



W. L. Adams Center for Writing

Punctuating Compound Sentences

A **compound sentence** is one that includes at least two independent clauses. An incorrectly punctuated compound sentence can lead to run-on or fused sentence errors, as well as comma splice errors.

Incorrect fused: *Some students want an education others simply want a degree.*

Incorrect comma splice: *Some students want an education, others simply want a degree.*

You can avoid these errors by choosing one of three ways to create correctly punctuated compound sentences: use a **semicolon**, use a **coordinating conjunction**, or use a **conjunctive adverb**.

semicolon: Use no conjunction but place a **semicolon** between the two independent clauses:
Correct: *Some students want an education; others simply want a degree.*

co-ordinating conjunction: To connect and indicate the relationship between the independent clauses, use coordinating conjunctions such as *and, or, but, for, nor, yet, and so*. Insert a comma before the conjunction.

Correct: *Some students want an education, but others simply want a degree.*

conjunctive adverb: To indicate the relationship between the two independent clauses, use a conjunctive adverb, placing a semicolon before the conjunction and a comma after it.
Correct: *Some students want an education; however, others simply want a degree.*

Conjunctive adverbs include the following:

*moreover
however
therefore
besides
nevertheless as
a result
furthermore
instead
consequently in
addition on the
contrary*

*thus indeed
on the other hand
in conclusion in
fact otherwise in
other words
similarly in
contrast of course
certainly*

*for example then
meanwhile
for instance first,
second, third
finally to illustrate
next that*