

Sentence Combining (1): Coordination

Once you have mastered the basics of correct usage in written English, you will want to express yourself in increasingly complex ways. Coordination is a method of combining independent clauses by using sentence connectors. This results in a **compound sentence** that can improve the formality and sophistication of your writing style. Coordination techniques for writing compound sentences are:

1. Use a comma + coordinating conjunction
2. Use a semicolon + conjunctive adverb + comma
3. Use a semicolon.

1. Use a comma + coordinating conjunction

Coordinating conjunctions are used in compound sentences. Remember them as 'A.B.Fonsy'—**and, but, for (meaning because), or, nor, so, yet**. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction when you are writing a compound sentence.

●**Rule 1:** The coordinating conjunction determines the relationship between the first independent clause and the second independent clause.

These relationships are as follows:

and — **to add an idea**
 but — **to contrast two opposing ideas**
 for — **to introduce a reason**
 or — **alternative, to show a choice**
 nor — **to add an idea when the first clause is in the negative**
 so — **to introduce a result**
 yet — **to contrast two opposing ideas**

NOTE: The use of '**nor**' requires an inversion of the subject and the verb.

Examples

The government offers students a number of options for paying their HECs fees, **but** students still become confused about the implications of their choices.

The Treasurer will not abolish the tax, **nor will he** reduce HECS charges.

●**Rule 2:** A number of coordinating conjunctions are used in pairs.

either ... or — **alternative, to show a choice**
 neither ... nor — **to add an idea when the first clause is in the negative**
 not only ... but also — **to add an idea**

NOTE: The use of '**neither ... nor**' requires an inversion of the subject and the verb.

Examples

Either students work and pay their HECs fees up-front during their studies, **or** they pay them off during their working lives.

Neither of the students chose to work during their university studies, **nor did they** have the financial backing to pay their HEC fees.

Students were affected not only by the imposition of university fees **but also** by the lack of access to scholarships..

See also Academic Skills factsheet: *Sentence Combining (2): Subordination*

2. Use a semicolon + conjunctive adverb + comma

Conjunctive adverbs are also used in compound sentences. These conjunctions have a similar meaning to 'A.B.Fonsy' conjunctions but can sound more formal and give greater emphasis to your reasoning or argument. For these adverbs, use a semi-colon (;) before and a comma (,) after when you are writing a compound sentence.

Using conjunctive adverbs in compound sentences	Meaning
<i>furthermore, besides, moreover, also, in addition</i>	to add an idea
<i>however, nevertheless, still, nonetheless, conversely, otherwise, instead, in contrast, on the other hand</i>	to contrast two opposing ideas
<i>otherwise, instead, on the other hand</i>	alternative, to show a choice
<i>consequently, therefore, thus, accordingly, hence, as a result, for this reason</i>	to introduce a result
<i>likewise, similarly, in the same way</i>	to show likeness, compare
<i>indeed, in fact, for example, in particular</i>	to give emphasis, explain, restate, to give an example
<i>meanwhile, subsequently, then, afterwards, earlier, later</i>	to show time order

Examples

1. The immediate effects of HEC fees on students are well documented; **however**, the long-term effects have yet to be considered. (COMPOUND SENTENCE)
2. Many argued that higher education gives life and career opportunities to a select group in society; **therefore**, HECs fees were justified. (COMPOUND SENTENCE)
3. Paying HECs fees upfront means that students begin work without a HECs debt; **moreover**, upfront payments attract a 20 percent discount. (COMPOUND SENTENCE)
4. Most Australian students who study at university are Commonwealth supported students; **consequently**, they have some of the cost of their education paid by the government. (COMPOUND SENTENCE)
5. Many argue for the right to free education; **otherwise**, they consider that higher education fees should at least be means tested. (COMPOUND SENTENCE)

3. Use a semicolon

A semicolon can be used to combine independent clauses to make a compound sentence; however, this technique may only be used if both clauses have a similar grammatical structure or have closely related ideas.

YES, YOU CAN USE A SEMICOLON TO JOIN THESE SENTENCES.

- ✓ The students objected to paying university fees; they felt that it inhibited their future economic prospects.

NO, YOU CANNOT USE A SEMICOLON TO JOIN THESE SENTENCES.

- ✗ The students objected to paying university fees; ~~it was thought that the government was concerned with revenue raising when it implemented these policies.~~
- ✓ The students objected to paying university fees. It was thought that the government was concerned with revenue raising when it implemented these policies.
- ✓ The students objected to paying university fees; **in fact**, it was thought that the government was concerned with revenue raising when it implemented these policies.