St. Louis Community College

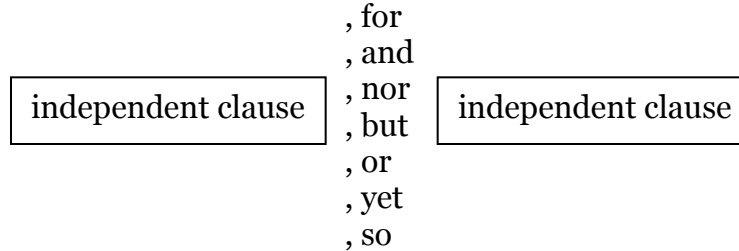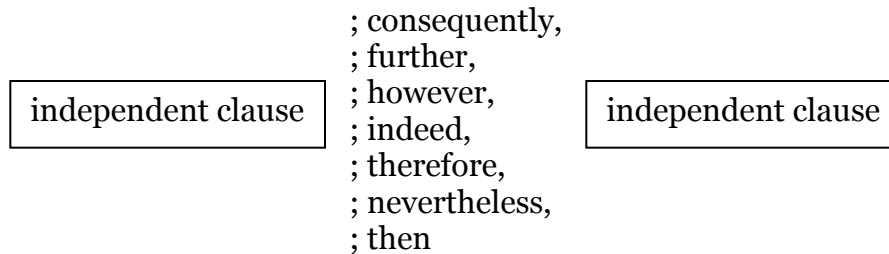# PUNCTUATING COMPOUND & COMPLEX SENTENCES

COMPOUND:

Use a comma before a *coordinating conjunction* that connects two independent clauses.

| independent clause | , for
, and
, nor
, but
, or
, yet
, so | independent clause |

Use a *semicolon* to connect two closely related or parallel independent clauses.
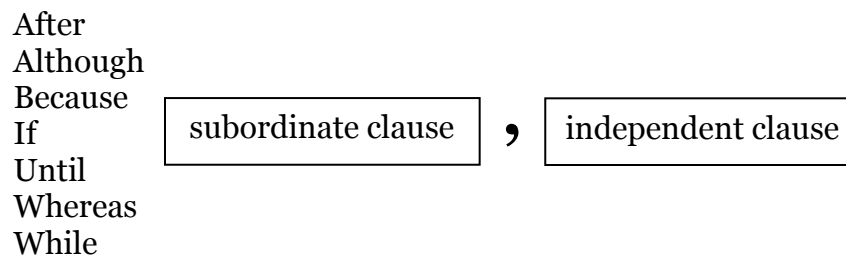
| independent clause | **;** | independent clause |

Use a semicolon before and a comma after a *transition* that connects two independent clauses. If the transition is short, the comma may not be necessary.

| independent clause | ; consequently,
; further,
; however,
; indeed,
; therefore,
; nevertheless,
; then | independent clause |

COMPLEX:

The placement of a subordinate clause determines the punctuation of the clause. Use a comma following an introductory subordinate clause to separate it from the independent clause.

| After
Although
Because
If
Until
Whereas
While | subordinate clause | **,** | independent clause |

When the subordinate clause follows the independent clause, no comma is needed unless the clause expresses contrast or exception *(although, while, whereas)*.