The Comma Splice

What it is:

- When two separate independent clauses, each a complete thought on its own, are incorrectly joined by a comma

  **For example:** The man built a large house with five bedrooms on the edge of town, his wife didn’t like it and refused to move in.

Background Definitions:

- **Main (independent) clause:**
  - Is a thought that **can** stand alone
  - It does not need any additional information to complete the sentence

  **For example:** The rain in November often turns into snow

- **Subordinate (dependent) clause:**
  - Is a thought that **cannot** stand on its own

  **For example:** Because the rain in November often turns into snow…

  If the rain in November often turns into snow. . .

  - These two underlined words cause this sentence to need a main clause to complete the thought.

- **Subordinating conjunctions:**
  - Specific words that turns a main clause into a subordinate clause.

  **Such as:** After, although, as long as, because, before, even though, if, just as, once, provided that, since, unless, until, when, where, which, while, who, why
How to Fix a Comma Splice

1. Replace comma with a semi colon
2. Replace comma with a period
3. Add a coordinating conjunction: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So (FANBOYS)

   For example:
   o The man built a large house with five bedrooms on the edge of town, but his wife didn’t like it and refused to move in.

4. Make one clause a subordinate (dependent) clause

   For example:
   o Although the man built a large house with five bedrooms on the edge of town, his wife didn’t like it and refused to move in.
   o After the man built a large house with five bedrooms on the edge of town, his wife didn’t like it and refused to move in.

• This document was edited from Dalhousie’s writing centre page, and more information can be found here: http://dal.ca.libguides.com/c.php?g=257176&p=4531758