

## ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION INFO SHEET

### Grammar: Compound Sentence (G: CS)

Sentences are the building blocks of all writing, and effective writers use a variety of structures to engage the reader. This is the second of three information sheets that will guide you through the most basic of sentence structures. Remember that we have not included a definitive explanation of sentences, and there are a number of exceptions to these rules. However, this information may help you to solve some basic errors when writing.

#### Learn about:

- what is a compound sentence
- how to solve common punctuation errors in compound sentences

See **Info sheets, Activity sheets and videos** on simple and complex sentences.

There are three major types of sentences. Each type of sentence requires specific punctuation.

1. Simple sentence: Tom walks to work most days
2. **Compound sentence:** Tom walks to work, and Sam joins him every Friday.
3. Complex sentence: Although Tom likes walking to work, he has started to drive on Fridays.

#### What is a compound sentence?

A compound sentence is two simple sentences joined together with three types of punctuation.

1. **Sam completed his degree, so he was able to think critically about his options.**

This compound sentence includes two sentences (independent clauses) which are joined with a comma and a linking word (coordinating conjunction). Examples of short coordinating conjunctions are *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*. (FANBOYS). You cannot remove the joining word in a compound sentence since it would cause an error called a comma splice. The comma for shorter sentences is optional. In academic writing, where the sentences are often longer, you should include a comma.

Independent Clause 1	comma	Coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS)	Independent Clause 2
<b>Bob</b> <u>was</u> exhausted last night	,	for	<b>he</b> <u>had worked</u> many hours. *
<b>Bills</b> <u>can be paid</u> online	,	and	<b>this</b> <u>is</u> popular with many customers.
<b>I</b> <u>don't speak</u> English	,	nor	<b>does</b> <u>my wife</u> .*
<b>The computer</b> <u>is</u> broken	,	but	<b>IT</b> <u>can fix</u> it.
<b>Sam</b> <u>should apologise</u>	,	or	<b>Ted</b> <u>may complain</u> .
<b>The students</b> <u>were</u> tired	,	yet	<b>they</b> <u>continued</u> to work.
<b>Hybrids</b> <u>have</u> multiple engines	,	so	<b>they</b> <u>are</u> likely to be more economical.
*rarely used today			

**Note:** Notice how each sentence (independent clause) starts with a **subject** and has a main verb.

## 2. Fred met his targets; however, the company made two recommendations.

This compound sentence includes two sentences (independent clauses) which are joined with a semicolon and a longer coordinating conjunction. Longer coordinating conjunctions are also joining words i.e. *however, therefore*. These longer conjunctions can create more formality in your writing.

Longer coordination conjunctions often require a semicolon and a comma as specified below.

Independent Clause 1	semicolon	Longer coordinating conjunctions	comma	Independent Clause 2
Tom <u>likes</u> running	;	however nevertheless	,	he <u>has</u> a painful injury.
The tree <u>was not removed</u>	;	therefore consequently	,	the soil <u>did</u> not erode.
The policy <u>was</u> effective	;	moreover furthermore in addition	,	it <u>was</u> popular.

## 3. The policy was effective; it had a significant impact on the numbers.

This compound sentence includes two sentences (independent clauses) which are joined with a semicolon and no linking word. This sentence structure can be used when the independent clauses are closely related. However, only attempt this when you are more confident in your abilities.

### Common errors with compound sentences

Zoe and Clem arrived at the Woodford Folk Festival, rain was bucketing down, there was mud everywhere, they had left home in shorts and thongs, they should have brought the plastic ponchos and gumboots. X

**Note:** The writer has incorrectly used commas to join five sentences. This is a series of comma splices. A comma splice occurs when two sentences are punctuated with a comma only, instead of a comma and a linking word (conjunction) or a full stop. See correct sentences below.

### Compound sentence

Zoe and Clem arrived at the Woodford Folk Festival. Rain was bucketing down, and there was mud everywhere. They had left home in shorts and thongs, but they should have worn plastic ponchos and gumboots. ✓

### Simple sentences

Zoe and Clem arrived at the Woodford Folk Festival. Rain was bucketing down. There was mud everywhere. They had left home in shorts and thongs. They should have brought plastic ponchos and gumboots. ✓

By varying your sentence lengths and word order, you will communicate your ideas more effectively.

### Practice

Test your understanding with the Compound Sentences Activity Sheet.