

CLAUSES AND COMPOUND SENTENCES

A good knowledge of the use of subordinate clauses helps writers to improve and vary their style. There are two kinds of clauses: **independent** and **dependent**. All clauses must have both a subject and verb.

An independent clause is a sentence; it can stand alone: "Alice is a terrible typist."

A dependent clause depends on other words in a sentence: "Alice is a terrible typist because she tries to rush all the time." The underlined portion, which is a dependent (subordinate) clause, cannot stand alone. "Because she tries to rush all the time" is not a sentence.

Every sentence is one of the following:

- (1) an independent clause--Mary got sick last night. (This is a simple sentence.)
- (2) more than one independent clause--Mary got sick last night, and her husband took care of her. (This is a compound sentence.)
- (3) a combination of independent and dependent clauses--Mary got sick last night after she ate the lasagna that John had cooked. (This is a complex sentence.)

Adverb and Adjective Clauses

Adverb clauses and adjective clauses are used to combine ideas and provide writers with techniques for sentence variety. Key signal words for each follow:

Adverb Clause Signal Words				Adjective Clause Signal Words	
after	although	until	as	who	that
where	though	while	if	whom	when
because	even though	before	when	whose	where
even if	since	so that	unless	which	
whenever	wherever	as if			

The following examples illustrate how adverb and adjective clauses are used to combine ideas:

The show is over. We will be going to the restaurant. two simple sentences

After the show is over, we will be going to the restaurant. complex sentences
 We will be going to the restaurant after the show is over. with adverb clause

Larry is a sleepwalker. He is my brother. two simple sentences
 Larry, who is my brother, is a sleepwalker. complex sentence
with adjective clause

Compound Sentences

A sentence that consists of two or more independent clauses connected correctly is a compound sentence. Independent clauses/sentences may be joined in three ways:

(1) by using only a semicolon (;)

(2) by using a semicolon with a conjunctive adverb or transitions, such as

also	however	thus
besides	in addition	therefore
for example	moreover	then
furthermore	nevertheless	consequently
hence	otherwise	to illustrate
in fact	of course	without a doubt

Please note, these words may also be used as interrupters instead of sentence connectors. If they are used as interrupters, they do not need a semicolon; instead, they will usually be set off by commas. Also, though a semicolon may be used between two related sentences, a period may also be used with or without the transition words listed above.

(3) by using a comma with a coordinating conjunction, such as

and but or nor for so yet

The following examples illustrate how to combine sentences using the three rules above:

It is raining today. I will need my umbrella.	two simple sentences
It is raining today; I will need my umbrella.	rule 1
It is raining today; I will, therefore, need my umbrella.	rule 1
It is raining today; therefore, I will need my umbrella.	rule 2
It is raining today; thus, I will need my umbrella.	rule 2
It is raining today, so I will need my umbrella.	rule 3
It is raining today, and, therefore, I will need my umbrella.	rule 3

All of the sentences above are written correctly. One way is not better than another. The most important point to remember in your own writing is to use a variety of ways to connect your sentences. Decide which transition words are best depending upon what you want to emphasize. If you can master the above rules, you will never write a run-on sentence, which is nothing more than two or more sentences not connected properly!

There are other ways to combine sentences and display sentence variety, too, by using present participles (-ing word groups), past participles, appositives, and lists, just to mention a few strategies. Effective writers use a variety of techniques to achieve their goals.

Directions: Join the following sentences using adverb or adjective clauses, compounding, or combinations of these methods. For added practice, create several revisions for each.

For example: Spring is approaching. The forest animals are emerging from their burrows.

Spring is approaching, so the forest animals are emerging from their burrows.
(compound sentence)

Since spring is approaching, the forest animals are emerging from their burrows.
(complex sentence using an adverb clause)

1. Plants are ultra-sensitive to their environment. They react to vibrations and loud sounds.

2. The students thought the exam was too difficult. They decided that it should not be revised.

3. Myra owns a boat. She often goes sailing. She rarely goes fishing.

4. The ground is still covered with hoarfrost. The seedlings can't be planted in frozen soil.

5. Symbols are often confused. People consequently misunderstand one another.

6. Ann is a good student. She studies hard. She has major difficulty with essay exams.

7. In former times, women delivered their children while working in the fields. The women continued working after the deliveries.

8. We live on "Spaceship" Earth. That means that our planet is a self-contained sphere with limited resources.

9. Time management is an important skill. Students and teachers need to develop it. It should be taught at all levels.

10. Marty is a very popular student. He ran for Student Government President. He lost.