

Dependent words

Sentences are made up of independent and dependent (*or subordinate*) clauses. We connect clauses in different ways with different kinds of connecting words to show the relationship between the ideas in the clauses, making sense of information for the reader.

One kind of connecting word is dependent words (or “subordinating conjunctions”). **Dependent words can also help fix comma splices:** adding a subordinate conjunction in front of one of the independent clauses in a comma splice makes it a dependent clause and fixes the comma error. *See the Writing Guide “Commas: Finding & fixing COMMA SPLICES.”*

Here’s a list of many of the words we think of as **dependent words**:

after	in order that	than	whereas
although	if	that	wherever
as	how	though	whether
as if	lest	[’til or til is really until]	which
as though	like (meaning “such as”)	unless	whichever
because	once	until	while
before	provided that	what	who
even if	rather than	whatever	whoever
even though	since	when	whom
ever since	so (meaning “so that”)	whenever	whomever
inasmuch as	so that	where	whose
			why

Caution!

Be sure not to treat these words like dependent words; **they’re not!** (They’re called “conjunctive adverbs.”)

- Dependent words start *dependent* clauses; **conjunctive adverbs start independent clauses.**
- When used as a conjunctive adverb, these words are **followed by a comma.**
- **Using a conjunctive adverb will not fix a comma splice.** Use a dependent word instead. *See the Writing Guide “Commas: Finding & fixing COMMA SPLICES.”*

besides (meaning also)	hence	indeed	subsequently
consequently	however	moreover	therefore
furthermore	in fact	nevertheless	thus

Examples:

Because the cure was discovered by three collaborating scientists, the Nobel prize was also shared.

Territories in that area changed allegiances **whenever** a new ruler took over.

A film may communicate oppression and entrapment **if** low-key lighting and oblique camera angles are used.

The scholarship required a very high GPA. **However**, there were some exceptions allowed.

The institute is closed on weekends; **therefore**, seminars are held only during the work week.