Specimen:

The force of the water currents **were** so strong I was stuck in the middle of the bayou, being pulled by the currents. I could not swim**,** all I could do was scream for help and that’s what I did**,** the water currents were so strong that **it** was pulling me down stream and under the water**,** there was nothing I could do but scream and hold on to the tire for my life, while I was holding on for my life, I could hear my mother saying “I told you not to swing on that rope, you are a hard headed little boy, a hard head will make a soft behind”.

Corrected:

The force of the water currents **was** so strong I was stuck in the middle of the bayou, being pulled by the currents. I could not swim. All I could do was scream for help, and that’s what I did. The water currents were so strong that **they** were pulling me downstream and under the water. There was nothing I could do but scream and hold on to the tire for my life. While I was holding on for my life, I could hear my mother saying**,** “I told you not to swing on that rope -- you are a hard-headed little boy, a hard head will make a soft behind**.”**

We have made several sentences out of what originally were only two. The excellent content of the passage is now much easier to read. We are thinking about the author’s experience, not about comma splices. Note the exception to the rule in the short, catchy expression at the very end. Also note the change for the sake of numerical agreement to “was” and “they.” “Force” is a singular subject. The word “currents” is plural, so the pronoun referring to that word should also be plural.

Specimen:

My goal **is** to water them as early as I can wake up**,** that way I **can** avoid the horrid rays of the sun. By the time I **am** done, I **have to feed** the pigs and **coats** and sometimes even **clean** their waste that way they can live in a cleaner environment.

Corrected:

My goal **was** to water them as early as I **could** wake up, **because** that way I **could** avoid the horrid rays of the sun. By the time I **was** done, I **would have fed** the pigs and **g**oats and sometimes even clean**ed** their waste, so they **could** live in a cleaner environment.

Originally we have a comma splice and a fused sentence. We also need to use the past tense in referring to past actions. Note that in resolving the comma splice, we add the word “because” to subordinate the clause which follows it. In correcting the fused sentence, we add a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

Specimen:

“Alright this is us**.**” **T**he other khaki lady said as she exited the van.

Corrected:

“All right, this is us**,**” **t**he other khaki lady said as she exited the van.

Here we change punctuation and capitalization to get rid of the sentence fragment, also known as an incomplete sentence.

Specimen:

I joined the group and with that came group responsibility. Group cleaning, group cooking and group gear.

Corrected:

I joined the group, and with that came group responsibility**:** group cleaning, group cooking, and taking care of group gear.

Notice how the sentence fragment is resolved by incorporation into a complete sentence, one in which a colon is used after a main clause to introduce a list. Also note the third item being put into –ing form to make the three parallel items parallel in grammatical form.

There is another possibility:

I joined the group, and with that came group responsibility. That included group cleaning, group cooking, and taking care of group gear.

Here we have converted the fragment into a second complete sentence.

Specimen:

It was then that the teacher decided to stop what we **are** doing and asked the class to turn in the papers to her.

Corrected:

It was then that the teacher decided to stop what we **were** doing and asked the class to turn in the papers to her.

Here we change the verb form to be consistent with the past tense.