

Commas and Connecting Words to Form Compound Sentences

The rain kept falling.
The river kept rising.

Two simple sentences = two independent clauses

These sentences can be combined in one compound sentence by adding a comma before a connecting word (and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so)

e.g. The rain kept falling, and the river kept rising.

Semicolons and Connectors to Form Compound Sentences

Use a semicolon to punctuate two independent clauses that are closely related in meaning.

e.g. He knew he had flunked the driver's exam; he ran over a stop sign.

You may also use a connecting word with the semicolon to join two independent clauses.

e.g. I spent three months looking for an apartment; however, I couldn't find anything decent under \$500 a month.

Fred had a bad headache yesterday; furthermore, his arthritis was bothering him.

NOTE: A comma is required after the connecting word.

Connecting Words

however	moreover	furthermore
in addition	consequently	thus
therefore	indeed	also
instead	on the other hand	as a result
nevertheless		

If you use these words to begin sentences, use a comma after them.

e.g. Consequently, the protest march was cancelled.

Commas after Introductory Clauses and Phrases

Dependent clauses begin with words like *because*, *since*, *although*, *until*, *while*, *when*, and *if*. When a dependent clause precedes an independent clause in a sentence, place a comma after the dependent clause.

e.g. Because there were not enough seats on the bus, Karen volunteered hers to the little boy.

While I was on the phone, Marty arrived home.

Commas also follow introductory phrases.

e.g. Hoping for a windfall, Mary bought another lottery ticket.

In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.

Commas to Separate Elements in a Series

Use commas to separate three or more equal elements in a series.

e.g. Diana, Russ, and Tony went to lunch.

 Their flag was red, white, and blue.

NOTE: The comma before the *and* is optional.

Colons to Introduce Lists

Use a colon to introduce a list that follows an independent clause.

e.g. The required courses are the following: Math, History and English.

NOTE: No colon is required if what precedes the list is not an independent clause.

e.g. The required courses are Math, History and English.