

Semicolons

- Join two short related main clauses
 - CL1; CL2.
 - Do not capitalize after semi colon
- Between list items if items have commas in them
 - Sam, the physicist; Amy, the engineer; and Tim, the botanist*



Transitional Words & Phrases/ Conjunctive Adverbs

- Start a new sentence or clause
- Set off by a comma

Additionally
In addition
Consequently
Further
Finally

Hence
However
Nevertheless
Otherwise
Similarly

Subsequently
Therefore
Thus

CL1. Trans, CL2.

CL1; trans, CL2.

CL1. CL, trans, 2. <less common

Problem: comma splice

Only a comma joining 2 independent clauses

- ex. I would write, however, I'm too tired.

Commas

- Before coordinating conjunction that joins two main clauses: CL1, and CL2.
- Between list items: *A, B, & C* (the comma before & is optional)
- Before a quote: *he said, "ABC."*
- After intro words before subject: *Yesterday, we studied.*
- Around inserted material: *Cookie bear, the large jar of animal crackers, was present at most events.*



Sentences & Punctuation Cheat Sheet



Created by Kelly J Cunningham for the UVA Engineering Graduate Writing Lab

Independent Clause (Main Clause)

- Subject + Verb + Complete thought
- can be a sentence by itself

CL = clause

Coordinating Conjunctions

FANBOYS: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so* (NOT so that)

CL1, coordconj CL2.

Subordinating Conjunctions

After

Although

As/as if/ as long as/ as soon as/ as though

Because

Before

By the time

Even if/though

Every time

If/if only

In case

In order that

In the event that

Just in case

Now that

Once

Only if

Rather than

Since

So that

The first time

Though

Unless

Until

When

Whenever

Where

Whereas

Whether or not

While

Subordinating Conj + Indep CL= Dependent CL

SubConj CL, CL. (Dep CL, Ind CL.)

CL SubConj CL. (Ind CL Dep CL.)

no comma

Relative (Adjective) Clauses

- Modifies a noun
- Comes after noun it modifies
- Begins with relative pronoun:
 - *that, which, who, whom, whose*

Essential Relative Clauses

- No commas
- If human-> who (*that* is also sometimes used with people)
- If nonhuman-> that (US English, *which* may be used in some varieties)
- Provides critical info: the sentence doesn't work without it
- *Ex. Introductions that appear in dissertations tend to be longer than the average journal article intro.*

Nonessential Relative Clauses

- Commas around the inserted material
- If human-> who
- If nonhuman-> which (NOT that)
- Provides bonus info: you could remove it & the sentence still works
- *Ex. Introductions, which come at the beginning of a paper, are often the most difficult sections to write.*

Avoid vague which

- Be sure it is clear what 'which' refers to
- If referring to a whole idea found earlier in the sentence, consider using an -ing form instead:
 - ❌ The process removes cadmium & lead, which leaves the product uncontaminated.
 - The process removes cadmium & lead, leaving the product uncontaminated.

Tips



- Must have the relative pronoun (who, that, which) when it's the subject: *Researchers who work in teams publish more.*
- Can omit the relative pronoun when it's the object (there's some other subject for the relative clause): *The research (that) I published was funded by the NSF.*
- Double check subject verb agreement in the relative clause & the main clause:
 - *The issue you are having is common in writing.*

Modifiers

- Words, phrases or clauses that add info about another element in a sentence
- It needs to be clear what the modifier refers to

Problem: Dangling Modifier

- Modifies an element that is not clearly stated- implicit subject doesn't match actual subject of modified clause
- Often at beginning of the sentence

- 
By modifying the parameter, the model accuracy was seen to increase.
- 
By modifying the parameter, we increased the model accuracy.

Problem: Misplaced Modifier

- Modifier not close enough to the element it modifies

- 
Sitting on the keyboard, Bob thought the cat was cute.
- 
Bob thought the cat, sitting on the keyboard, was cute.