

PUNCTUATION PATTERN SHEET

Important Principles and Concepts

- Simple sentences are complete written statements (independent clauses) that can stand alone as a complete sentence.
- Fragments (dependent) clauses can't stand alone as a complete sentence, such as “Although I *prefer* orange juice,” “before I *went* to the grocery store,” “While I *was doing* my laundry.”

Common Sentence Patterns with Appropriate Punctuation

Pattern 1: Simple Sentence

I scheduled an appointment at the writing center.

We ate at Trattoria Marcella yesterday.

My neighbor's bloodhounds love to howl when we walk by her house.

<The Pattern

Simple Sentence = **Subject** + *Verb* w/ possible additional information w/in the sentence.

Pattern 2: Compound Sentence Using Connectors

I scheduled an appointment at the writing center, and I can't wait until my session.

On Tuesday he ate through two pears, but he was still hungry.

I found seven sources for this argument paper, yet I still think I need another one that represents a different point of view.

<The Pattern

Simple sentence, **connector** simple sentence.

Connectors are coordinating conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so.

You can easily remember these conjunctions by remembering this word—fanboys.

Pattern 3: Complex Sentence that Begins with a Fragment Clause

Since I scheduled an appointment at the writing center, I want to have my draft done soon.

Although he doesn't have much evidence to support his position, he feels strongly that the government needs to censor certain books from being read.

Whenever she comes into the office, the staff is ready to help her.

<The Pattern

Fragment Clause, Simple Sentence.

Fragment (dependent) clauses use subordinating conjunctions such as these: 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, provided, rather than, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, whereas, wherever, whether, and while.

Pattern 4: Complex Sentence that Ends with a Fragment Clause

I want to have my draft done soon since I scheduled an appointment at the writing center.

He feels strongly that the government needs to censor certain books from being read although he doesn't have much evidence to support his position.

The staff is ready to help her whenever she comes into the office.

<The Pattern

Simple Sentence w/ *Fragment Clause*.

Fragment (dependent) clauses use one of those subordinating conjunctions provided above in the description of Pattern 3, and the fragment clause ends the complex sentence with the fragment not typically requiring a comma.

Pattern 5: Compound Sentence Connected by a Semicolon (;)

I went to the writing center on Tuesday evening; there I received some useful tips about developing support for my argument.

The presidential candidate made a ton of unrealistic promises; he wanted to please a lot of likely voters.

Noah knew he needed to start jogging again; his family has a history of heart disease.

<The Pattern

Complete Sentence; Complete Sentence.

This pattern is most effective when used sparingly. And the pattern needs to use sentences that are closely related and balanced (about the same length).

Pattern 6: Compound Sentence Connected by a Semicolon, Transition, and a Comma

I have an appointment at the writing center; however, I need to reschedule it for tomorrow.

The scientist has studied and published articles on marshland ecosystems for over twenty years; as a result, scholars know he is an expert in the field.

The news media presents most issues in a pro vs. con manner; consequently, people are fooled into thinking that arguments are either-or propositions.

<The Pattern

Complete Sentence; **transition**, Complete Sentence.

This pattern, like Pattern 5, is most effective when used sparingly. Note the comma follow the transition word.

The transition used is usually some kind of conjunctive adverb such as these: accordingly, also, as a result, besides, certainly, consequently, finally, further, furthermore, hence, however, in addition, incidentally, in comparison, in contrast, indeed, in fact, instead, likewise, meanwhile, moreover, nevertheless, next, nonetheless, now, otherwise, rather, similarly, still, then, thereafter, therefore, thus, undoubtedly,

Pattern 7: Compound-Complex Sentences/Complex-Compound Sentences

Rose marched into the store, and she demanded that customer service help her before closing for the day.

While some people have strange negative perceptions about the South, we enjoyed living there, and we look back fondly on our years spent in Mississippi and Alabama.

One of my favorite vegetables is collard greens because they're healthy and tasty, but very few people know how to cook them correctly.

<The Pattern

Simple Sentence, **connector** Simple Sentence w/ *Fragment Clause*.

Fragment Clause , Simple Sentence, **connector** Simple Sentence.

Simple Sentence w/ *Fragment Clause*, **connector** Simple Sentence.

Pattern 8: Complete Sentence Introducing a List with a Colon

During my session at the writing center we worked on three important aspects of my paper: finding a focus for the essay, developing evidence, and organizing paragraphs.

You will write six major writing assignments this semester: a place-based essay, a reflective essay, an explanatory essay, an evaluation essay, a position essay, and a cover letter based on a professional communication case.

It was clear what I needed when I put together the swing set: a very good drill, a hammer, screwdrivers, another person to help, and lots of patience.

<The Pattern

Complete Sentence : _____ , _____ , _____ , and _____ .

Pattern 9: Complete Sentence that Includes and Extra Phrase Imbedded to Describe the Subject

The writing center, an excellent resource for all majors, helped me immensely during college.

The North Mississippi All-Stars, a band whose sound has been described by critics as “hill country blues,” are heavily influenced by R.L. Burnside and other blues musicians from the Delta.

Augie, the grounds crew worker I met when I came here, takes classes for fun and writes poetry in his spare time.

<The Pattern

Subject , *extra phrase describing the subject*, Verb Phrase.

Imbedded phrases are collection of words that enhance but are not required to make the clause a complete sentence. In this case, since the imbedded phrase modifies the subject, it's also called an appositive.

Here is a test you can use to see if the phrase is truly *extra*: cross out the phrase surrounded by commas and read what remains to make sure it's a complete sentence.

Disclaimer: Patterns 10-12 are most effective when used sparingly.

Pattern 10: Complete Sentence w/ Additional Information Provided between Double Dashes

Writing centers across the world—they are just not in the US—help students become independent writers and thinkers.

James McMurtry’s song “We Can’t Make It Here Anymore”—lyrics that are essentially about globalization—sums up the state of many American cities.

Barrier islands—sandy areas that protect the mainland from storms—change location every ten to fifteen years.

<The Pattern

Complete—*additional information*—Sentence.

Two em-dashes (double-dashes) can be used to set apart a thought within a sentence. This extra information could have required a separate sentence but is added along the way. Two dashes are essentially the same as a pair of commas, but dashes add emphasis and are more artful than parentheses..

Pattern 11: Complete Sentence followed by a Double Dash and Fragmentary Information

When I visited the writing center, the consultant offered some solid advice—develop your evidence and then figure out your thesis statement.

I went to the grocery and didn’t get what I originally went there for—milk and honey.

The dentist gave me just what I didn’t want—a filling and a bill for seventy-five dollars.

<The Pattern

Complete sentence—*fragmentary information*.

An em-dash (double dash) can be used as a mark of introduction much like a colon, but it is less formal.

Pattern 12: Two Complete Sentences Connected by a Double Dash

Jamie asked a question that she had asked me in a previous session with a different paper—“What do you want the reader to think, feel, or understand after reading this paper?”

Even though it was midnight, we decided to keep driving—it was only fifty more miles to Tuscaloosa.

He gave me the old line everyone cringes at—“Let’s just be friends.”

<The Pattern

Complete Sentence—Complete Sentence.

Since em-dashes (double-dashes) can be used to add emphasis, the second clause accentuates the first clause in some way.