Five Useful Ways to Join Ideas

- **An independent clause** is a complete sentence which contains a subject and a verb; it expresses a complete thought.
- **A dependent clause** is a group of words with a subject and a verb. It does not express a complete thought, so it is not a sentence and can’t stand alone.

**Option 1:** Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction—[FANBOYS]

```
Independent clause \{ \}, for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so \} independent clause.
```

**Samples:** Ron did not do well on the test, **but** he didn’t even try.

**Option 2:** Use a semicolon

```
Independent clause \{ \}; \} independent clause.
```

**Sample:** Ron did not do well on the test; he didn’t even try.

**Option 3:** Use a semicolon with a transitional word and a comma

```
Independent clause \{ \}; consequently, for example, furthermore, however, in fact, instead, meanwhile, nevertheless, otherwise, therefore \} independent clause.
```

**Samples:** Ron didn’t study for the test; **however,** he didn’t even try.
Option 4: **Subordination**—When the subordinator is in the middle of the sentence, no comma is needed.

```
Independent clause

after
although
as (as if)
because
before
if
since
unless
until
when(ever)
whereas
while

dependent clause.
```

**Samples:**
- Ron did not do well on the test **because** he didn’t even try.
- Ron did not do well on the test **since** he didn’t even try.

Option 5: **Subordination**—When the subordinator is at the beginning of the sentence, a comma will follow the dependent clause.

```
After
Although
As (as if)
Because
Before
If
Since
Unless
Until
When(ever)
Whereas
While

dependent clause, independent clause.
```

**Samples:**
- **Because** Ron didn’t study for the test, he did not do well.
- **Since** Ron didn’t study for the test, he did not do well.

Adapted from Susan Fawcett’s, *Grassroots with Reading.*