

# Avoid Comma-Splicing!

**Rule: where you can use a full stop, you can't use a comma.**

**Strategies:**

- 1. Use full stop. Don't overuse, unless you want staccato, 'hardboiled' crime fiction effect.**
- 2. Join the two clauses with conjunction e.g. *and, but, so, because*, according to sense.**
- 3. Use a dash (informal).**
- 4. Use colon (: = *I mean, that is to say*) or semi-colon (; = *and*) according to sense (formal).**
- 5. Completely reshape the sentence.**

**Instead of comma-splicing...**

**Find the best second clause to follow the first, and join it with Full Stop, Colon, Semi-Colon, Dash, or Conjunction as appropriate.**

You might think comedians were happy,  
jolly people offstage

you can find them on the shelf by the door.

We wanted to go out but couldn't

have you ever heard anything so crazy?

Green forms must be used  
for recording major experiments

they couldn't stand the noise.

Visiting the White House was  
the high point of our Washington tour

their remains have been found in Switzerland and Britain.

they are notorious for depression and neurosis.

It's hard to find equipment for that sport

we were surprised how small it was.

The inspector told the teacher that if no students  
came, she had to teach the lesson to an empty classroom

it was raining.

After Ben got his electric guitar,  
the neighbours started complaining

you can only understand its nature by stretching it.

Some Neolithic people lived in lake villages

when you do, it's expensive.

The mind is like an elastic band

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It was already five when I started swimming

the sun was setting and it was getting darker.

It looked as if a tornado had hit it

we were wondering how it didn't collapse.

It wasn't very bright

there was a bed in the middle of the room.

I started running for my life to the exit

I didn't care about the spiders' webs.

The floor was cracking

it made me anxious.

I don't want to know

it smells funny in there.

I drove to Chris's apartment

when I arrived he was waiting for me.

In the hall there was a desk

behind the desk was an old man.

He told us it was time to go

we were late already

That glue is very strong

it can stick a table to a ceiling

There was an awful smell in the room

it was as if someone had been frying onions for centuries.

He suffered a horrible stomach upset

he was back and forth to and from the toilet all night.