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Writing  
Compound Sentences

The most basic kind of sentence, a **simple sentence**, consists of a single **independent clause**: one subject and one verb.

European immigrants arrived at Ellis Island.

A **compound sentence** is made up of two or more simple sentences (independent clauses).

**A Using Coordinating Conjunctions**

One way to form a compound sentence is by joining two independent clauses with a **coordinating conjunction** preceded by a comma.

European immigrants arrived at Ellis Island, but Asian immigrants arrived at Angel Island.

Coordinating Conjunctions			
and	for	or	yet
but	nor	so	

Coordinating conjunctions join two ideas of equal importance. They describe the relationship between two ideas, showing how and why the ideas are related. Different coordinating conjunctions have different meanings.

- To indicate addition, use *and*.  
He acts like a child, and people think he is cute.
- To indicate contrast or contradiction, use *but* or *yet*.  
He acts like a child, but he is an adult.  
He acts like a child, yet he longs to be taken seriously.
- To indicate a cause-and-effect relationship, use *so* or *for*.  
He acts like a child, so we treat him like one.  
He acts like a child, for he craves attention.
- To present alternatives, use *or*.  
He acts like a child, or he is ignored.
- To eliminate alternatives, use *nor*.  
He does not act like a child, nor does he look like one.



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WRITING  
EFFECTIVE SENTENCES

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**FOCUS** Commas with Coordinating Conjunctions

When you use a coordinating conjunction to link two independent clauses into a single compound sentence, always put a comma before the coordinating conjunction.

We can stand in line all night, or we can go home now.

Remember, though, not to use a comma before a coordinating conjunction unless it links two *complete independent clauses*.

INCORRECT We can stand in line all night, or go home now.

CORRECT We can stand in line all night or go home now.

◆ **PRACTICE 16-1**

Fill in the coordinating conjunction—*and, but, for, nor, or, so, or yet*—that most logically links the two parts of each compound sentence. Remember to insert a comma before each coordinating conjunction.

**Example:** Fairy tales have been told by many people around the world, but the stories by two German brothers may be the most famous.

(1) Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm lived in the nineteenth century \_\_\_\_\_ they wrote many well-known fairy tales. (2) Most people think fondly of fairy tales \_\_\_\_\_ the Brothers Grimm wrote many unpleasant and violent stories. (3) In their best-known works, children are abused \_\_\_\_\_ endings are not always happy. (4) Either innocent children are brutally punished for no reason \_\_\_\_\_ they are neglected. (5) For example, in "Hansel and Gretel," the stepmother mistreats the children \_\_\_\_\_ their father abandons them in the woods. (6) In this story, the events are horrifying \_\_\_\_\_ the ending is still happy. (7) The children outwit the evil adults \_\_\_\_\_ they escape unharmed. (8) Apparently, they are not injured physically \_\_\_\_\_ are they harmed emotionally. (9) Nevertheless, their story can hardly be called pleasant \_\_\_\_\_ it remains a story of child abuse and neglect.

**ON THE WEB**

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Writing  
Compound Sentences

## ◆ PRACTICE 16-2

Join each of the following pairs of independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction. Be sure to place a comma before the coordinating conjunction.

**Example:** A computer makes drafting essays easier,<sup>and it</sup> ~~it~~ also makes revision easier.

1. Training a dog to heel is difficult. Dogs naturally resist strict control.
2. A bodhran is an Irish drum. It is played with a wooden stick.
3. Students should spend two hours of study time for each hour of class time. They may not do well in the course.
4. Years ago, students wrote their lessons on slates. The teacher could correct each student's work individually.
5. Each state in the United States has two senators. The number of representatives depends on a state's population.
6. In 1973, only 2.5 percent of those in the U.S. military were women. By 2008, that percentage had increased to 20 percent.
7. A "small craft advisory" warns boaters of bad weather conditions. These conditions can be dangerous to small boats.
8. A DVD looks like a CD. It can hold fifteen times as much information.
9. Hip-hop fashions include sneakers and baggy pants. These styles are very popular among today's young men.
10. Multiple births have become more and more common. Even septuplets have a reasonable chance of survival today.

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## ◆ PRACTICE 16-3

Add coordinating conjunctions to combine some of the simple sentences in the following paragraph. Remember to put a comma before each coordinating conjunction you add.

**Example:** Years ago, few Americans lived to be one hundred,<sup>but today,</sup> ~~today~~ <sup>with some</sup> there are over 32,000 centenarians.

- (1) Diet, exercise, and family history may explain centenarians' long lives. (2) This is not the whole story. (3) A recent study showed surprising similarities among centenarians. (4) They did not all avoid tobacco and