

Comma (,)

Use a comma after the first independent clause when you link two independent clauses with one of the following coordinating conjunctions: and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet.

The participants attended the meeting, and the researcher handed out the surveys.

The participants were all college age, but they attended many different institutions.

Use a pair of commas in the middle of a sentence to set off clauses, phrases, and words that are **not essential** to the meaning of the sentence. Use one comma before to indicate the beginning of the pause and one at the end to indicate the end of the pause.

Clause: That Tuesday, *which happens to be my birthday*, is the only day when I am available to meet.

Phrase: This restaurant has an exciting atmosphere. The food, *on the other hand*, is rather bland.

Word: I appreciate your hard work. In this case, *however*, you seem to have over-exerted yourself.

Do **NOT** use a comma when the phrase is needed for meaning. The participants *who answered the questionnaire online* were all university students.

Semicolon (;)

Use a semicolon when you link two independent clauses with no connecting words. *For example:*

The campaign was very successful; millions of dollars were raised.

The literature is extensive; this study will attempt to summarize the main issues.

You can also use a semicolon when you **join** two independent clauses (complete sentences) together with one of the following conjunctive adverbs (adverbs that join independent clauses): however, moreover, therefore, consequently, otherwise, nevertheless, thus, etc. For example:

The surveys were answered online; however, many were incomplete.

Attendance was high; moreover, the attendees were very enthusiastic.

The study group came to no definite conclusions; therefore, they decided to table the issue for the semester.

COMPLETE SENTENCE; **however**, COMPLETE SENTENCE.