

## Sentence Structure Academic Resource Center

### OVERVIEW

#### Independent Clause:

- >- Subject and verb express a complete thought as a whole sentence,
  - o *She took her dog for a walk in the park.*

#### Dependent Clause:

- >- Subject and verb that don't express a complete thought as a sentence fragment.
- >- Often has a dependent marker word at the beginning of the phrase,
  - o *When she took her dog for a walk in the park...*  
(Then what happened? This thought is incomplete.)

#### Dependent Marker Words:

Common Dependent Markers: After, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order to, since, though, unless, until, whatever, when, whenever, whether, while

- >- Dependent clauses that begin with one of these words will usually be followed by "then" or a coordinating conjunction (see below).

### COMBINING CLAUSES

Conjunctions are used to combine clauses. There are two types for combining independent clauses: coordinating conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs.

#### Coordinating Conjunctions:

A connecting word at the beginning of an independent clause.

- >- Coordinating Conjunctions: *and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet*
- >- When adding a second independent clause to a sentence, add a comma before the coordinating conjunction.
  - o *She studied for her final test at the library, but it was hard for her to focus because of stress.*

#### Conjunctive Adverbs

A connecting word used at the beginning of an independent clause.

- >- Common Conjunctive Adverbs: *also, consequently, furthermore, however, moreover, nevertheless, therefore*
- >- When a second independent clause has a conjunctive adverb, add a semicolon before the conjunctive adverb.
  - o *She studied for her final test at the library; however, it was hard for her to focus because of stress.*

## COMMON PROBLEMS

### Comma Splice:

- >- The use of a comma between two independent clauses,
  - o Incorrect: *I like writing, it is very exciting.*
  - o Correct: *I like writing. It is very exciting.*
    - (or) *I like writing; it is very exciting.*
    - (or) *I like writing, and it is very exciting.*
    - (or) *I like writing because it is very exciting.*
    - (or) *Because it is very exciting, I like writing.*

### Fused Sentence:

- >- Two independent clauses not separated by any form of punctuation.
  - o Incorrect: *My writing tutor is intelligent I've learned a lot from her.*
  - o Correct: *My writing tutor is intelligent. I've learned a lot from her.*
    - (or) *My writing tutor is intelligent; I've learned a lot from her.*
    - (or) *My writing tutor is intelligent, and I've learned a lot from her.*
    - (or) *My writing tutor is intelligent; moreover, I've learned a lot from her.*

### Sentence Fragment:

- >- When a dependent clause or other incomplete thought is treated as a complete sentence,
  - o Incorrect: *Because I forgot the essay was due today.*
  - o Correct: *Because I forgot the essay was due today, I didn't finish writing it.*
    - (or) *I forgot the essay was due today.*

### Wordiness:

- >- Wordiness is using more words than are needed to make your point. Sometimes long sentences are necessary, especially if you're trying to make a complex point, but a paragraph cluttered with lots of extra words and phrases can distract the reader.
- >- Even though wordiness can sometimes sound "fancy," try to avoid using redundant words or phrases and to write in a way that is as precise and concise as possible.

### References:

"Purdue Online Writing Lab: "Independent and Dependent Clauses"

- (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/598/01/>)

"Wordiness"

- (<http://www2.gsu.edu/~accert/wordiness/WO.htm>)