

15

Coordination: Compound Sentences

To **coordinate** two or more parts of a sentence is to give them the same rank and role by making them grammatically alike. As we noted in 13.8, you can coordinate words or phrases to make a compound phrase. In this chapter we show how you can coordinate simple sentences to make a *compound sentence*.

15.1 MAKING COMPOUND SENTENCES

A **compound sentence** consists of two or more independent clauses joined by conjunctions, semicolons, or conjunctive adverbs. Each clause is called **independent** (IC) because each could stand by itself as a complete sentence:

IC	JOINED TO	IC	JOINED BY
They acquired horses	and	their ancient nomadic spirit was suddenly free of the ground. —N. Scott Momaday	conjunction
History does not stutter	;	it rhymes.	semicolon
The average age for women to marry in Ireland is twenty-six;	in contrast,	women of India marry at an average age of fourteen.	conjunctive adverb

15.2 COMPOUNDING WITH CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions include the set of words commonly known as “A. B. Fonsy”: *and, but, for, or, nor, so, and yet*. They show the following relations:

1. SIMPLE ADDITION

The economists considered budget cuts, *and* the politicians thought of votes.

2. ADDITION OF A NEGATIVE POINT

Many of the settlers had never farmed before, *nor* were they ready for the brutal Saskatchewan winters.

3. CONTRAST

The delegates came to discuss world trade, *but* the protestors wanted to stop them.

All the candidates claim to understand Europeans, *yet* none has ever lived in Europe.

4. LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE

My father never attended the military parades in the city, *for* he hated war.

During World War II, Americans of Japanese descent were unjustly suspected of disloyalty, *so* they were placed in detention camps.

For introduces a reason; *so* introduces a consequence.

5. CHOICE

Nelson could keep his ships near England, *or* he could order them to attack the French in Egypt.

PUNCTUATION WITH CONJUNCTIONS

A conjunction used between independent clauses normally needs a comma just before it, as shown by all the examples above. But there are two exceptions.

1. You can omit the comma when the clauses are short:

Many are called but few are chosen.

2. You can replace the comma with a semicolon when there are commas elsewhere in the sentence:

On the morning of June 28, 1969, the weather finally cleared; but the climbers, wearied by their efforts of the previous days, could not attempt the summit.

You can use a comma without a conjunction when there are more than two clauses, but you should normally use a conjunction between the last two:

The sun shone, a stiff breeze ruffled the bay, the sails bellied out, and the bow cut the water like a knife.

15.3 OVERUSING AND

Use *and* sparingly in compound sentences. A series of clauses strung together by *and* can become boring:

I was born in Illinois, and the first big city I ever saw was Chicago, and was I ever excited! I went there with my father and mother, and we stayed in a big hotel in the Loop, and I saw lots of interesting sights. We spent a whole day just walking around the city, and I got a stiff neck from looking up at the skyscrapers, and my feet got sore too from walking down so many streets. I was glad to go back to the hotel and take a long soak in the Jacuzzi.

To break the monotony of compounding with *and*, substitute other linking words—or other constructions:

Since I was born in Illinois, the first big city I ever saw was Chicago. Was I ever excited! My father and mother took me to a big hotel in the Loop. On the day after our arrival, we spent eight hours just walking around the city to see the sights. It was exhausting. In fact, I got a stiff neck from looking up at all the skyscrapers and sore feet from walking down so many streets. I couldn't wait to take a long soak in the Jacuzzi at our hotel.

For alternatives to the overuse of *and* constructions, [see chapter 17](#).

15.4 COMPOUNDING WITH THE SEMICOLON

A semicolon alone can join two independent clauses when the relationship between them is obvious:

Some books are undeservedly forgotten ; none are undeservedly remembered
—W. H. Auden

Too much, perhaps, has been said of his silence ; too much stress has been laid upon his reserve.
—Virginia Woolf

15.5 COMPOUNDING WITH CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

A **conjunctive adverb**—sometimes called a **sentence adverb**—is a word or phrase that shows a relation between the clauses it joins, as a conjunction does. But a conjunctive adverb is usually weightier and more emphatic than a conjunction:

The Iron Duke had complete confidence in his soldiers' training and valor; *furthermore*, he considered his battle plan a work of genius.

Conjunctive adverbs indicate the following relations between one clause and another:

1. ADDITION (*besides, furthermore, moreover, in addition*)

Some economists oppose legislation restricting foreign trade; *in addition*, they attack proposals to increase corporate taxes.

2. LIKENESS (*likewise, similarly, in the same way*)

Many young Englishmen condemned the English war against France in the 1790s; *likewise*, many young Americans condemned the American war against North Vietnam in the 1960s.

3. CONTRAST (*however, nevertheless, still, nonetheless, conversely, otherwise, instead, in contrast, on the other hand*)

Einstein's theory of relativity was largely the product of speculation; experiments made within the past fifty years, *however*, have confirmed many of its basic points.

4. CAUSE AND EFFECT (*accordingly, consequently, hence, therefore, as a result, for this reason*)

Chamberlain made an ill-considered peace treaty with Hitler after the German invasion of Czechoslovakia; *as a result*, England was unprepared for the German invasion of Poland.

5. A MEANS-AND-END RELATION (*thus, thereby, by this means, in this manner*)

Florence Nightingale organized a unit of thirty-eight nurses for the Crimean War in the 1850s; *thus* she became a legend.

6. REINFORCEMENT (*for example, for instance, in fact, in particular, indeed*)

Public transportation will also be vastly improved; a high-speed train, *for instance*, will take passengers from Montreal to Toronto in less than two hours.

7. TIME (*meanwhile, then, subsequently, afterward, earlier, later*)

At first, members of the audience were overtly hostile to the speaker; *later*, they cheered her as one of their own.

As items 3 and 6 show, you may use a conjunctive adverb *within* a clause, not just before its subject.

PUNCTUATION WITH CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

A conjunctive adverb normally takes punctuation on either side of it. The punctuation depends on where the conjunctive adverb is used:

1. When used *between* two independent clauses, the conjunctive adverb is normally preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma:

Townsppeople consider the covered bridge a link to a golden age; *as a result*, they have voted funds for its restoration.

2. Some conjunctive adverbs (including *thus, then, still, otherwise, and hence*) may begin a clause with no comma after them:

The rise of the dollar against foreign currencies drives up the price of our exports; *thus* we lose customers abroad.

3. When used *within* the second clause, the conjunctive adverb is normally set off by commas:

Jackson did not get the nomination; he managed, *however*, to win the votes of over one thousand delegates.

EXCEPTION: Some conjunctive adverbs, including *therefore*, *nevertheless*, *nonetheless*, *instead*, and those mentioned above in entry 2, may be used without commas when they are placed just before the main verb:

The hole in the ozone layer is steadily growing; we must therefore stop sending fluorocarbons into the atmosphere.

Joining Independent Clauses

IN BRIEF

The independent clauses (IC) of a compound sentence are normally joined in one of the following three ways:

1. IC ; IC when the relation between clauses is obvious.
2. IC , conjunction IC to make the relation explicit.
3. IC ; conjunctive adverb, IC to make the relation emphatic.
(Placement of the conjunctive adverb is optional)





15.6 EDITING COMMA SPLICES

The **comma splice** is the error of joining two independent clauses—two possible sentences—with nothing but a comma:

*One of the runners suffered from heat exhaustion, she collapsed two miles from the finish.

When you use the comma to join or splice two distinct statements, you are probably trying to keep two related points together in one sentence. But the comma alone cannot do that for you. You should therefore do one of four things:

1. PUT A CONJUNCTION AFTER THE COMMA:

EDITED: One of the runners suffered from heat exhaustion, so she collapsed two miles from the finish.

2. REPLACE THE COMMA WITH A SEMICOLON:

EDITED: One of the runners suffered from heat exhaustion; she collapsed two miles from the finish.

3. REPLACE THE COMMA WITH A SEMICOLON AND A CONJUNCTIVE ADVERB:

EDITED: One of the runners suffered from heat exhaustion; as a result, she collapsed two miles from the finish.

4. REPLACE THE COMMA WITH A PERIOD, MAKING TWO SENTENCES:

EDITED: One of the runners suffered from heat exhaustion. She collapsed two miles from the finish.

Sometimes a comma splice occurs when the second clause in a sentence begins with a conjunctive adverb:

*Most working people get at least one raise a year, nevertheless, inflation often leaves them with no increase in buying power.

A conjunctive adverb used between two clauses must be preceded by a semicolon:

EDITED: Most working people get at least one raise a year; nevertheless, inflation often leaves them with no increase in buying power.

Alternatively, you can use a period, making two sentences:

EDITED: Most working people get at least one raise a year. Nevertheless, inflation often leaves them with no increase in buying power.





15.7 EDITING RUN-ON (FUSED) SENTENCES

A **run-on sentence**, sometimes called a **fused sentence**, joins two independent clauses—two possible sentences—with no punctuation or conjunction between them:

*Emily listened to the lobster boats chugging out to sea from the cove she watched the gulls sailing overhead.

Here the first independent clause simply pushes into the second one. We cannot tell for sure where the first one ends. Is its last word *sea* or *cove*?

You make this error when your thoughts come in a rush, outrunning your hand. You are most likely to find the error by reading your sentences aloud, listening for the drop in your voice to tell you where one statement (or independent clause) ends and another begins. When you find that point and see no punctuation to mark it, do one of four things:

1. USE A COMMA AND A CONJUNCTION BETWEEN THE CLAUSES:

EDITED: Emily listened to the lobster boats chugging out to sea from the cove, and she watched the gulls sailing overhead.

2. USE A SEMICOLON BETWEEN THE CLAUSES:

EDITED: Emily listened to the lobster boats chugging out to sea from the cove; she watched the gulls sailing overhead.

3. USE A SEMICOLON AND A CONJUNCTIVE ADVERB BETWEEN THE CLAUSES:

EDITED: Emily listened to the lobster boats chugging out to sea from the cove; then she watched the gulls sailing overhead.

4. USE A PERIOD AT THE END OF THE FIRST CLAUSE. You will then have two sentences:

EDITED: Emily listened to the lobster boats chugging out to sea from the cove. She watched the gulls sailing overhead.

