

<b>WEAK VERB</b>	The plan before the city council <b>has to do with</b> tax rebates.
<b>STRONG VERB</b>	The plan before the city council <b>proposes</b> tax rebates.

### Replacing a phrase with a verb

Phrases such as *be aware of*, *be capable of*, *be supportive of* can often be replaced with one-word verbs.

I **envy** [not *am envious of*] your mathematical ability.

I **appreciate** [not *am appreciative of*] your modesty.

Your skill **illustrates** [not *is illustrative of*] how hard you studied.

### Revising nouns into verbs

Many nouns are derived from verbs. Such nouns usually end with *-ance*, *-ment*, and *-tion* (*tolerance*, *enforcement*, *narration*). When you turn such wordy nouns back into verbs, your writing is more concise.

**NO** The **accumulation of** paper lasted thirty years.

**YES** The paper **accumulated** for thirty years.

## CHAPTER 17

# Coordination and Subordination

Used well, **coordination** and **subordination** in sentences enhance writing style. These structuring methods reflect the relationships among ideas that a writer seeks to express. Some writers enlist coordination and subordination while they **DRAFT**, but often writers wait until they **REVISE** to check for good opportunities to use these two techniques.

<b>TWO SENTENCES</b>	The sky turned dark gray. The wind died down.
<b>USING COORDINATION</b>	The sky turned dark gray, <b>and</b> the wind died down.

USING SUBORDINATION 1 **As** the sky turned dark gray, the wind died down. [Here, the wind is the focus.]

USING SUBORDINATION 2 **As** the wind died down, the sky turned dark gray. [Here, the sky is the focus.]

## COORDINATION

### 17a What is coordination of sentences?

**Coordination** of sentences is a grammatical strategy to communicate that the ideas in two or more **INDEPENDENT CLAUSES** are equivalent or balanced. Coordination can produce harmony by bringing related elements together. Whenever you use the technique of coordination of sentences, make sure that it works well with the meaning you want to communicate.

The sky turned **brighter, and** people emerged happily from buildings.

The sky turned **brighter; people** emerged happily from buildings.

### 17b What is the structure of a coordinate sentence?



A **coordinate sentence**, also known as a *compound sentence*, consists of two or more **INDEPENDENT CLAUSES** joined either by a semicolon or by a comma working in concert with a **COORDINATING CONJUNCTION** (*and, but, for, or, nor, yet, so*).

### 17c What meaning does each coordinating conjunction convey?

Each **COORDINATING CONJUNCTION** has its own meaning. When you choose one, be sure that its meaning accurately expresses the relationship between the ideas that you want to convey.

- **and** means addition
- **but** and **yet** mean contrast
- **for** means reason or choice
- **or** means choice

- **nor** means negative choice
- **so** means result or effect

 **ALERT:** Always use a comma before a coordinating conjunction that joins two INDEPENDENT CLAUSES (23b). 

## 17d How can I avoid misusing coordination?

One major misuse of COORDINATION occurs when unrelated or nonequivalent ideas, each in its own INDEPENDENT CLAUSE, are coordinated. The result looks like a coordinated sentence, but the ideas are unrelated.

**NO** Computers came into common use in the 1970s, and they sometimes make costly errors. [The statement in each independent clause is true, but the ideas are not related or equivalent.]

**YES** Computers came into common use in the 1970s, and now they are indispensable business tools.

A second major misuse of coordination occurs when it's overused. Simply stringing sentences together with COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS makes relationships among ideas unclear—and the resulting sentence lacks style.

**NO** Dinosaurs could have disappeared for many reasons, **and** one theory holds that a sudden shower of meteors and asteroids hit the earth, **so** the impact created a huge dust cloud that caused a false winter. The winter lasted for years, **and** the dinosaurs died.

**YES** Dinosaurs could have disappeared for many reasons. One theory holds that a sudden shower of meteors and asteroids hit the earth. The impact created a huge dust cloud that caused a false winter. The winter lasted for years, killing the dinosaurs.

**EXERCISE 17-1** Working individually or with a group, revise these sentences to eliminate illogical or overused coordination. If you think a sentence needs no revision, explain why. For help, consult 17a through 17d.

**EXAMPLE** Fencing, once a form of combat, has become a competitive sport worldwide, and today's fencers disapprove of those who identify fencing with fighting.

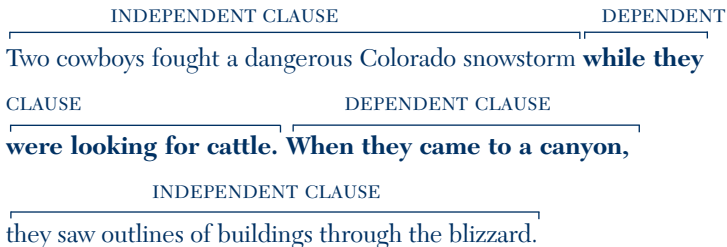
Fencing, once a form of combat, has become a competitive sport worldwide, but today's fencers disapprove of those who identify fencing with fighting.

1. As depicted in movies, fencing sometimes appears to be reckless swordplay, and fencing requires precision, coordination, and strategy.
2. In the 1800s, fencing became very popular, and it was one of the few sports included in the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, and fencing has been part of the Olympics ever since.
3. Fencing equipment includes a mask, a padded jacket, a glove, and one of three weapons—a foil, épée, or saber—and a fencer's technique and targets differ depending on the weapon used and the fencer's experience.
4. Generally, a fencer specializes in one of the three weapons, but some competitors are equally skilled with all three.
5. The object of fencing is to be the first to touch the opponent five times, and a “president,” who is sometimes assisted by a number of judges, officiates at competitions.

## SUBORDINATION

### 17e What is subordination in sentences?

**Subordination** is a grammatical strategy to communicate that one idea in a sentence is more important than another idea in the same sentence. To use subordination, you place the more important idea in an **INDEPENDENT CLAUSE** and the less important—the subordinate—idea in a **DEPENDENT CLAUSE**. The information you choose to subordinate depends on the meaning you want to deliver.



To illustrate the difference in writing style when you use subordination, here's a passage with the same message as the example above, but without subordination.

Two cowboys fought a dangerous Colorado snowstorm. They were looking for cattle. They came to a canyon. They saw outlines of buildings through the blizzard.

## 17f What is the structure of a subordinate sentence?

A subordinate sentence starts the DEPENDENT CLAUSE with either a SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION (see Box 17-2) or a RELATIVE PRONOUN.

**If** they are very lucky, the passengers may glimpse dolphins breaking water playfully near the ship.

—Elizabeth Gray, student

Pandas are solitary animals, **which** means they are difficult to protect from extinction.

—Jose Santos, student

For patterns of subordination with dependent clauses, see Box 17-1. Dependent clauses are of two types: ADVERB CLAUSES and ADJECTIVE CLAUSES. An adverb clause starts with a subordinating conjunction. An adjective clause starts with a relative pronoun.

### BOX 17-1 PATTERN



#### Subordination

##### Sentences with Adverb Clauses

- **Adverb clause**, independent clause.
  - **After the sky grew dark**, the wind died suddenly.
- Independent clause, **adverb clause**.
  - Birds stopped singing, **as they do during an eclipse**.
- Independent clause, **adverb clause**.
  - The stores closed **before the storm began**.

##### Sentences with Adjective Clauses

- Independent clause, **restrictive (essential)° adjective clause**.
  - Weather forecasts warned of a storm **that might bring a thirty-inch snowfall**.
- Independent clause, **nonrestrictive (nonessential)° adjective clause**.



Subordination (*continued*)

- Spring is the season for tornadoes, **which may have wind speeds over 220 miles an hour**.
- Beginning of independent clause, **restrictive (essential)<sup>o</sup> adjective clause**, end of independent clause.
  - Anyone **who lives through a tornado** remembers its power.
- Beginning of independent clause, **nonrestrictive (nonessential)<sup>o</sup> adjective clause**, end of independent clause.
  - The sky, **which had been clear**, turned greenish black.

<sup>o</sup>For an explanation of RESTRICTIVE and NONRESTRICTIVE ELEMENTS, see 23f.

## BOX 17-2 SUMMARY



## Subordinating conjunctions and their meanings

**Time**

*after, before, once, since, until, when, whenever, while*

- **After** you have handed in your report, you cannot revise it.

**Reason or Cause**

*as, because, since*

- **Because** you have handed in your report, you cannot revise it.

**Purpose or Result**

*in order that, so that, that*

- I want to read your report **so that** I can evaluate it.

**Condition**

*if even, if, provided that, unless*

- **Unless** you have handed in your report, you can revise it.

**Contrast**

*although, even though, though, whereas, while*

- **Although** you have handed in your report, you can ask to revise it.

**Choice**

*than, whether*

- You took more time to revise **than** I did before the lab report deadline.

**Place or Location**

*where, wherever*

- **Wherever** you say, I'll come to hand in my report.

## 17g What meaning does each subordinating conjunction convey?

Each SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION has its own meaning. When you choose one, be sure that its meaning accurately expresses the relationship between the ideas that you want to convey. Box 17-2 (opposite) lists subordinating conjunctions according to their different meanings.

**EXERCISE 17-2** Working individually or with a group, combine each pair of sentences, using an adverb clause to subordinate one idea. Then, revise each sentence so that the adverb clause becomes the independent clause. For help, see 17e through 17g, especially Box 17-1.

**EXAMPLE** The US Mint produces new coins. The US Bureau of Engraving and Printing makes \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100 bills.

- a. While the US Mint produces new coins, the US Bureau of Engraving and Printing makes \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100 bills.
  - b. While the US Bureau of Engraving and Printing makes \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50, and \$100 bills, the US Mint produces new coins.
1. The US Mint can produce more than 50 million coins a day. The US Bureau of Engraving and Printing can produce 20 million notes a day.
  2. The Federal Reserve Banks are responsible for both destroying old money and ordering new coins and notes. They must keep the right amount of money in circulation.
  3. Coins can stay in circulation for decades. People let them accumulate in jars and drawers in their homes.
  4. A \$1 bill lasts about fifteen to eighteen months. It reaches its average life span.
  5. The US Federal Reserve Banks destroy dirty, worn, and torn bills. The Federal Reserve Banks are destroying more than \$40 billion worth of money a year.

## 17h How can I avoid misusing subordination?

One major misuse of SUBORDINATION occurs when a SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTION doesn't communicate a sensible relationship between the INDEPENDENT CLAUSE and the DEPENDENT CLAUSE. See Box 17-2 for a list of subordinating conjunctions and their different meanings.



**NO** Because Beethoven was deaf when he wrote them, his final symphonies were masterpieces. [*Because* is illogical here; it says the masterpieces resulted from the deafness.]

**YES** Although Beethoven was deaf when he wrote them, his final symphonies were masterpieces. [*Although* is logical here; it says Beethoven wrote masterpieces in spite of his being deaf.]

A second major misuse of subordination occurs when it's overused, resulting in too many images or ideas crowded together in one sentence. This causes readers to lose track of the message. Whenever you write a sentence with two or more dependent clauses, check that your message is clear. If it isn't, you've likely overused subordination.

**NO** A new technique for eye surgery, **which is supposed to correct nearsightedness, which previously could be corrected only by glasses, has been developed, although many eye doctors do not approve of the new technique because it can create unstable vision, which includes intense glare from headlights on cars and many other light sources.** [The base sentence *A new technique for eye surgery has been developed* is crowded with five dependent clauses attached to it.]

**YES** A new technique for eye surgery, **which is supposed to correct nearsightedness,** has been developed. Previously, only glasses could correct nearsightedness. Many doctors do not approve of the new technique **because it can create unstable vision.** The problems include intense glare from car headlights and many other sources of light. [In this revision, one long sentence has been broken into four sentences, making the material easier to read and the relationships among ideas clearer. Two dependent clauses remain, which balance well with the other sentence constructions. Some words have been moved to new positions.]

 **ESL NOTE:** If you're told that your sentences are too long and complex, limit the number of words in each sentence. The advice of many ESL teachers is to revise any sentence you write that contains more than three independent and dependent clauses in any combination. 

**EXERCISE 17-3** Working individually or with a group, correct illogical or excessive subordination in this paragraph. As you revise according to the message you want to deliver, use some dependent clauses as well as some short sentences. (Also, if you wish, apply the principles of coordination discussed in sections 17a through 17d.) For help, consult 17h.



Although people in the United States think of hot dogs as their traditional food, this American favorite originated in Germany in 1852 when butchers in Frankfurt, Germany, stuffed meat into a long casing, which in honor of the town, they called their creation a “frankfurter.” Because one butcher noticed that the frankfurter resembled the shape of his dog, a dachshund, he decided to name the meat roll a “dachshund sausage,” a name which caught on in Germany. When Germans brought dachshund sausages to the United States, peddlers sold them on the street, although the dachshund sausages were so hot that people often burned their fingers because they had trouble holding the meat. When one clever peddler put the sausage in a bun, a *New York Times* cartoonist decided to draw a picture of hot dachshund sausages in buns, although he called them “hot dogs” because he didn’t know how to spell *dachshund*.

## 17i How can I effectively use coordination and subordination together?

Your writing style improves when you use a logical and pleasing variety of SENTENCE TYPES, utilizing COORDINATION and SUBORDINATION to improve the flow of ideas. Here’s a paragraph that demonstrates a good balance in the use of coordination and subordination.

When I was growing up, I lived on a farm just across the field from my grandmother. My parents were busy trying to raise six children and to establish their struggling dairy farm. It was nice to have Grandma so close. While my parents were providing the necessities of life, my patient grandmother gave her time to her shy, young granddaughter. I always enjoyed going with Grandma and collecting the eggs that her chickens had just laid. Usually, she knew which chickens would peck, and she was careful to let me gather the eggs from the less hostile ones.

—Patricia Mapes, student

When you use both coordination and subordination, never use both a COORDINATE CONJUNCTION and a SUBORDINATE CONJUNCTION to express one relationship in one sentence.

**NO** **Although** the story was well written, **but** it was too illogical. [The subordinating conjunction *although* expresses the contrast, so also using *but* is incorrect.]

**YES** **Although** the story was well written, it was too illogical.

**YES** The story was well written, **but** it was too illogical.