

Independent Clauses in Compound Sentences

An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence. An independent clause contains both a subject and a verb, and it expresses a complete thought.

A compound sentence is composed of at least two independent clauses.

Techniques to Join Independent Clauses

There are four techniques used to join independent clauses in a compound sentence:

- a comma and a coordinating conjunction (*and, nor, but, or, yet, so*).
- a semicolon
- a semicolon and a transition word (*therefore, however, hence, thus...etc.*).
- a colon.

You should choose the technique that best fits the context of the sentence.

Comma and Coordinating Conjunction

Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction to join two independent clauses when you want to show contrast or relation between two ideas.

Examples of Compound Sentences with a Comma and Coordinating Conjunction

1. The man was sitting in the restaurant, but he was not ordering anything.
2. I was waiting at the bus stop, and a man started talking to me.
3. Emily was out of milk, so she went to the store.
4. Helen wanted to get a puppy, but she is allergic to dog fur.

Semicolon

Use a semicolon to join two independent clauses that are closely related.

Examples of Compound Sentences with a Semicolon

1. He studied for his math class for hours; he felt prepared for the midterm the next day.
2. Juliet loves her little brother; he is generous and kind.
3. My sister is a doctor; she suggested I get the flu shot.

Semicolon and Transition Word

Use a semicolon to join two independent clauses when the ensuing clause begins with a transition word (conjunctive adverb). Remember to use a comma after the transition word.

Examples of Compound Sentences with a Semicolon and Transition Word

1. I enjoy fantasy novels; **therefore**, *The Return of the King* is one of my favorite books.
2. Tom did not want to see Sue; **however**, he knew Sue would get mad if he did not come.

Colon