**Connecting clauses**

**An independent clause** is a group of words containing a subject and a verb; *it can stand alone as a complete sentence*. It may contain prepositional or other types of phrases.

Examples: Ron quickly ran to the grocery store.

Gatsby believed in the green light.

**Common subordinating conjunctions**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| after although as as if as long as as though because before even if even though | if if only in order that now that once rather than since so that than that | though till unless until when whenever where whereas wherever while |

**A dependent clause** is a group of words containing a subject and a verb; it is the same as an independent clause except it begins with a subordinating conjunction, which makes it unable to stand alone as a complete sentence

Examples: ***As*** Ron quickly ran to the grocery store.

***Because*** Gatsby believed in the green light.

**A dependent clause needs an independent clause to help it become part of a complete sentence.**

Examples: [***As*** Ron quickly ran to the grocery store] , [he tripped on a rock].

Use a comma after any dependent clause that begins a sentence.

dependent clause independent clause

[Ron tripped on a rock] [***as*** he quickly ran to the grocery store].

Independent clause dependent clause

When a dependent clause follows an independent clause, do not separate them with a comma

**Run-on sentences**

Contrary to popular belief, a run-on sentence is not simply a long sentence. Rather, a run-on occurs any time two independent clauses are not properly connected. This can happen in one of two ways:

1. Two independent clauses connected with a comma – this is called a **comma splice**, and it’s one of two kinds of run-on sentences.
   * [Ron quickly ran to the grocery store] , [he tripped on a rock].

Independent clause bad comma! independent clause

1. Two independent clauses with nothing between – this is called a **fused sentence**, and it’s the other kind of run-on sentence. NOTE: This is the same thing as a comma splice but without the comma!
   * [Ron quickly ran to the grocery store] [he tripped on a rock].

Independent clause no comma independent clause

**Proper ways to connect clauses/Avoiding and fixing run-ons**

There are several ways to properly connect independent clauses to avoid creating run-ons (comma splices or fused sentences).

* **Period (create two sentences)**
  + Ron quickly ran to the grocery store. He tripped on a rock.
  + Gatsby believed in the green light. He was a dreamer.
* **Semicolon**
  + Ron quickly ran to the grocery store; he tripped on a rock.
  + Gatsby believed in the green light; he was a dreamer.

***FABOYS REMINDER!***

For

And

Nor

But

Or

Yet

So

* **Comma and coordinating (FANBOYS) conjunction**
  + [Ron quickly ran to the grocery store]**, but** [he tripped on a rock].
  + [Gatsby believed in the green light]**, so** [he was a dreamer].
* **Subordination (change one of the clauses into a dependent clause)**
  + **[When Ron quickly ran to the grocery store]**, [he tripped on a rock].

Dependent clause independent clause

* + [Gatsby believed in the green light] [**because he was a dreamer]**.

Independent clause dependent clause

**Common sentence structures**

1. ***IC , coord. conj. IC***

This structure has two independent clauses connected by a comma and a coordinating (FANBOYS) conjunction.

* I woke up early, and I ate a hearty breakfast of oatmeal and eggs.
* I ate a hearty breakfast of oatmeal and eggs, so I was able to stay focused at school all day.

1. ***IC; IC***

This structure has two independent clauses connected by a semicolon. The semicolon’s main job is to connect two closely related independent clauses.

* I didn’t finish my homework; my parents won’t let me go to the movies tonight.

☺

* Cole earned an A in his English class; his parents bought him a new car.

You wouldn’t use a semicolon to connect two unrelated independent clauses; if there’s no cause/effect relationship, don’t use a semicolon.

* I didn’t finish my homework; my father drives a blue BMW.

☹

* Larry ordered a quadruple coronary bypass burger; Milwaukee is the largest city in Wisconsin.

1. ***IC DC***

This structure has an independent clause followed by a dependent clause. Note that there is no comma in this structure.

* David fell off his bike because he wasn’t paying attention to where he was going.
* I plan to participate in no-shave November even though I can’t grow much of a beard yet.

1. ***DC, IC***

This structure begins with a dependent clause which is followed by an independent clause. REMEMBER – ALWAYS USE A COMMA AFTER A DEPENDENT CLAUSE THAT BEGINS A SENTENCE!

* Because he wasn’t paying attention, David fell off his bike.
* Even though I don’t sing or play an instrument, I tried out for a Swedish black metal band.

1. ***IC, coord. conj. IC DC***

This structure is the same as #1 but ends with a dependent clause.

* Wilford and Gwen both have mullets, and they both love 80s music even though they were born in the 90s.
* I drove to the grocery store, but I didn’t buy anything because I realized I left my wallet at home.

1. ***DC IC, coord. conj. IC***

This structure is the same as #4, but it ends with a comma, a coordinating conjunction, and an independent clause.

* While the tornado tore across Plymouth, the tornado sirens blared, and residents hurried into basements.
* After Ben and Sharon broke up via text messge, someone tweeted about it, and everyone knew about it within minutes.