

# Using However

'However' can be used in a number of different ways and each usage requires particular punctuation.

## Using 'however' as a conjunctive adverb

'However' can be used to join two simple sentences to make a compound sentence.

'However' indicates that the relationship between the two independent clauses is one of contrast or opposition.

The engineers claimed that the bridge was safe; **however**, they were still not prepared to risk crossing.

Use a semi-colon (;) *before* and a comma (,) *after* however when you are using it to write a compound sentence.

## Using 'however' to begin a sentence

If 'however' is used to begin a sentence, it must be followed by a comma, and what appears *after* the comma must be a complete sentence.

**However**, there was no need to repeat the data entry.

Keep the use of sentences beginning with 'however' to a minimum. Overuse makes 'however' look more important than the content of the sentence. It may also result in sentence fragments.

FRAGMENT — However, life in Ancient Egypt three thousand years ago.

REVISED — However, life in Ancient Egypt three thousand years ago was much more sophisticated.

A sentence beginning with 'however,' is usually closely related to the sentence which precedes it. In most cases, it is more appropriate to use 'however' to form a compound sentence.

## Using 'however' as an aside

'However' can be used to interrupt a sentence. Use a comma (,) *before* and a comma (,) *after* 'however' when you use it in this way.

It is, **however**, extremely difficult to identify all the relevant variables.

## Using 'however' to mean 'in whatever manner', 'by whatever means' or 'to whatever extent'

**However** the data were analysed, the results remained consistent.  
OR

The results remained consistent **however** the data were analysed.

Note the comma in the first example. Be careful when using 'however' in this way as the result may be ambiguous.

Compare the following:

The results remained consistent **however** the data were analysed.

The results remained consistent; **however**, the data were analysed.

If punctuation is not a strong point, your marker may find it difficult to decide what you mean.