Sentence Variety I: Coordinating Conjunctions

The most common way to put nouns, verbs, objects, or other parts of sentences together is by using one or more of the coordinating conjunctions: **For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So** (FANBOYS).

1. **Coordinating Conjunctions can join subjects in a sentence:**

   \[ S \quad S \quad S \quad S \quad S \]
   
   Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen, Luke Longley, Dennis Rodman, **and** Ron Harper
   
   \[ V \]
   
   started Game Six of the NBA Championship Series.

2. **They can make verbs more complex:**

   \[ S \quad V \quad V \quad V \quad V \]
   
   They scrapped, scrambled, **and** hustled **but** refused to quit.

3. **They also add more elements as objects of a verb:**

   \[ S \quad V \quad \text{Obj.} \quad \text{Obj.} \quad \text{Obj.} \quad \text{Obj.} \]
   
   During the parade, clowns threw candy **and** confetti **but** neither hugs **nor** kisses.

4. **Additionally, FANBOYS attach more nouns to a prepositional phrase:**

   \[ S \quad V \quad \text{Prepositional Phrase} \]
   
   The celebrants caroused **through** the streets, avenues, alleys, **and** malls.

Most commonly, using coordinating conjunctions to join an independent clause to another independent clause or to a dependent clause creates more complex sentences. However, remember one basic rule about punctuation: **When a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS) joins two independent clauses, always place a comma BEFORE the conjunction.**

   \[ \text{Independent clause} \quad \text{, but} \quad \text{independent clause.} \]
   
   or
   
   yet
   
   **so**

For example:

\[ \text{Independent Clause} \quad \text{Independent Clause} \]

**This morning Hubert told his mother he’d be late for supper, but she forgot.**

\[ \text{Independent Clause} \quad \text{Independent Clause} \]

**The clock read 7:45, so she began to fret.**

If the conjunction joins an independent clause to a dependent clause or phrase (an incomplete thought or fragment), **no comma is needed:**

\[ \text{Independent clause} \quad \text{but} \quad \text{dependent clause or phrase.} \]

Updated 7-30-12
Sentence Variety I: Coordinating Conjunctions

or
yet

(Notice that this doesn’t apply to “for,” “so,” or “nor”
[unless nor is paired with “neither”])

For example:

Independent Clause                            Dependent Phrase
She thought she should call the police but decided against it.

Independent Clause                                             Dependent Phrase
In the kitchen, she cut from a thick slab of the roast beef and scowled over her
shoulder at her roommate.

Practice 1
Directions: Add or cross out commas as necessary to properly punctuate the sentences. If the sentence is correct, make no changes.

1. The red-haired girl packed a lunch, and grabbed her fishing rod.

2. She skipped across the yard, crept under the fence that bordered the pasture, and trotted down the hill toward the creek.

3. She pushed over a rotting log carefully, yet rolled the log over her big toe.

4. Carrie screamed in pain for she had a two-inch sliver stuck under her toe nail.

5. She could cry and feel sorry for herself, or she could suck it up and keep hiking.

Practice 2

Directions: Write seven sentences that use a comma, using each coordinating conjunction. Then, write five sentences that do not need a comma using “and,” “or,” “yet,” and “but” at least once each.