

CONJUNCTIONS

Sometimes independent clauses are connected by one **coordinating conjunction**: *and, but, for, or, nor, so, and yet*. As these conjunctions do not subordinate, an independent clause beginning with one of them may stand as a complete sentence. Independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction are separated by commas. Therefore, to punctuate correctly, you must distinguish between independent clauses and other kinds of sentence elements joined by coordinating conjunctions. In the following examples note that only independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions are separated by commas:

The morning was *dark* and *rainy* [The conjunction *and* joins two adjectives, *dark* and *rainy*. No comma permitted.]

The broken vase *covered* the floor and *created* a mess. [The conjunction *and* joins the two verbs. No comma permitted.]

She climbed *up the hill* and *over the fence*. [The conjunction *and* joins two phrases. No comma permitted.]

Mrs. Smith shot the deer, but *her husband skinned it*. [The conjunction *but* connects two independent clauses, which are separated by a comma.]

A few conjunctions are used in pairs. They are called **correlative conjunctions**.

both...and	neither...nor	whether...or
either...or	not only...but (also)	

Sometimes two independent clauses are connected by a **conjunctive**, or **transitional, adverb** such as one of the following:

however	moreover	nevertheless	therefore
then	accordingly	otherwise	thus
hence	besides	consequently	

A semicolon is necessary before any of these words beginning a second clause. After the longer *conjunctive adverbs* a comma is generally used.

EX: We hiked all day; *then* at sundown we began to look for a place to camp.

Bill broke his leg during the Friday game; *consequently*, he could not play for the rest of the season.

Note: Conjunctive adverbs can be distinguished from subordinating conjunctions by the fact that the *adverbs* can be moved to a different position in the sentence, but the *conjunctions* cannot.

EX: Bill broke his leg during the Friday game; he could not, *consequently*, play for the rest of the season.

Other common conjunctions are **subordinating conjunctions**. These conjunctions are used to introduce a dependent clause. Students should be cautious that they do not confuse subordinating conjunctions with prepositions. The same words may be used to introduce both. The difference is that the conjunction introduces a group of words containing a subject and a verb. A preposition introduces a group of words that contains a noun or a pronoun.

EX: Before the game started, we had lunch.
(*Before* is used as a conjunction in this sentence.
The subject of the clause is *game*, the verb is *started*.)

Before the game, we had lunch. (In this sentence *before* is used as a preposition. The object of the preposition is *game*. There is no verb in the phrase. The subject of the sentence is *we* ; the verb is *had* .)

The following is a list of common subordinating conjunctions:

after	if	as	that
unless	when	as if	so...that
although	before	even if	as soon as
as though	whether	because	as long as
even though	why	until	wherever
though once	than	where	
since	while		