has moved in one direction lately, it has gone down.

Two sentences: The stock market has moved in one direction lately. It has gone down.

Semicolon: The stock market has moved in one direction lately; it has gone down.

Subordinating Conjunction: (There is no real basis for subordination here. The clauses seem to be of equivalent importance. The second clause merely describes the direction; it adds a little information.)

Conjunctive Adverb: The stock market has moved in one direction lately; in fact, it has gone down. (You can force the issue here with "in fact" but it really does not work well.)

Coordinating Conjunction: The stock market has moved in one direction lately, and it has gone down. (Again, the "and" is somewhat forced.)

Teaching Tip: The best response is the lone semicolon. The semicolon implies a close connection with the first clause, but does not force a semantic relationship through the syntax.

4. Elvis Presley was a great singer, he was never really accepted by the country music's mainstream.

Two sentences: Elvis Presley was a great singer. He was never really accepted by the country music's mainstream.

Semicolon: Elvis Presley was a great singer; he was never really accepted by the country music's mainstream.

Subordinating Conjunction: Although Elvis Presley was a great singer, he was never really accepted by the country music's mainstream.

Conjunctive Adverb: Elvis Presley was a great singer; however, he was never really accepted by the country music's mainstream.

Coordinating Conjunction: Elvis Presley was a great singer, but he was never really accepted by the country music's mainstream.

Teaching Tip: The relationship is fairly obvious. The best constructions seem to be the last three, where the relationship between the two clauses is clearly reinforced by the conjunctions.

5. Computer programs help us live saner lives, obviously the people who write them should make lots of money.

Two sentences: Computer programs help us live saner lives. Obviously the people who write them should make lots of money.

Semicolon: Computer programs help us live saner lives; obviously the people who write them should make lots of money.

Subordinating Conjunction: Since computer programs help us live saner lives, the people who write them should make lots of money.

Conjunctive Adverb: Computer programs help us live saner lives; therefore, the people who write them should make lots of money.

Coordinating Conjunction: Computer programs help us live saner lives, so obviously the people who write them should make lots of money.

Teaching Tip: The word “obviously” helps students understand the relationship between the two clauses. The last three choices seem to make that relationship clear. The “subordinating conjunction” example seems the most euphonious, most pleasing to the ear.

6. Dubai has built magnificent office towers with luxuries and conveniences, it is considered a great location in which to conduct international business.

Two sentences: Dubai has built magnificent office towers with luxuries and conveniences. It is considered a great location in which to conduct international business.

Semicolon: Dubai has built magnificent office towers with luxuries and conveniences; it is considered a great location in which to conduct international business.

Subordinating Conjunction: Because Dubai has built magnificent office towers with luxuries and conveniences, it is considered a great location in which to conduct international business.

Conjunctive Adverb: Dubai has built magnificent office towers with luxuries and conveniences; therefore, it is considered a great location in which to conduct international business.

Coordinating Conjunction: Dubai has built magnificent office towers with luxuries and conveniences, so it is considered a great location in which to conduct international business.

Teaching Tip: All of the techniques work fairly well here, but I would lean toward the last three, again because the relationship is made obvious.

7. Brazil has won several world cups championships in soccer, they are always considered a good team.

Two sentences: Brazil has won several world cups championships in soccer. They are always considered a good team.

Semicolon: Brazil has won several world cups championships in soccer; they are always considered a good team.

Subordinating Conjunction: Because Brazil has won several world cups championships in soccer, they are always considered a good team.

Conjunctive Adverb: Brazil has won several world cups championships in soccer; therefore, they are always considered a good team.

Coordinating Conjunction: Brazil has won several world cups championships in soccer, so they are always considered a good team.

Teaching Tip: You notice that three conjunctive adverbs serve most of our needs: then, however, and therefore. Impress upon students that these three conjunctive adverbs, used correctly, will take them far.

8. The Quaid-i-Azam campus of Punjab University is considered excellent, it attracts many students.

Two sentences: The Quaid-i-Azam campus of Punjab University is considered excellent. It attracts many students.

Semicolon: The Quaid-i-Azam campus of Punjab University is considered excellent; it attracts many students.

Subordinating Conjunction: Because the Quaid-i-Azam campus of Punjab University is considered excellent, it attracts many students.

Conjunctive Adverb: The Quaid-i-Azam campus of Punjab University is considered excellent; therefore, it attracts many students.

Coordinating Conjunction: The Quaid-i-Azam campus of Punjab University is considered excellent, so it attracts many students.

Grammar Worksheets: Comma Splices, Worksheet 2, Answers, Tips
<http://www.grammar-worksheets.com>

1. The legislature had enacted laws enabling debtors to discharge their obligations more easily, the courts put an end to such practices by stipulating that no state could enact such laws.

Two sentences: The legislature had enacted laws enabling debtors to discharge their obligations more easily. The courts put an end to such practices by stipulating that no state could enact such laws.

Semicolon: The legislature had enacted laws enabling debtors to discharge their obligations more easily; the courts put an end to such practices by stipulating that no state could enact such laws.

Subordinating Conjunction: Although the legislature had enacted laws enabling debtors to discharge their obligations more easily, the courts put an end to such practices by stipulating that no state could enact such laws.

Conjunctive Adverb: The legislature had enacted laws enabling debtors to discharge their obligations more easily; however, the courts put an end to such practices by stipulating that no state could enact such laws.

Coordinating Conjunction: The legislature had enacted laws enabling debtors to discharge their obligations more easily, but the courts put an end to such practices by stipulating that no state could enact such laws.

Teaching Tip: When joining ideas, when combining ideas from different sentences, when trying to move from one sentence to another smoothly, the relationship between the ideas is crucial. In this sentence the second independent clause suggests that a contrast – a conflict between the legislature and the courts, with the courts overturning the idea of the first independent clause. The words but, although, and however all establish that relationship. Emphasize to students that although these words carry the same meaning, their use in a sentence and the way in which the sentence is punctuated are different because the three words belong to three different types of “connecting words.”

These connecting words all mean the same thing. They **establish a contrast**, but they are used differently in sentences, and the sentences are punctuated differently because they belong to three different “types” of connectors.

Type of Connector:	Subordinating Conjunction	Conjunctive Adverb	Coordinating Conjunction
Word:	although	however	but
Punctuation and Use:	Although ----, ----.	----; however, ----.	----, but ----.

2. Every wall was smashed to rubble, the only thing left of those houses was the land and the rocks from the rubble.

Two sentences: Every wall was smashed to rubble. The only thing left of those houses was the land and the rocks from the rubble.

Semicolon: Every wall was smashed to rubble; the only thing left of those houses was the land and the rocks from the rubble.

Subordinating Conjunction: When every wall was smashed to rubble, the only thing left of those houses was the land and the rocks from the rubble.

Conjunctive Adverb: Every wall was smashed to rubble; in fact, the only thing left of those houses was the land and the rocks from the rubble.

Coordinating Conjunction: Every wall was smashed to rubble, and the only thing left of those houses was the land and the rocks from the rubble.

Teaching Tip: Students need to understand that the relationship between these two clauses is simply one of additional information. The second clause adds information; it clarifies the content of the first clause. It expands the description. The best answers will be those without a forced “connecting word.” In this case, the **two sentences** option and the **semicolon** option work better than the other three.

3. My heart broke, the owners had no insurance.

Two sentences: My heart broke. The owners had no insurance.

Semicolon: My heart broke; the owners had no insurance.

Subordinating Conjunction: My heart broke because the owners had no insurance.

Conjunctive Adverb: The owners had no insurance; consequently, my heart broke.

Coordinating Conjunction: The owners had no insurance, so my heart broke.

Teaching Tip: There is something of a cause/effect sense here. However, because of its length, the sentence should not be encumbered with connecting words. **Two sentences** and a **semicolon** are the best responses here. The others are forced.

4. The town looked deserted, the streets were so dark and empty that the only thing we could hear was the wind blowing.

Two sentences: The town looked deserted. The streets were so dark and empty that the only thing we could hear was the wind blowing.

Semicolon: The town looked deserted; the streets were so dark and empty that the only thing we could hear was the wind blowing.

Subordinating Conjunction: The town looked deserted because the streets were so dark and empty that the only thing we could hear was the wind blowing.

Conjunctive Adverb: The streets were so dark and empty that the only thing we could hear was the wind blowing; therefore, the town looked deserted.

Coordinating Conjunction: The streets were so dark and empty that the only thing we could hear was the wind blowing, so the town looked deserted.

Teaching Tip: The best solution is to write two sentences. The second independent clause clarifies the description articulated in the first. There is a cause/effect sense ("the town looked deserted because..."), but to use a cause/effect connector like because forces the issue.

5. We worked from dusk to dawn, never had so many contracts been written in such a short time.

Two sentences: We worked from dusk to dawn. Never had so many contracts been written in such a short time.

Semicolon: We worked from dusk to dawn; never had so many contracts been written in such a short time.

Teaching Tip: Again, it's best not to force a relationship when one clause merely adds new information.

6. Money continued to flow in, we started to live the life of the rich, on weekends we ate at expensive restaurants.

Two sentences: Money continued to flow in. we started to live the life of the rich, on weekends we ate at expensive restaurants.

Semicolon: Money continued to flow in; we started to live the life of the rich. On weekends we ate at expensive restaurants.

Subordinating Conjunction: As money continued to flow in, we started to live the life of the rich. On weekends we ate at expensive restaurants.

Conjunctive Adverb: Money continued to flow in; in fact, we started to live the life of the rich. On weekends we ate at expensive restaurants.

Coordinating Conjunction: Money continued to flow in, so we started to live the life of the rich. On weekends we ate at expensive restaurants.

Teaching Tip: The key to this sentence is realizing that the third independent clause should be a separate sentence.

7. The river extended beyond the mountains, we saw the clouds merge with the water in the horizon.

Subordinating Conjunction: As the river extended beyond the mountains, we saw the clouds merge with the water in the horizon.

Teaching Tip: Using the subordinating conjunction as lends a certain smooth euphony to the sentence. The other solutions make the sentence sound abrupt.

8. Men and women drink coffee because it adds to their sense of well-being, it smells good and tastes good to all mankind, all respond to its wonderful stimulating properties.

Two sentences: Men and women drink coffee because it adds to their sense of well-being. It smells good and tastes good to all mankind, all respond to its wonderful stimulating properties.

Semicolon: Men and women drink coffee because it adds to their sense of well-being; it smells good and tastes good to all mankind, all respond to its wonderful stimulating properties.

Teaching Tip: I would encourage students to use a semicolon here. The semicolon establishes a connection between two relatively balanced sentences.

9. Caffeine supplies the principal stimulant, it increases the capacity for muscular and mental work without harmful reaction.

Two sentences: Caffeine supplies the principal stimulant. It increases the capacity for muscular and mental work without harmful reaction.

Teaching Tip: Two sentences work best here. The writer is simply adding information.

10. Like all good things in life, the drinking of coffee may be abused, those having an idiosyncratic susceptibility to alkaloids should be temperate in the use of tea, coffee, or cocoa.

Two sentences: Like all good things in life, the drinking of coffee may be abused. Those having an idiosyncratic susceptibility to alkaloids should be temperate in the use of tea, coffee, or cocoa.

11. In every high-tensioned country there is likely to be a small number of people who, because of certain individual characteristics, cannot drink coffee at all, these people belong to the abnormal minority of the human family.

Semicolon: In every high-tensioned country there is likely to be a small number of people who, because of certain individual characteristics, cannot drink coffee at all; these people belong to the abnormal minority of the human family.

12. Some people cannot eat strawberries, that would not be a valid reason for a general condemnation of strawberries.

Conjunctive Adverb: Some people cannot eat strawberries; however, that would not be a valid reason for a general condemnation of strawberries.

Coordinating Conjunction: Some people cannot eat strawberries, but that would not be a valid reason for a general condemnation of strawberries.

Teaching Tip: The contrast in the relationship should be reinforced with a conjunctive adverb or a coordinating conjunction.

13. Some writers claim for Persia the discovery of the coffee drink, there is no evidence to support the claim.

Conjunctive Adverb: Some writers claim for Persia the discovery of the coffee drink; however, there is no evidence to support the claim.

Coordinating Conjunction: Some writers claim for Persia the discovery of the coffee drink, but there is no evidence to support the claim.

14. The Persians appear to have used considerable intelligence in handling the political phase of the coffee-house question, it never became necessary to order them suppressed in Persia.

Subordinating Conjunction: Since the Persians appear to have used considerable intelligence in handling the political phase of the coffee-house question, it never became necessary to order them suppressed in Persia.

Conjunctive Adverb: The Persians appear to have used considerable intelligence in handling the political phase of the coffee-house question; therefore, it never became necessary to order them suppressed in Persia.

Coordinating Conjunction: The Persians appear to have used considerable intelligence in handling the political phase of the coffee-house question, so it never became necessary to order them suppressed in Persia.

Teaching Tip: The cause/effect relationship should be made obvious.

15. Residue from a super-saturated solution produces ideal seed crystals for growth in a lab, these crystals may contain impurities.

Subordinating Conjunction: Although residue from a super-saturated solution produces ideal seed crystals for growth in a lab, these crystals may contain impurities.

Conjunctive Adverb: Residue from a super-saturated solution produces ideal seed crystals for growth in a lab; however, these crystals may contain impurities.

Coordinating Conjunction: Residue from a super-saturated solution produces ideal seed crystals for growth in a lab, but these crystals may contain impurities.

16. The need for occupational therapists has grown substantially, therefore more colleges are offering programs in this high-demand field.

Two sentences: The need for occupational therapists has grown substantially. Therefore more colleges are offering programs in this high-demand field.

Semicolon: The need for occupational therapists has grown substantially; therefore, more colleges are offering programs in this high-demand field.

Subordinating Conjunction: Because the need for occupational therapists has grown substantially, more colleges are offering programs in this high-demand field.

Conjunctive Adverb: The need for occupational therapists has grown substantially; therefore, more colleges are offering programs in this high-demand field.

Coordinating Conjunction: The need for occupational therapists has grown substantially, so more colleges are offering programs in this high-demand field.

Teaching Tip: The original sentence includes the conjunctive adverb therefore, which implies a cause/effect relationship. Any option that includes this cause/effect relationship is preferable to one that does not.

Grammar Worksheets: Comma Splices, Worksheet 3, 16 Exercises. Answers
Only one answer, the one I consider best, is given below. As you can see from the above examples, several methods exist to correct a comma splice.

1. It's amazing how rapidly technology has developed, when glancing around this crowded campus it's hard to spot someone who isn't spaced out on his or her phone or computer.

Ans: It's amazing how rapidly technology has developed. When glancing around this crowded campus it's hard to spot someone who isn't spaced out on his or her phone or computer.

2. Technology is just a tool we have, it is how we use it that makes it good or bad.

Ans: Technology is just a tool we have; it is how we use it that makes it good or bad.

3. Jake knew something was not right with the kite, he remembered that he had not attached the tail.

Ans: Jake knew something was not right with the kite when he remembered that he had not attached the tail.

4. Jake attached the long tail using a larkshead knot, he launched the kite successfully.

Ans: After Jake attached the long tail using a larkshead knot, he launched the kite successfully.

5. The orange delta kite climbed quickly and gracefully, soon Jake realized he had let out the entire reel.

Ans: The orange delta kite climbed quickly and gracefully. Soon Jake realized he had let out the entire reel.

6. The kite seemed to hang in the balmy afternoon sky, Jake was mesmerized by the experience, he was late to his English class.

Ans: Because the kite seemed to hang in the balmy afternoon sky, Jake was **so** mesmerized by the experience **that** he was late to his English class.

Ans: The kite seemed to hang in the balmy afternoon sky. **In fact**, Jake was **so** mesmerized by the experience **that** he was late to his English class.

7. Hugo Boss sells attractive men's sports clothes, their products are upscale and somewhat expensive.

Ans: Hugo Boss sells attractive men's sports clothes; their products are upscale and somewhat expensive.

8. Jean thought that Cynthia would not understand the riddle about making four triangles with six toothpicks, Cynthia solved it after mulling it over a bit.

Ans: Jean thought that Cynthia would not understand the riddle about making four triangles with six toothpicks, **but** Cynthia solved it after mulling it over a bit.

9. Caffeine is considered an addictive substance, many people cannot function properly without it.

Ans: Caffeine is considered an addictive **substance; in fact, many** people cannot function properly without it.

10. Bryce Harper was one of the top baseball prospects in 2010, he went on to make the National League all-star team his first two seasons.

Ans: Bryce Harper was one of the top baseball prospects in **2010; in fact, he** went on to make the National League all-star team his first two seasons.

11. Many soccer (football) fans consider Lionel Messi one of the best players in the world, in 2009 he won the Ballon d'Or and FIFA World Player of the Year awards.

Ans: Many soccer (football) fans consider Lionel Messi one of the best players in the world. In 2009 he won the Ballon d'Or and FIFA World Player of the Year awards.

12. Great advances have been made in the prevention and treatment of HIV, many parts of the world are still ravaged by AIDS-related deaths.

Ans: Great advances have been made in the prevention and treatment of HIV, **but** many parts of the world are still ravaged by AIDS-related deaths.

13. Many HIV-positive people are unaware that they are infected with the virus, for example, in 2001 less than 1% of the sexually active urban population in Africa had been tested.

Ans: Many HIV-positive people are unaware that they are infected with the virus; for example, in 2001 less than 1% of the sexually active urban population in Africa had been tested.

14. The Western blot can be used to confirm infection in ambiguous cases of HIV infection, this test is not widely used in developing nations.

Ans: The Western blot can be used to confirm infection in ambiguous cases of HIV **infection; however, this** test is not widely used in developing nations.

15. Contemporary tests for HIV are very accurate, a single screening test is correct more than 99% of the time.

Ans: Contemporary tests for HIV are very **accurate. In fact, a** single screening test is correct more than 99% of the time.

16. Lionel Messi may be the best soccer player in the world today, many still consider Pele the best one ever.

Ans: Lionel Messi may be the best soccer player in the world today, **but** many still consider Pele the best one ever.