

## conjunctions and adverbs: structure and punctuation

**Conjunctions** (see pages 200–206) make **grammatical** and **meaning** connections – they join clauses into sentences, and show the relationship between them. Some conjunctions:

*and, but, or, so, before, after, when, as soon as, because, since, although, if, that*

When a conjunction comes between two clauses, there is normally either **no punctuation** (especially if the clauses are short) or a **comma (,)** before it in writing.

*I had supper before I phoned Jean. I was very unhappy, so I decided to change my job.*

**Adverbs** can make **meaning** connections, but they do **not** make **grammatical** connections: they do not join clauses into sentences. Some adverbs:

*however, then, therefore, meanwhile, consequently, in fact, also, as a result, on the other hand, indeed*

When an **adverb** comes between two clauses, there is normally either a **full stop (.)** or a **semi-colon (;)** before it in careful writing, because the clauses are still separate.

*I had supper; then I phoned Jean. OR I had supper. Then I phoned Jean.  
(better than I had supper, then I phoned Jean.)*

*I was unhappy; therefore I moved away. OR I was unhappy. Therefore I moved away.*

### 1 Put a comma, a semi-colon or nothing between the words in italics.

- 1 One person asked a *question* *then* there was a long silence.
- 2 We will ship your *order* *as soon as* we have received supplies from the manufacturer.
- 3 The brakes need *attention* *also*, there is a problem with the steering.
- 4 It was bitterly *cold* *and* snow was forecast.
- 5 It was not possible to make a *decision* *because* the necessary information was not available.
- 6 A is greater than B, and B is greater than C *therefore* A is greater than C.
- 7 Not enough people bought *tickets* *so* the concert was cancelled.

**but** and **however** *But* is a **conjunction**; **however** is an **adverb**. Note the difference in punctuation before these words.

*It was cold, but it was pleasant.*

*It was cold. However, it was pleasant. OR It was cold; however, it was pleasant.  
(better than It was cold, however ...)*

Note that we also put a comma **after** *however*.

### 2 Rewrite the sentences, changing **but** to **however** or vice versa.

- Alice was clearly the best candidate, **but** she did not get the job.  
*Alice was clearly the best candidate; however, she did not get the job.*
- The audience was small; **however**, they were clearly appreciative.  
*The audience was small, but they were clearly appreciative.*

1 She has considerable musical ability; **however**, her technique is poor.

2 Nobody liked him, **but** everybody agreed that he was a good manager.

3 It is a reliable and economical car, **but** its performance is disappointing.

4 Simpson was not playing at his best; **however**, he managed to win the match.

5 The house is in reasonable condition, **but** the roof will need some repairs.

## 3 Rewrite the sentences using the adverbs and adverbial expressions in the box.

Be careful with the punctuation.

also consequently on the other hand then there

1 The bank is very inefficient, and the staff are remarkably rude.

2 We bought a map before we set off to explore the town.

3 There had been no investment for years, so the railways were in a terrible state.

4 The people are friendly, but it is difficult to get to know them really well.

5 We walked down to the beach area, where we found the men we were looking for.

## 4 Complete these sentences any way you like.

1 I like .....; however, .....

2 ..... can be useful; on the other hand, .....

3 ..... is .....; in addition, .....

**position** Conjunctions always begin clauses. Adverbs can often go in different places in a clause (but not between the verb and the object). If an adverb interrupts the normal word order of a clause, it may be separated by two commas.

*He confessed to 114 murders, but the police did not believe his story.*

(BUT NOT ... *the police but did not believe his story.*)

*He confessed to 114 murders; however, the police did not believe his story.*

*He confessed to 114 murders; the police, however, did not believe his story.*

*He confessed to 114 murders; the police did not, however, believe his story.*

*He confessed to 114 murders; the police did not believe his story, however.*

(BUT NOT ... *the police did not believe, however, his story.*)

5 Rewrite the sentences, putting the expressions *in italics* in other places.1 He had little talent; *on the other hand*, his sister was a brilliant musician.2 The hospital was seriously understaffed; *in spite of that*, the standard of care was excellent.3 Andrew overslept; *as a result*, the whole family missed the plane.

'The past is not dead.

In fact, it's not even past.'

(William Faulkner)

'It is forbidden to kill;  
therefore all murderers are  
punished unless they kill in  
large numbers and to the  
sound of trumpets.'

(Voltaire)

'The reasonable man adapts  
himself to the world; the  
unreasonable one persists  
in trying to adapt the world  
to himself. Therefore all  
progress depends on the  
unreasonable man.'

(G B Shaw)

'Never doubt that a small group  
of thoughtful, committed citizens  
can change the world. Indeed, it  
is the only thing that ever has.'

(Margaret Mead)

## linking clauses with conjunctions and adverbs (continued)

### 6 GRAMMAR IN A TEXT. Put commas (,) or semi-colons (;) before the numbered words.

In the early years we were breaking new ground <sup>1</sup>and there were naturally a number of difficulties <sup>2</sup>however, business was for the most part excellent. Credit was easily available <sup>3</sup>indeed, the banks were only too anxious to offer loans to new companies <sup>4</sup>in addition, interest rates rarely went above 4% through the whole of the period. Costs were low <sup>5</sup>also, there was an almost inexhaustible demand for our product. Staffing was sometimes problematic <sup>6</sup>since a large proportion of the labour force was semi-skilled at best <sup>7</sup>and experienced and well-qualified managers were by no means easy to find. This meant that there was a rapid turnover of employees <sup>8</sup>consequently quality sometimes suffered <sup>9</sup>although customers were not in general highly critical. Now, twenty years later, conditions have changed dramatically <sup>10</sup>and the overall picture is very different indeed <sup>11</sup>however, I am happy to say that despite everything we are still managing to remain profitable.

### NOTES

**Commas are often used before conjunctions** to separate longer or more complicated clauses (see page 254). Shorter pairs of clauses are often connected without commas. Compare:

*Joseph went home because he was tired.*

*Joseph decided to go home earlier than he had planned, because he was beginning to have trouble keeping his eyes open.*

**contrast** Commas are particularly common before conjunctions expressing contrast.

*Ann is very sociable, while her sister is quite shy.*

*He kept shivering, although it was a warm day.*

And **adverbs** expressing contrast often have commas after them.

*They were becoming increasingly discouraged. However, they continued walking.*

*Income is satisfactory; on the other hand, expenditure has increased alarmingly.*

*Yet, at the beginning of a clause, is a conjunction, and is not followed by a comma.*

*It was cold, yet it was pleasant. (NOT ... yet, it was pleasant.)*

**clause position** Clauses that begin sentences are usually separated by commas. Compare:

*As soon as it boils, turn down the heat. Turn down the heat as soon as it boils.*

**punctuation with no conjunction** When two main clauses are joined without a conjunction, they can be punctuated with a semi-colon, a colon or a dash, but not a comma.

*We had no idea where he was; he had completely disappeared.*

(NOT *We had no idea where he was, he had completely disappeared.*)

*She had one basic principle: she was always right.*

*We will send your order as soon as possible – this will probably be in early July.*

**one-clause sentences** Sometimes a single clause with a conjunction is written as a separate sentence. Some people feel this is incorrect, but it is normal in question-and-answer sequences, or when a writer wishes to give extra emphasis to a clause.

*Why are we in financial trouble? Because the banks lent money to the wrong people.*

*He was charming. But he was totally without a conscience.*

For *however* as a conjunction (e.g. *However we travel, we have to go through London*), see page 243.