

Sentence Development Tutorial

Tutorial 15: **Joining Ideas** **(Coordination, Subordination and Semicolons)**

This Tutorial includes two files:

- **Lesson (15a_Joining_Ideas_Lesson)**

In order to learn the material presented in this tutorial more effectively, as you read you should take notes in a place that you can reference later. If it is convenient, you could print the tutorial and annotate it so you can keep it for future reference.

- **Exercises (15b_Joining_Ideas_Exercises)** – located in the same area as the lesson)
 - It has highlighted areas for you to answer the exercises using an application such as Adobe Acrobat Reader.
 - Download and save this file as your own; you will share it with an instructor after you complete the lesson and exercises.

Please contact the Writing Center with any questions or difficulties:
csmtwc@smccd.edu or 650-574-6436.

Coordination

Short, isolated sentences can make your writing sound choppy or less fluent. As a writer, your goal should be to combine short sentences into long, complex sentences that are punctuated correctly. One easy way to join sentences is to use what are called coordinators or coordinating conjunctions. The most common coordinators are **and**, **but**, and **so**.

Choppy: Jane's car broke down. She bought a new one.

Better: Jane's car broke down, **so** she bought a new one.

Notice that when we join two sentences with a coordinator, a comma ***always*** appears before the coordinator.

Principle I. Use a comma *before* a coordinator when joining two complete sentences.

A useful method to remember coordinators is that the first letter of each one together spells **FANBOYS**:

F or
A nd
N or
B ut
O r
Y et
S o

Coordinators not only *join* sentences. They also *show the logical relationship* between ideas in each sentence as shown in the following chart.

15. Joining Ideas (Coordination, Subordination and Semicolons)

| FANBOYS | Relationship | Joining Two Related Sentences using a Coordinator |
|------------|------------------------------|---|
| For | Result-Cause | Two complete sentences with a result-cause relationship: I am tired today. I danced until 4:00 in the morning. <i>Example:</i> I am tired today, for I danced until 4:00 in the morning. |
| And | Addition | Two complete sentences with an addition relationship (the second sentence provides <i>additional</i> information): I am tired today. <i>If I don't find time to sleep, I will be tired tomorrow.</i> <i>Example:</i> I am tired today, and if I don't find time to sleep, I will be tired tomorrow. |
| Nor | Addition of negatives | Two complete, negative sentences with an addition relationship (the second negative sentence provides additional information): I will not go to the movies today. <i>I will not go shopping at the mall.</i> <i>Example:</i> I will not go to the movies today, nor will I go shopping at the mall. <i>(Note: When you use nor, you will need to drop the word "not" and change the order of the subject and the verb in the second sentence.)</i> |
| But | Contrast | Two complete sentences that contrast with each other. <i>I am tired today.</i> Tomorrow I will run six miles. <i>Example:</i> I am tired today, but tomorrow I will run six miles. |
| Or | Alternatives | Two complete sentences, which are alternatives to each other. I will take a nap today. Tonight I will go to bed early. <i>Example:</i> I will take a nap today, or tonight I will go to bed early. |
| Yet | Contrast | Like but , yet shows contrast between two complete sentences. I am tired today. I feel good about the marathon tomorrow. <i>Example:</i> I am tired today, yet I feel good about the marathon tomorrow. |
| So | Cause-Result | Two complete sentences with a cause-result relationship. The second is a result of the first. <i>I am exhausted.</i> I will take a four-hour nap. <i>Example:</i> I am exhausted, so I will take a four-hour nap. |

Principle II. Use the correct coordinator (FANBOYS) to accurately show the logical relationship between the two sentences that you are joining.

Coordinators show *different* logical relationships. Look at the following two sentences.

Hector wanted to make dinner.

Julie wanted to go out to eat.

You could combine these two sentences in a couple of ways. Watch what happens to the meaning depending on which coordinator we use.

- Hector wanted to make dinner, **but** Julie wanted to go out to eat.
(*They disagreed about what to do together—CONTRAST*)
- Hector wanted to make dinner, **and** Julie wanted to go out to eat.
(*They each had their own plan, one and the other—ADDITION*)
- Hector wanted to make dinner, **so** Julie wanted to go out to eat.
(*Julie doesn't like the way Hector cooks—CAUSE/EFFECT*)

Please open your 15b exercises file and complete Exercises 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Subordination

Like coordinators, subordinators join sentences and show a variety of relationships between logically related ideas.

Once you place a subordinator in front of a sentence, the sentence is no longer complete but becomes a subordinate clause, also known as a dependent clause.

Her father bought her a beautiful gold watch. (complete sentence)

She was only ten years old. (complete sentence)

When she was only ten years old (***not** a complete sentence*)
subordinate clause

15. Joining Ideas (Coordination, Subordination and Semicolons)

Her father bought her a beautiful gold watch **when she was only ten years old.**
complete sentence *subordinate clause*

Even though it is more rare, you could also put the subordinate clause in the middle of the sentence:
She realized, after she had waited in line at the door, that she could have purchased
her ticket in advance.
subordinate clause

Following are the punctuation rules for subordinate clauses, depending on where the subordinate clause is located in the sentence.

Use a comma when the subordinate clause appears at the beginning of a sentence.

Because she purchased her ticket in advance, *she didn't have to wait in line at the door.*
subordinate clause *complete sentence*

Put commas on either side of the subordinate clause if it appears in the middle of the sentence:

She realized, after she had waited in line at the door, that she could have purchased her
complete sentence *subordinate clause* *complete sentence*
tickets in advance.

You do not need a comma when a subordinate clause appears at the end of a sentence:

She didn't have to wait in line at the door **because she purchased her ticket in advance.**
complete sentence *subordinate clause*

Principle IV. When you use a subordinator at the beginning of a sentence, you must use a comma to separate the two clauses. If the subordinate clause is in the middle of the sentence, set it off from the rest of the sentence with commas. You do not use a comma if the subordinate or dependent clause comes at the end of the sentence.

Please open your 15b exercises file and complete Exercises 5 and 6.

There is one last principle of subordinate clauses.

Principle V: A subordinate clause downplays an idea within a sentence.

The idea that you are playing down, or making less important, is in the subordinate clause. The idea that you are emphasizing appears in the complete sentence (also known as an independent clause).

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <i>subordinate clause</i> | <i>complete sentence</i> |
| Because I joined a volleyball team, | <i>I needed to get in shape.</i> |
| <i>idea played down</i> | <i>idea emphasized</i> |

“I needed to get in shape” is emphasized because it is the complete sentence.

“Because I joined a volleyball team” is played down because it is simply extra information. It tells us the cause of her need to get in shape—so that she can play well for the team.

As shown in the following example, if the sentence is rewritten, “I needed to get in shape” is downplayed, and “I joined a volleyball team” is emphasized. That is, the writer needs to get in shape and so she joins the team in order to do so.

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <i>subordinate clause</i> | <i>complete sentence</i> |
| Because I needed to get in shape, | I joined a volleyball team. |
| <i>idea played down</i> | <i>idea emphasized</i> |

Please open your 15b exercises file and complete Exercises 7 and 8.

The Semicolon Without Transition Words

A semicolon looks like this:

;

Principle VI. The semicolon is used to join two related sentences when you choose not to use a coordinator or subordinator. You must *not* capitalize the first letter of the second sentence when you use a semi-colon.

Two related sentences:

Buying a new car can be an ordeal. The worst part is picking the one you want.

Combined with a semicolon:

Buying a new car can be an ordeal; the worst part is picking the one you want.

Please open your 15b exercises file and complete Exercise 9.

Semicolons with Transition Words

Like coordinators, transition words express the logical relationships between ideas, but they **do not** join sentences; therefore, you must ***always*** use a semicolon with a transition word to link two sentences together.

The boy was not happy with his peanut butter and jelly sandwich.
He showed great interest in the bologna and cheese sandwich his best friend was eating.

*The boy was not happy with his peanut butter and jelly **sandwich; however,** he showed great interest in the bologna and cheese sandwich his best friend was eating.*

*Notice how the semicolon is used ***before*** the transition word and a comma is used ***after*** it.*

Transition words and phrases can occur at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a sentence.

Beginning of sentence:

Katie tried to walk the **dog; however,** it didn't want to move.

Katie tried to walk the **dog. However,** it didn't want to move.

Middle of sentence:

Katie tried to walk the dog; **it, however,** didn't want to move.

Katie tried to walk the dog. **It, however,** didn't want to move.

End of sentence:

Katie tried to walk the **dog; it** didn't want to move, **however.**

Katie tried to walk the dog. It didn't want to move, **however.**

Principle VII. Although they can show the logical relationships that coordinators and subordinators do, transition words *do not join sentences grammatically*, so you **must use a semicolon or period** between sentences.

Coordinators and subordinators

Coordinators and subordinators join sentences more effectively than transition words, so you should be careful not to overuse transition words. Remember that when you do use transition words to join two sentences, you must ***always*** use a **semicolon** or a **period (not a comma)**. If you do not follow this rule, you will create a run-together sentence, as shown in the following example.

Correct: Jamil wants to go to the **concert; however,** he can't afford to go.

Run-together sentence: Jamil wants to go to the **concert, however,** he can't afford to go.

15. Joining Ideas (Coordination, Subordination and Semicolons)

Following is a chart that shows some common transition words, listed by the logical relationship. Following is a chart that shows some common transition words, listed by the logical relationship.

| Relationship Shows | Transition Words |
|--------------------|--|
| Addition | also furthermore further moreover additionally similarly |
| Contrast | however otherwise still nevertheless alternatively on the other hand nonetheless |
| Cause-Result | therefore hence thus as a result consequently |
| Alternative | on the other hand conversely instead |
| Condition | otherwise |
| Time Sequence | then next previously subsequently afterwards |

Please open your 15b exercises file and complete Exercise 10.

The following chart lists the FANBOYS, some commonly used subordinators, and some transition words as well as the relationship each word expresses. This chart shows the choices you have when joining sentences to show logical relationships.

15. Joining Ideas (Coordination, Subordination and Semicolons)

| Expressing Logical Relationships Between Ideas | | | |
|--|--------------|--|--|
| Relationship Shows | Coordinators | Subordinators | Transition Words |
| Addition | and | | also further additionally furthermore moreover similarly |
| Contrast | but yet | although though even though while even if whereas | however still nonetheless on the other hand otherwise nevertheless alternatively |
| Result-Cause | for | because since as | |
| Cause-Result | so | | therefore thus consequently hence as a result |
| Addition of Negatives | nor | | |
| Alternative | or | | on the other hand conversely instead |
| Condition | | If unless provided (that) | otherwise |
| Time Sequence | | after as soon as while before since when until as once whenever | then next previously subsequently afterwards |

- Coordinators** join sentences and can introduce sentences.
 - Mary walked the dog, **for** it needed to lose weight.
 - So** it lost ten pounds after two weeks of walking.
- Subordinators** join sentences and introduce a sentence *only when the party they are attached to is itself attached to a complete sentence*—an independent clause:
 - Mary walked the dog **because** it needed to lose weight.
 - Because** it needed to lose weight, Mary walked the dog.
- Transition Words** or phrases *do not join sentences* though they can show the logical relationships that coordinators and subordinators do. Because they do not join sentences grammatically, you must use a semicolon or period between the sentences. (NOTE the placement of the commas. They can come at the beginning, middle or end of a sentence:
 - Mary tried to walk the dog; **however**, it didn't want to move.
 - Mary tried to walk the dog. **However**, it didn't want to move.
 - Mary tried to walk the dog. It didn't want to move, **however**.
 - Mary tried to walk the dog; it, **however**, didn't want to move.

Final Activity

Instructions:

1. Review a classroom essay that you are working on, and be prepared to incorporate coordination, subordination and the semicolon into your own writing.
2. Make an appointment for a conference with an instructor working in the Writing Center. To make this appointment, sign up using the same method you use to make essay conference appointments. Be sure to include a comment or note that you are meeting about a tutorial.
3. During this appointment, the instructor will make sure you understand the concepts covered in this tutorial, answer any questions that you might have, review your answers to the exercises, and check to see if you can incorporate the skill into your writing.