MPC English & Study Skills Center

Commas with Coordinating Conjunctions and Adverb Clauses

Commas with Coordinating Conjunctions

There are seven <u>coordinating conjunctions</u>, and the best way to remember them is to remember the FANBOYS:

> **F**or   (means the same as *because*)
> **A**nd   (means the same as *in addition*)
> **N**or   (makes second clause negative)
> **B**ut   (connects clauses with contrasting meanings)
> **O**r   (combines clauses that present a choice)
> **Y**et   (connects clauses with contrasting meanings)
> **S**o   (means the same as *therefore*, combines clauses that show a result)

To correctly join two independent clauses, you need BOTH a comma and a coordinating conjunction. For example:

- I went to the store**, and** I bought a cake for my friend's birthday.

- I enjoy walking on the beach**, for** it is fun and relaxing.

- The test was postponed**, so** many of the students felt relieved.

Note: If the coordinating conjunction does NOT join two independent clauses, *do not use a comma before it!* Sometimes a sentence will have a compound subject or a compound verb—these are examples of times that coordinating conjunctions will **not** require a comma.

- <u>I went to the store and bought a cake for my friend's birthday</u>.

  No comma! Why not? There isn't a comma because *bought a cake for my friend's birthday* is not an independent clause.

- <u>Jessica went to the library but didn't study</u>.

  No comma! Why not? There isn't a comma because *didn't study* is not an independent clause.

Note: An independent clause requires both a subject and a verb.

Commas with Adverb Clauses

An adverb clause begins with a <u>subordinating conjunction</u> and contains a subject and a verb.

Some examples of subordinating conjunctions are *because, since, if, although, unless, even though, as, and inasmuch as.*

Punctuation tip: Depending on the order of the sentence, you may or may not need a comma with a dependent clause.

If the dependent clause comes ***before*** the independent clause, it is followed by a comma.

Examples: **Because it rained on Sunday,** Charlie did not have to water the grass.
After I wash my car, it always rains.
Since I learned how to meditate, I have felt calmer.

However, if the dependent clause comes ***after*** the independent clause, NO comma is needed.

Examples: Charlie did not have to water the grass **because it rained on Sunday.**
It always rains **after I wash my car**.
I have felt calmer **since I learned how to meditate**.