Perfect Punctuation
Part One: Sentence Structure

Copyright ©Heather McWhinney, 2017
Graduate Writing Help Specialist, Student Learning Services
Learning Outcomes for Part One

By the end of this presentation, you should be able to:

- Recognize the difference between independent and dependent clauses.
- Know how to punctuate independent and dependent clauses.
Overview of Screencast (Part One)

1. Define punctuation.
2. Explain the structure of independent clauses.
3. Review simple and compound sentences and their punctuation.
4. Explain the structure of dependent clauses.
5. Explain the function of subordinate conjunctions and relative pronouns.
How Can We Define Punctuation?

- Lynn Truss defines punctuation as “a system of printer’s marks that have aided the clarity of the written word for the past half millennium.”
- Truss also calls punctuation marks “the traffic signals of language.”

## Do Punctuation Marks Change Meaning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Woman without her man is nothing.”</th>
<th>“Woman: without her, man is nothing.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>”Let’s eat, Grandma.”</td>
<td>“Let’s eat Grandma.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The giant panda eats, shoots and leaves.”</td>
<td>“The giant panda eats shoots and leaves.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Several prominent people were invited to speak, including human rights advocates, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin.”</td>
<td>“Several prominent people were invited to speak, including human rights advocates, Donald Trump, and Vladimir Putin.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Reviewing English Sentence Structure

- Before we can understand these printer’s marks – or traffic signals – we need to refresh our knowledge of English sentence structure.
- The next few slides focus on clauses – the building blocks of sentences.
Clausess

- A clause is a group of words that has a subject and a verb.
- There are two types of clauses:
  - independent clauses
  - dependent clauses
Independent Clauses and Simple Sentences

- An independent clause is a group of words that expresses a complete thought and that can stand alone as a sentence.
- An independent clause contains one or more subject and verb. It may also have one or more object, complement or phrase.
- A single independent clause is also called a simple sentence.
  
  ✓ Claire applied to two universities.
  ✓ In February, Claire applied to the two universities of her choice.
  ✓ By choosing to study nursing, Claire is continuing a family tradition.
Independent Clauses and Compound Sentences

A compound sentence is two independent clauses joined in one of three ways:

1. With a comma followed by a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS): *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.*
   
   ✓ The sea was calm, **but** Jim was worried about a storm.

2. With a semi-colon followed by a conjunctive adverb or adverb phrase (e.g., *however, therefore, additionally, conversely, in contrast*) and a comma.
   
   ✓ The sea was calm; **however**, Jim was worried about a storm.

3. With a semi-colon alone.
   
   ✓ The sea was becoming rough; Jim was worried about a storm.
Conjunctive Adverbs and Adverb Phrases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Conjunctive Adverbs and Adverb Phrases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>additionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>furthermore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moreover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>besides</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Dependent Clauses**

- A dependent clause is a group of words that has one or more subject and verb and that begins with a subordinate conjunction.
- A dependent clause can’t stand alone as a sentence because it doesn’t express a complete thought.
- A dependent clause must be joined to an independent clause – either with or without a comma.

✓ **Although she would like to go home**, Yi is staying in Saskatoon this summer.

✓ Yi isn’t going home **because she has to work on her dissertation.**
### Examples of Subordinate Conjunctions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After</th>
<th>In order that</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Although</td>
<td>Since</td>
<td>Whenever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As</td>
<td>That</td>
<td>Where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because</td>
<td>Though</td>
<td>Whereas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before</td>
<td>Unless</td>
<td>Whether</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If</td>
<td>Until</td>
<td>While</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relative Pronouns and Adverbs

- A dependent clause can also be joined to an independent clause with a relative pronoun or adverb.
- Relative pronouns: *who, whom, whose, that, and which.*
- Relative adverbs: *when, where, and why.*

- Jim looked at the rough sea, **which was beginning to worrying him.**
- The cove **where the boat was anchored** was sheltered from the wind.
- Jim, **who is a physics professor,** adores being on his boat.
Complex Sentences

- A complex sentence consists of an independent clause and at least one dependent clause. The dependent clause can appear at the beginning, middle or end of the sentence.

  ✓ Although Jane likes sailing on clear days, she usually prefers being on solid ground.

  ✓ Jane agreed to get married on a boat because she wanted an adventure.

  ✓ She promised her parents that she would send them a message every day while she was at sea.
Final Tips

- Leave yourself enough time to revise and edit your work.
- Make a list of the punctuation marks you know you have trouble with and watch for them when you proofread.
- Use a good handbook, and look up rules even if you think you know them.
- Experiment with websites. Here are four that I like:
  - [www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl](http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/grammar-girl)
  - [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/566/01/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/566/01/)
Summary

- Effective punctuation helps your readers understand your meaning.
- To understand how to punctuation effectively, you need to understand basic English sentence structure.
- An independent clause is a group of words that expresses a complete thought. It contains one or more subject and verb.
- A dependent clause is a group of words that contains at least one subject and verb and begins with a subordinate conjunction.
- The three main sentence types are simple, compound and complex.