

PUNCTUATION PATTERN SHEET

The placement of punctuation in a sentence depends directly on the placement of clauses within the sentence. Clauses are strings of words that form a thought or idea. There are two main types of clauses, dependent and independent. An independent clause contains both a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a sentence. A dependent clause cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Example:

When Bilbo put on the magic ring, he disappeared.

The above example is a complex sentence because it contains both a dependent and independent clause.

Dependent clause

When Bilbo put on the magic ring

Because this clause begins with a conjunction, it cannot stand alone as a sentence. In this case, to make it a complete sentence, we must know what happens when Bilbo put on the magic ring.

Independent clause

He disappeared

Because this sentence contains both a subject and a verb, it can stand alone as a sentence.

Other clauses can be added on to create a more complex sentence, like in the first example. The trick lies in knowing where to punctuate. Below is a helpful punctuation guide for the most common sentence structures.

1. Independent clause.

I like to eat.

2. Independent clause ; Independent clause .

I wrote an essay; it was about sentence structure.

3. Independent clause ; therefore, Independent clause .

My car is out of gas; therefore, I rode the bus.

OR

I want to eat out tonight; however, I don't have any money.

OR

Stephen had a hole in his pocket; consequently, his keys fell out.

4. Independent clause , and Independent clause .

(or other coordinating conjunction)

I got an A on my research paper, and my professor suggested I get it published.

OR

Tina wanted to go to the concert, but her dad wouldn't let her.

OR

Jason worked hard on his dissertation, so he felt confident.

5. Dependent clause , Independent clause .

Because she didn't do her homework, she failed her exam.

6. Independent clause because Dependent clause .

He didn't make it to class on time because of the traffic jam.

7. Independent clause because, when, if, etc Independent clause .

David blushed because Sally kissed his cheek.

OR

I sang my favorite song when it came on the radio.

OR

He'll jump for joy if he wins the contest.

8. clause, phrase, word , non-essential
clause,
phrase, word , clause, phrase, word .

There are hundreds, if not thousands, of tutorials online.