CONJUNCTIONS, SUBORDINATORS, AND CONNECTORS

Explanation: Run-on fragment sentences and inadequate or incorrect relationships in sentences are often the result of using the wrong word or no word at all. Learning the difference between the functions of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions and connectors (transitional words/conjunctive adverbs) will help writers avoid these sentence errors.

Especially important is the ability to recognize exact relationships between ideas. Some relationships are of equal importance (coordinators); some of unequal importance (subordinators); some of neither equal nor unequal relationships (connectors). Be certain to express correct relationships by using the appropriate connectors or transitional words.

Study the following list of words so that you do not confuse their functions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordinators</th>
<th>Subordinators</th>
<th>Connectors (transitional words)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Conjunctions</td>
<td>1. Conjunctions</td>
<td>likewise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>after</td>
<td>moreover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but</td>
<td>although (though)</td>
<td>furthermore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for</td>
<td>as (if)</td>
<td>also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>as long as</td>
<td>in addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nor</td>
<td>because (for)</td>
<td>finally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so</td>
<td>since</td>
<td>however</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yet</td>
<td>unless</td>
<td>nevertheless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>how</td>
<td>on the other hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Correlatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>either…or</td>
<td>when</td>
<td>therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neither…or</td>
<td>where</td>
<td>consequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both…and</td>
<td>while</td>
<td>thus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not only…but also</td>
<td>until</td>
<td>then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>whether</td>
<td>as a result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>so that</td>
<td>in brief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in order that</td>
<td>that is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>for example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in fact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Relative pronouns
who(m) *NOTE: This is only the partial list of connectors.
which
that
whomever
what
whatever
whoever

6/28/2010
Examples:
1. He went out for pizza after the movie. (preposition)
2. After Joan got her license, she bought a new car. (subordinating conjunction)

I. Coordination
A comma should be placed before a coordinator when the coordinator joins two independent clauses.
Correct punctuation of coordinators
1. The union wanted to strike, but the workers could not agree.
2. You cannot help him, he refuses to be in anyone’s debt.
Incorrect punctuation of coordinators
1. The idea may be very good or it may be very poor.
2. Neither will I praise the Democrats nor will I condemn the Republicans.

A comma splice sentence occurs when the writer has joined two independent ideas with a comma but has neglected to use a coordinator with the comma.
For example: Jacques Cousteau has a solution to the problem of chemical pollution of our oceans, it will require a great deal of money. (Correct by inserting the coordinator “but” after the comma-oceans, but it…).

A fused sentence (run-on) occurs when the writer has joined two independent ideas with no punctuation when those two ideas have neither a coordinate nor a subordinate relationship.
For example: Cousteau is not optimistic he feels man will close his eyes to the problem of water pollution.
Such sentences can be corrected by inserting a semi-colon or period between the two independent clauses.
Cousteau is not optimistic; he feels man will close his eyes to the problem of water pollution.

II. Subordination
Sentence Fragments are often the result of beginning a sentence with a subordinating conjunction but not completing that sentence with an independent clause. In other words, the writer coordinated an idea to nothing. Another statement is necessary to make full sense. A subordinator usually sets up expectations, and the clause that follows the subordinate clause answers those expectations.

The following examples begin with subordinators that set up unfulfilled expectations.
1. If we do not make a stand here.
2. Because I wanted my independence.
3. Unless the President is willing to listen to the people.

A comma is generally used to separate the subordinate clause from the independent clause when the subordinate clause begins the sentence.
Example: If we do make a stand here, we may lose the battle.
III. Connectors

Connect link or tie related ideas together in ways not necessary those of coordination and subordination.

For example, emphasis is shown by words like indeed, in fact, certainly, illustration by words like for example, namely; summation by words like finally, in conclusion.

These words are set off from the rest of the sentence with commas.

For example:
1. One should, furthermore, always drive safely.
2. Finally, let me say that the writer must express the proper relationship between ideas.

Exercises

Identify each of the following words as either a coordinator, subordinator, or a connector. Consider any words listed under “coordinator” as coordinators and under “subordinator” as subordinates even though they also appear under connectors.

a. but
b. furthermore
c. after
d. although
e. for
f. therefore
g. which
h. when
i. as a result
j. because

Identify each of the following as fused (run-on), fragment, a comma splice, or correct. Correct each error by the best method: adding or removing subordinators; adding coordinator and a comma; adding semicolons or a period; or by changing a word or words.

Example: Jacques Cousteau has a solution to the problem of chemical pollution of our oceans, it will require a great deal of money.
Comma splice; corrected by inserting but after the comma:
Jacques Cousteau has a solution to the problem of chemical pollution of our oceans, but it will require a great deal of money.

a. Cousteau recommends that we extract toxic chemicals from our waterways, then pack them in watertight containers.
b. The containers must be stored beneath the water level, otherwise, the toxic materials will return to our oceans.

c. Cousteau recommends salt mines for a storage place they are not a part of the water cycle.

d. We know that salt mines are not part of the water cycle, they have been dry for millions of years.

e. Storing our chemical wastes in salt mines, then, would prevent them from entering our oceans.

f. The cost of such a procedure will be high everything we buy will increase in price.

g. While others were contending that it would take much longer than the Secretary of the Interior suggests.

h. Because many soap manufacturers substituted other chemicals for phosphates and several states and cities banned phosphate-bearing detergents.

i. Other ecologists are equally forthright in their message to man, for example, Wesley Marx warns us about the fate of our oceans in his book, *The Frail Ocean*.

j. Some people who disagreed with the decisions to return to phosphates.
Answer Key

Exercise 1:

a. but- coordinator-
b. furthermore- connector-
c. after- subordinator-
d. although- subordinator-
e. for- coordinator-
f. therefore- connector-
g. which- subordinator-
h. when- subordinator-
i. as a result- connector-
j. because- subordinator-

Exercise 2:

a. correct

b. comma splice- The containers must be stored beneath the water level; otherwise, the toxic materials will return to our oceans.

c. fused- Cousteau recommends salt mines for a storage place since they are not a part of the water cycle.

d. comma splice- We know that salt mines are not part of the water cycle. They have been dry for millions of years.

e. correct

f. fused- The cost of such a procedure will be high; everything we buy will increase in price.

g. fragment- Others contend that it will take much longer than the Secretary of the Interior suggests.

h. fragment- Many soap manufacturers substituted other chemicals for phosphates and several states and cities banned phosphate-bearing detergents.

i. comma splice- Other ecologists are equally forthright in their message to man; for example, Wesley Marx warns us about the fate of our oceans in his book, *The Frail Ocean*.

j. fragment- Some people disagreed with the decisions to return to phosphates.