COMMAS IN COMPOUND SENTENCES

BEFORE WE CAN DISCUSS COMPOUND SENTENCES, WE FIRST NEED TO REVIEW WHAT MAKES UP A SENTENCE.

A sentence is made up of the following:

A SUBJECT  What the sentence is about

A VERB  What that subject did or is

THE REST  Everything else in the sentence that helps to make it complete

Todd read the whole book over the weekend

- SUBJECT: Todd
- VERB: read
- THE REST: the whole book over the weekend.

Let’s look at two other samples

He found the plot confusing.

- SUBJECT: He
- VERB: found
- THE REST: the plot confusing.

Jason and Tina stayed and spoke with the ambassador.

- SUBJECT: Jason and Tina
- VERB: stayed and spoke with
- THE REST: the ambassador

Practice:
Write out the SUBJECT, VERB, and THE REST of these sentences. NOTE: The verbs in these sentences are all action verbs.

1. Kevin played his best game ever.
2. The students completed their projects in only two weeks.
3. The puppy was wagging his tail.
4. Clair and Jean went to Ireland over spring break.
5. Trevor prepared and presented his report over the weekend.
A compound sentence combines two simple sentences into one.

Todd read the whole book, but he found the plot confusing.

Kevin played the best game of his life, so he was glad that his parents had been there to see it.

The most common way to combine two sentences into one is to use a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

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<th>COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS</th>
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Practice: Decide if the following sentences are compound or not.

If the sentence is compound, underline the two sentences that make up the new compound sentences.

If the sentence is not compound, underline the part that is compound.

Example: Dale and Todd tried out for football together.

Dale made the football team, but Todd did not.

1. My sister just had a baby boy, and my father is thrilled.

2. Paul and Linda enjoyed the ballet but were disappointed by the reception that followed.

3. David really wanted the new job but wasn’t too excited about the 45-minute daily commut.

4. The family was terrified by the tornado, but everyone knew exactly what he had to do.

5. At dress rehearsal, Mary couldn’t remember any of her lines, so he understudy was called in for Act Two.

6. I love lobster but not shrimp.

7. I love lobster, but it is not on my diet.

8. Melissa and I disagree about almost everything, but we are still best friends.
CHECK YOUR WORK

DID YOU NOTICE THAT
- Each compound sentence contained a verb WITH ITS VERY OWN SUBJECT.
- Each compound sentence contained a coordinating conjunction connecting TWO COMPLETE THOUGHTS.

HERE IS THE PROCESS I RECOMMEND FOR IDENTIFYING AND CORRECTLY PUNCTUATING COMPOUND SENTENCES.

STEP ONE: Determine if the sentence is compound or not.

Example: You must give your presentation today, or you will lose 100 points.
You must give your presentation, or you will lose 100 points.

STEP TWO: Find the SPOT where the two complete sentences/thoughts meet.

You must give your presentation today/ or you will lose 100 points.

STEP THREE: Identify what’s already there, and what is missing.

You must give your presentation today/ OR you will lose 100 points.

As you can see, this compound sentence contains a COORDINATING CONJUNCTION.

All you need to do now is put a COMMA before that coordinating conjunction.

REMEMBER: You must have a comma before the coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS: AND, BUT, OR, NOR, FOR, YET, SO
Punctuate the following sentences correctly. BE CAREFUL! Perhaps not ALL of the sentences are compound. You will need to decide.

1. Don't believe everything you hear but don't stop listening.

2. Betty accepted the teaching position in the small community for she believed that she truly had something to offer students there.

3. When the elaborate meal was served, there was a gasp of amazement from the diners and then the room was alive with the sounds of clanking silverware and chatter.

4. Our new bed is arriving next week and I, for one, am looking forward to sleeping on something other than the floor.

5. One of the students claimed that the new teacher was the best she had ever had but another student claimed that her methods were confusing.

6. Dr. Marsh's name was announced over the intercom so she rose up from the table and quickly left the room.

7. The group met to discuss the lecture notes from Chapter 21 for they were certain that they would be quizzed on the material the next day.

8. You must give me an answer tomorrow or I will withdraw my proposal of marriage.

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS
COMMAS IN COMPOUND SENTENCES
PRACTICE 6

Finding your way through sentences in an exercise is one thing. Finding your way through a paragraphs is another. Sentences in the following paragraph have been numbered for you. Take ONE SENTENCE AT A TIME.

- Decide if the sentence is compound or not.
- If the sentence is compound, find where the TWO COMPLETE THOUGHTS MEET.
- ADD whatever you need TO THAT SPOT to make the compound sentence correct.

1) In the United States, approximately 2,500 radio stations play country music but only about fifty radio stations play jazz. 2) Foreign-language stations are becoming more prevalent and they have increased by about thirty-three percent in the past decade. 3) No comedy stations exist on radio even though comedy programs are among the most popular on television.

4) Sales of compact discs of gospel, rock, and rap have grown in the last decade but sales of country, pop, and classical CDs have declined. 5) Approximately forty-four million compact discs are sold in the United States annually and sometimes I believe they're scattered on my son’s bedroom floor. 6) Some music fans now prefer CDs to live concerts since the recordings are usually clearer.

7) To earn platinum status, an album must sell at least one million cassettes or compact discs and must make at least $2 million. 8) Multi-platinum status indicates sales of two million units and at least $4 million in sales. 9) New albums by Metallica, Toni Braxton, and Hootie and the Blowfish have already attained multi-platinum and their fans continue to buy more copies. 10) Michael Jackson and a trio of opera tenors share the honor of having multi-platinum CDs and some observers find that fact amusing. 11) Reggae legend Bob Marley has been dead for more than a decade yet a recent release of his music managed to sell over a million copies.

12) It is now possible to create one’s own CDs consisting of songs taken from other CDs and recording companies are uncertain about the effect of this innovation on their sales. 13) Further breakthroughs in the recording industry are inevitable and will undoubtedly increase our listening pleasure.