

Subordination: Adverb Clauses in Complex Sentences

Subordination using adverb clauses is one way to communicate relationships between ideas. However, unlike coordination, which connects two related ideas of equal importance, with subordination, the more important idea is expressed as a complete sentence (independent clause), and the less important idea is expressed as an adverb clause (dependent clause) which cannot stand alone; this makes a complex sentence.

Adverb clauses begin with a subordinating conjunction (also called a signal word) and include a subject and a verb. Here are some common subordinating conjunctions:

after	before	so that
although	even if	though
as	even though	unless
as if	if	until
as long as	in order that	when / whenever
as soon as	once	where / wherever
as though	provided that	whether
because	since	while

1. Introductory adverb clauses are set off from the main sentence by a comma.

After I go to the store, I will be coming straight home.
Because she exercises regularly, she is in terrific condition.
Even if you pay for my ticket, I will not go.
Since you are paying for my ticket, I will go.
Though he had the right qualifications, he did not land the job.

2. Adverb clauses that follow the main idea are usually not set off with commas.

I will be coming straight home after I go to the store.
She is in terrific condition because she exercises regularly.
I will not go even if you pay for my ticket.
I will go since you are paying for my ticket.
He did not land the job though he had the qualifications.

NOTE: Sometimes writers will intentionally break Rule 2 and add a comma in front of the signal word for added emphasis, especially with the contrast words such as "though" or "although." However, before you choose to bend the rule, check with your instructor. In testing situations, it is usually prudent to follow the rules; in your own writing, you can often be more flexible as long as you can justify your decisions.

PRACTICE

Directions: Add punctuation as needed to the following sentences.

1. While he studies he needs to have complete quiet
2. He needs to have complete quiet while he studies
3. Although Alice often looks happy she is a very depressed person
4. Alice is a very depressed person although she often looks happy
5. As soon as you are ready call me
6. Call me as soon as you are ready

Coordination: Compound Sentences

Two complete ideas that are related and of equal importance can be joined together using coordination; this produces a compound sentence. Study the following rules.

1. Join two complete sentences (independent clauses) by using a comma and a coordinating conjunction: and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet. (A good way to remember these conjunctions is with an acronym: BOYFANS; each letter stands for one of the connecting words-- but, or, yet, for, and, nor, so.)

Janet is my neighbor, and she is my best friend.

Bill eats all the time, but he never gains weight.

Joe will meet us at the game, or he will see us later at Burger King.

Joe cannot make it to the game, nor will he see us later at Burger King.

I've been on a strict diet lately, for I need to lose some weight.

I need to lose some weight, so I've been on a strict diet lately.

Ann is small, yet she is very strong.

2. Join two complete and related sentences using only a semicolon.

Janet is my neighbor; she is also my best friend.

I've been on a strict diet lately; I need to lose some weight.

3. Join two complete and related sentences by using a semicolon and an adverbial conjunction; these transition words are usually followed by a comma. Here are some common adverbial conjunctions: furthermore, then, hence, therefore, thus, also, however, nevertheless, moreover, besides, consequently, meanwhile, otherwise, likewise, still.

Janet is my neighbor; furthermore, she is my best friend.

I need to lose some weight; consequently, I've been on a strict diet lately.

Ann is small; however, she is very strong.

WARNING: Before you apply any of the above rules, be sure you are connecting two complete sentences. The following sentences are not compound and, therefore, are not punctuated according to the above rules.

Janet is my neighbor and my best friend.

Ann is small but, nevertheless, very strong.

PRACTICE

Directions: Add punctuation as needed to the following sentences.

1. Harold acts like a nerd but he is really a shrewd businessman
2. Harold acts like a nerd however he is really a shrewd businessman
3. Harold is really a shrewd businessman but acts like a nerd
4. Lisa has a pleasant personality therefore she has many friends
5. Lisa has a pleasant personality so she has many friends
6. Lisa has a pleasant personality and many friends