

# 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 + a coordinating conjunction
2. Use a semicolon + a conjunctive adverb + a comma
3. Use a semicolon?

## 1. Use a comma + a 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:** Each coordinating conjunction is used to indicate a specific type of relationship.

### 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 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.

The Treasurer will not abolish the tax, **nor will he** reduce HECS charges.

●**Rule 2:** A number of coordinating conjunctions are used in pairs.

### Examples

Either students work and pay their HECs fees up-front during their studies, **or** they pay them off during their working lives.

The coordinating conjunction works with other words such as

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.

Neither of the students chose to work during their university studies, **nor did they** have the financial backing to pay their HEC fees.

**NOTE:** '**Not only ... but also**' should be used sparingly. Use it when you want to add emphasis.

Not only were students affected by the imposition of university fees, **but also** the parents of those students were financially involved.

See also Academic Skills fact Sheet: Sentence combining (2): Subordination

## 2. Use a semicolon + a conjunctive adverb + a 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. **Use a semi-colon (;) before and a comma (,) after a conjunctive adverb when you are writing a compound sentence.**

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

### 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 economical 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.