

PUNCTUATION OF CLAUSES

The terms *independent clause*, *main clause*, and *sentence* are all used to describe word groupings which contain a subject and a verb and make a complete thought. Two sentences, or *independent clauses*, which make *independent but related thoughts* may be joined together to emphasize or clarify the **relationship** between the two thoughts. The rules of grammar help us to effectively position and/or join clauses to create logical meaning flow and show relationships between ideas.

Two INDEPENDENT CLAUSES may be joined in three ways to **coordinate** the flow of meaning in a sentence.

1. use a semicolon to create one sentence:

independent clause ; (space) independent clause
Jane walked to the store; her brother walked with her.

2. use a comma and a **coordinating conjunction** (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So) to create one sentence:

independent clause , (space) coordinating conjunction independent clause
Jane walked to the store, and her brother walked with her.

3. use a semi-colon and one of the following transitional words:

accordingly	also	consequently	for example	furthermore	however
indeed	in fact	moreover	nevertheless	on the other hand	otherwise
so	still	then	therefore	thus	too

NOTE: A semi-colon is used **ONLY** when these words are used to join two **independent clauses**.

AVOID THESE ERRORS: Run-ons and comma splices are typical types of errors made when punctuating clauses. A **run-on** is a “collision” of two independent clauses due to the **absence** of punctuation. On the other hand, a **comma splice** is a grammatical “fender-bender” where two independent clauses bump due to **improper** punctuation. Avoid these errors by following the rules listed above. For additional practice see the handouts on run-ons and comma splices.

Two INDEPENDENT CLAUSES may also be separated

by using a period and a capital letter to create two sentences with related ideas.

independent clause • (space) independent clause
Jane walked to the store. Her brother walked with her.

When clauses are separated into individual sentences, the relationship between ideas is conveyed by the order of the sentences.

An INDEPENDENT CLAUSE may also be joined to a DEPENDENT CLAUSE (a word grouping with a subject and a verb which is **dependent** upon another sentence or independent clause for its meaning). The dependent clause may introduce the independent clause or follow it.

<i>If I were rich,</i>	<i>I would shop at Saks Fifth Avenue.</i>
Introductory Dependent Clause; meaning incomplete	Independent Clause; completes thought

OR

<i>She shops at Saks Fifth Avenue</i>	<i>when she has money.</i>
Independent Clause; completes thought	Dependent Clause; meaning incomplete

Note these words which signal that a clause is **DEPENDENT**

after	although	as	because	before
even though	if	since	so that	though
unless	until	when / whenever	where / wherever	while

An **INDEPENDENT CLAUSE** and a **DEPENDENT CLAUSE** may be joined in several ways. Two of the most common ways are:

1. To link a dependent clause at the beginning of a sentence with an independent clause which follows, place a comma *after* the dependent clause.

When Jane walked to the store, her brother walked with her.

2. When a dependent clause comes after an independent clause, no comma is used:

Jane's brother walked with her when she went to the store.

METHODS OF JOINING CLAUSES ILLUSTRATED

COORDINATION: *joining ideas or elements of equal importance*

1.	INDEPENDENT CLAUSE	for and nor but or yet so	INDEPENDENT CLAUSE
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2.	INDEPENDENT CLAUSE	;	INDEPENDENT CLAUSE
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3.	INDEPENDENT CLAUSE	consequently further however	;	INDEPENDENT CLAUSE
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SUBORDINATION: *joining clauses that cannot stand alone with independent clauses*

After Although As	DEPENDENT CLAUSE	;	INDEPENDENT CLAUSE
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NOTE: If the dependent clause comes after the independent clause, no comma is required.