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.

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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.

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

**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.