

Comma & Conjunction Patterns

COORDINATION

When two independent clauses are combined using a coordinating conjunction, the conjunction must be preceded by a comma:

Jose Canseco is a great baseball player , but he behaves like a spoiled kid.

When the relationship between the combined independent clauses is conveyed by a conjunctive adverb, then the clauses must be combined using a semicolon, and a comma usually follows the conjunctive adverb.

Jose Canseco is a great baseball player ; unfortunately, he behaves like a spoiled kid.

When no coordinating conjunction or conjunctive adverb adequately conveys the relationship between the independent clauses, then simply a semicolon may be used to combine them.

Jeannie hates cottonwood trees ; they aggravate her allergies.

SUBORDINATION

When the independent clause of a sentence is preceded by an introductory modifier, the beginning of the independent clause should usually be signaled by a comma. If that introductory modifier is an adverb clause, the comma pattern is as follows:

While Allison was in school , she worked for a store in the mall.

When the adverb clause follows the independent clause, no comma is necessary:

Allison worked for a store in the mall while she was in school.

Whenever a group of words seems unnecessary or interrupts the flow of a sentence, it is considered a non-restrictive element and must be bracketed by commas. If the non-restrictive element is an adjective clause, the comma pattern is as follows:

Computers, which seem to get cheaper every day , are necessary tools in the workplace.

When an adjective clause is necessary, it is restrictive, no commas are needed:

Most people who exercise live longer.

COORDINATION CONJUNCTIONS

and, but, (either . . .) or, (neither . . .) nor, yet, for, *and* so

CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

besides	thus	otherwise	conversely
furthermore	thereby	instead	afterward(s)
moreover	by this means	in contrast	for this reason
in addition	in this manner	accordingly	nonetheless
likewise	for example	hence	subsequently
similarly	for instance	as a result	therefore
in the same way	in fact	earlier	still
however	in particular	later	then
nevertheless	indeed	on the other hand	consequently

SUBORDINATORS (for adverb clauses)

when	until	lest	so . . . that
after	as soon as	whenever	so that
as long as	before	whoever	now that
ever since	as	however	in order that
while	because	ever	where
since	though	whatever	unless
although	even though	wherever	as though
whereas	if	whichever	as if
provided that	such that	than	

SUBORDINATORS (for adverb clauses)

whoever	whichever	where
whomever	if	wherever
whatever	that	which
who/whom	what	when
how	why	

RELATIVE PRONOUNS (for adjective clauses)

who	whoever	whose	where
whom	whomever	whatever	that
which	whichever		