Using Commas to Combine Sentences

How are commas used?

Commas alone cannot join two complete sentences. However, a comma combined with a coordinating conjunction can join two complete ideas of equal weight and importance.

When combining sentences...

Commas look like...

⇒ **Use coordinating conjunctions with a comma**
Such as *and, but, or, so, for* (meaning "because")*,* and *yet* (meaning "but")

- *My dog is old. My cat is still a kitten.*
- ***My dog is old, but my cat is still a kitten.***

Common errors are...

Common errors look like...

⇒ **Using *comma splices***
Comma splice refers to two sentences joined by a comma without the following coordinating conjunction.

- *My dog is old, my cat is still a kitten.*
- ***My dog is old, but my cat is still a kitten.***

⇒ **Using *run-on sentences***
A *run-on sentence* refers to two sentences connected by a coordinating conjunction without the preceding comma.

- *My dog is old but my cat is still a kitten.*
- ***My dog is old, but my cat is still a kitten.***

⇒ **Using *fused sentences***
A *fused sentence* refers to two sentences connected without a comma or a coordinating conjunction.

- *My dog is old my cat is still a kitten.*
- ***My dog is old, but my cat is still a kitten.***