

CHAPTER 27

Coordination and Subordination

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A. Coordination

A **clause** is a group of words that includes a subject and a verb. If a clause can stand alone as a complete idea, it is an **independent clause** and can be written as a **simple sentence**.*

Here are two independent clauses written as simple sentences:

1. The dog barked all night.
2. The neighbors didn't complain.

You can join two clauses together by placing a comma and a **coordinating conjunction** between them:

3. The dog barked all night, *but* the neighbors didn't complain.
4. Let's go to the beach today, *for* it is too hot to do anything else.

* For more work on simple sentences, see Chapter 26, "The Simple Sentence."

- The coordinating conjunctions *but* and *for* join together two clauses.
- Note that the clause on each side of the coordinating conjunction can stand alone as a complete sentence.
- A comma precedes each coordinating conjunction.

Here is a list of the most common coordinating conjunctions. To help you remember them, just think FANBOYS (the first letter of *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so*).

| Coordinating Conjunctions | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|----|-----|
| and | for | or | yet |
| but | nor | so | |

Be sure to choose the coordinating conjunction that best expresses the *relationship* between the two clauses in a sentence:

5. It was late, *so* I decided to take a bus home.
6. It was late, *yet* I decided to take a bus home.

- The *so* in sentence 5 means that the lateness of the hour caused me to take the bus. (The trains don't run after midnight.)
- The *yet* in sentence 6 means that despite the late hour I still decided to take a bus home. (I knew I might have to wait two hours at the bus stop.)
- Note that a comma precedes the coordinating conjunction.

PRACTICE 1

Read the following sentences for meaning. Then fill in the coordinating conjunction that *best* expresses the relationship between the two clauses. Don't forget to add the comma.

1. In 1853, a customer at Moon Lake Lodge in Saratoga, New York, thought his fried potatoes were too thick and soggy _____ he sent them back to the kitchen.
2. The Native American/African American chef, George Crum, took offense at this criticism of his cooking _____ he was a confident and cranky fellow.
3. Crum wanted to annoy his fussy customer _____ he angrily sliced some potatoes very thin, poured salt all over them, and fried them hard.
4. The chef expected the complaining patron to leave in a huff _____ he didn't.
5. Instead, the crispy potato thins pleased the customer immensely _____ he ordered more.

6. Crum, who soon opened his own restaurant, called his lucky invention "potato crunches" _____ he later renamed them "Saratoga Chips."
7. In the 1920s, traveling salesman Herman Lay began selling potato chips out of the trunk of his car _____ other companies began manufacturing them, too.
8. Now customers could order the tasty treat in restaurants _____ they could munch them at home.
9. However, chips at the bottom of the barrel or tin packaging would not stay fresh _____ would they stay crispy.
10. Entrepreneur Laura Scudder solved this problem by putting the chips between sheets of wax paper that she ironed together _____ the potato chip quickly became America's favorite snack.

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PRACTICE 2

Combine these simple sentences with a coordinating conjunction. Punctuate correctly.

1. My daughter wants to be a mechanic. She spends every spare minute at the garage.

2. Ron dared not look over the edge. Heights made him dizzy.

3. Tasha's living room is cozy. Her guests always gather in the kitchen.

4. Meet me by the bicycle rack. Meet me at Lulu's Nut Shop.

5. In 1969, the first astronauts landed on the moon. Most Americans felt proud.

B. Subordination

Two clauses can also be joined with a **subordinating conjunction**. The clause following a subordinating conjunction is called a **subordinate** or **dependent clause** because it depends on an independent clause to complete its meaning:

1. We will light the candles *when Flora arrives*.

- *When Flora arrives* is a subordinate or dependent clause introduced by the subordinating conjunction *when*.
- By itself, *when Flora arrives* is incomplete; it depends on the independent clause to complete its meaning.*

Note that sentence 1 can also be written this way:

2. *When Flora arrives*, we will light the candles.

- The meaning of sentences 1 and 2 is the same, but the punctuation is different.
- In sentence 1, because the subordinate clause *follows* the independent clause, *no comma* is needed.
- In sentence 2, however, because the subordinate clause *begins* the sentence, it is followed by a *comma*.

Here is a partial list of subordinating conjunctions:

| Subordinating Conjunctions | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------|
| after | if | unless |
| although | if only | until |
| as | in order that | when |
| as if | once | whenever |
| as though | provided that | where |
| because | rather than | whereas |
| before | since | wherever |
| even if | so that | whether |
| even though | though | while |

* For more work on incomplete sentences, or fragments, see Chapter 28, "Avoiding Sentence Errors," Part B.

Be sure to choose the subordinating conjunction that *best expresses the relationship* between the two clauses in a sentence:

3. This course was excellent *because* Professor Green taught it.
4. This course was excellent *although* Professor Green taught it.

- Sentence 3 says that the course was excellent *because* Professor Green, a great teacher, taught it.
- Sentence 4 says that the course was excellent *despite the fact that* Professor Green, apparently a bad teacher, taught it.

PRACTICE 3

Read the following sentences for meaning. Then fill in the subordinating conjunction that *best* expresses the relationship between the two clauses.

1. We could see very clearly last night _____ the moon was so bright.
2. Violet read *Sports Illustrated* _____ Daisy walked in the woods.
3. _____ it is cold outside, our new wood-burning Franklin stove keeps us warm.
4. The students buzzed with excitement _____ Professor Hargrave announced that classes would be held at the zoo.
5. _____ his shoulder loosens up a bit, Ron will stay on the bench.

PRACTICE 4

Punctuate the following sentences by adding a comma where necessary. Put a C after any correct sentences.

1. Thousands of low-income children in Venezuela have been given a new life because Jose Antonio Abreu taught them to play classical music.
2. While some people only talked about the poverty and drugs destroying many young Venezuelans Abreu took action.
3. After he convinced government leaders that musical training builds self-worth, Abreu got funding to start children's orchestras.
4. The results have been amazing as communities proudly support their young musicians.
5. When the children practice their violins or oboes they are also learning discipline, valuable skills, and the joys of musical teamwork.

6. The program ignores pop and tropical musicians like Christina Aguilera and Oscar de Leon because Abreu wants his students to master classical artists like Mozart and Beethoven.
7. Since the program was launched a generation of talented Venezuelan musicians is already performing, composing, and teaching classical music.
8. Because the program has been so successful it is the model for new youth orchestras now being formed throughout the world.

PRACTICE 5

Combine each pair of the following ideas by using a subordinating conjunction. Write each combination twice, once with the subordinating conjunction at the beginning of the sentence and once with the subordinating conjunction in the middle of the sentence. Punctuate correctly.

EXAMPLE

We stayed on the beach.

The sun went down.

We stayed on the beach until the sun went down.

Until the sun went down, we stayed on the beach.

1. This cactus has flourished.
2. I talk to it every day.

3. Ralph takes the train to Philadelphia.
4. He likes to sit by the window.

5. I had known you were coming.
6. I would have vacuumed the guest room.

7. He was the first person to eat a slice of meat between two pieces of bread.
8. The sandwich was named after the Earl of Sandwich.

9. Akila was about to answer the final question.
10. The buzzer sounded.

11. Few soap operas remain on the radio.
12. Daytime television is filled with them.

13. She connected the speakers.
14. The room filled with glorious sound.

15. The chimney spewed black smoke and soot.
16. Nobody complained to the local environmental agency.

C. Semicolons

You can join two independent clauses by placing a **semicolon** between them. The semicolon takes the place of a conjunction:

1. She hopes to receive good grades this semester; her scholarship depends on her maintaining a 3.5 average.
2. Tony is a careless driver; he has had three minor accidents this year alone.

- Each of the sentences above could also be made into two *separate sentences* by replacing the semicolon with a period.
- Note that the first word after a semicolon is *not* capitalized (unless, of course, it is a word that is normally capitalized, like someone's name).

PRACTICE 7

Each independent clause that follows is the first half of a sentence. Add a semicolon and a second independent clause. Make sure your second thought is also independent and can stand alone.

1. At 2 A.M. I stumbled toward the ringing telephone _____

2. *People* magazine published my letter to the editor _____

3. The officer pulled over the speeding pickup truck _____

4. Cameras are not permitted in the museum _____

5. Computer skills are increasingly important in many careers _____

D. Conjunctive Adverbs

In earlier chapters on paragraph and essay writing, you practiced using **transitional expressions** like *however*, *for example*, and *therefore*. Most transitional expressions are **conjunctive adverbs**. A conjunctive adverb placed after a semicolon can help clarify the relationship between two clauses:

1. I like the sound of that stereo; *however*, the price is too high.
2. They have not seen that film; *moreover*, they have not been to a theater for three years.

- Note that a comma follows the conjunctive adverb.

Here is a partial list of conjunctive adverbs, or transitional expressions.*

Conjunctive Adverbs or Transitional Expressions

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Addition: | also, besides, furthermore, in addition, moreover |
| Comparison: | likewise, similarly |
| Contrast: | however, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand |
| Example: | for example, for instance |
| Emphasis: | indeed, in fact, of course |
| Result: | consequently, therefore, thus |

PRACTICE 8

Punctuate each sentence correctly by adding a semicolon, a comma, or both, where necessary. Put a C after any correct sentences.

1. I hate to wash my car windows nevertheless it's a job that must be done.
2. Sonia doesn't know how to play chess however she would like to learn.
3. Dean Fader is very funny in fact he could be a professional comedian.
4. Deep water makes Maurice nervous therefore he does not want to join the scuba dive team.
5. I like this painting; the soft colors remind me of tropical sunsets.
6. The faculty approved of the new trimester system; furthermore, the students liked it too.
7. Bill has an iPod plugged into his ear all day consequently he misses a lot of good conversations.
8. We toured the darkroom then we watched an actual photo shoot.

* For more transitional expressions, see page 63.