

PUNCTUATION PATTERNS

WRITING SERVICES - UNCW - WESTSIDE HALL, 1ST FLOOR - 962-7857

Without some convention for showing the groupings and relationships of words, for suggesting pace and intonation, the written sentence becomes a puzzle to the modern reader, and the writer, with freedom to do anything in the way of charting his reader's course through lines of words, must set about doing something, selecting some kind of systematic spacing or marking arrangement that will clarify his meaning.

—Mina Shaughnessy, Errors and Expectations

1. Independent clause .
2. Independent clause ; independent clause .
3. Independent clause ; therefore, independent clause .
however,
nevertheless,
consequently,
furthermore,
moreover,
(etc.)
4. Independent clause , and independent clause .
but
for
or
nor
so
yet
5. Clause, phrase,
or word , Nonessential clause,
phrase or word , Clause, phrase, or
word .
6. If dependent clause , independent clause .
Because
Since
When
While
Although
After
(etc.)

7. Independent clause if dependent clause .
because
since
when
while
although
after
(etc.)

8. Independent clause A, B, and C .

EDITING ADVICE

- 1) Skim through your paper, stopping at each punctuation mark.
- 2) Check to see if you can explain why you used punctuation at this point.
- 3) Read your paper aloud. Are there any unpunctuated places where you pause to figure out the meaning of what you have written?

[Punctuation] scores the music in our minds, gets our thoughts moving to the rhythm of our hearts. Punctuation is the notation in the sheet music of our words, telling us when to rest, or when to raise our voices; it acknowledges that the meaning of our discourse, as of any symphonic composition, lies not in the unites but in the pauses, the pacing, and the phrasing.

—Pico Iyer, “In Praise of the Humble Comma”