

Combining Independent & Dependent Clauses

According to the Purdue OWL, an independent clause is “a group of words that contains a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought.” A dependent clause is “a group of words that contains a subject and verb but does not express a complete thought.”

Combining Two Independent Clauses

Use a comma before the coordinating conjunctions (connecting words) listed below.

Independent clause,	and but for or nor yet so	independent clause.
---------------------	---	---------------------

Example: I was tired after working all day, so I decided to go to bed early.

Use a semicolon between two independent clauses with no coordinating conjunction.

Independent clause ; independent clause.

Example: I was tired from working all day; I decided to go to bed early.

Use a semicolon before and a comma after the conjunctive adverbs (connecting words) listed below.

Independent clause,	accordingly also besides consequently furthermore however moreover nevertheless otherwise then therefore thus still	independent clause.
---------------------	---	---------------------

Example: I was tired from working all day; therefore, I decided to go to bed early.

Combining Independent Clauses with Dependent Clauses

When the dependent clause begins with a subordinating conjunction (connecting word) and precedes the independent clause, separate the clauses with a comma.

After Although Even though Though As As if As though As long as Because Before If So/So that Since Until Whatever When Whenever Where Wherever Whether While	<i>dependent clause,</i>	independent clause.
	<i>Subordinate clauses are dependent. They can't stand alone as complete sentences because they begin with a subordinating conjunction.</i>	<i>Independent clauses can stand alone as complete sentences.</i>

Example: Since I was tired, I decided to go to bed.

When the dependent (subordinate) clause follows the independent clause, don't use a comma before or after the subordinating conjunction (connecting word).

Independent clause <i>Independent clauses can stand alone as complete sentences.</i>	after although even though though as as if as though as long as because before if so/ so that since unless until whatever when whenever where wherever whether while	<i>dependent clause.</i> <i>Subordinate clauses are dependent. They can't stand alone as complete sentences because they begin with a subordinating conjunction.</i>
---	---	---

Example: I decided to go to bed since I was tired.