
Punctuation Patterns

1. **Independent clause.**

I went to the store.

2. **Independent clause; independent clause.**

I went to the store; it was the right thing to do.

3. **Independent clause, and independent clause.**

but
for
or
nor
so
yet

I went to the store, but that doesn't mean I'm an evil person.

4. **Independent clause; therefore, independent clause.**

however,
nevertheless,
consequently,
furthermore,
moreover,
[etc.]

I went to the store; therefore, I was unable to answer the phone.

5. [Word, clause or phrase], nonessential w or c or p, [w or c or p].

I went to the store, as I often do, to buy tongue.

6. [Word, clause or phrase], essential w or c or p, [w or c or p].

I went to the store down the street to buy tongue.

7. Because **dependent clause, independent clause.**

If
Since
When
While
Although
After
Before
[etc.]

Because I went to the store, I now have the tongue for which I had hankered.

8. **Independent clause** because **dependent clause**

if
since
when
while
although
after
before
[etc.]

I now have the tongue for which I hankered because I went to the store.

9. **Other introductory element, independent clause.**

These include the following:

Adverb: *Slowly*, she became conscious of her predicament.

Conjunctive adverb: *Nevertheless*, the hours of a typist are flexible.

Transitional expression: *In fact*, only you can decide.

Participle: *Frustrated*, he wondered whether he should change careers.

Prepositional phrase: In Fitzgerald's novel, green is an important symbol.

Participial phrase: Wearing her new shoes, Jane prepared for the race.

Infinitive phrase: To win the contest, Paul needed luck.

Absolute phrase: Pens poised in anticipation, the students awaited the test.

Note: The comma after an introductory element may be omitted if the element is short and does not seem to require a pause.

Ex.: At home I seldom go shopping.

10. **Independent clause:** A, B, C, and D.

I went to the store to get the following things: bread, milk, eggs, and the tongue for which I hankered.

11. **"Independent clause,"** she said.

He said, **"independent clause."**

"Start of quoted sentence," she said, **"end of quoted sentence."**

"I went to the store to get the tongue for which I hankered," she said.

He said, "I don't understand."

"Well," she said, "then you are a fool."

12. **Independent clause:** "quotation."

Independent clause with a "quoted bit" in the flow of the clause.

This is what he said: "I went to the store."

He said he "went to the store" just yesterday.

Appendix: Definitions of Clauses

A *clause* is a group of words with its own subject and verb. "To the store" is a *phrase*, whereas "I went to the store" is a clause.

An *independent clause* is a group of words that could stand alone as a sentence. (In other words, it has a subject and verb.)

Example: "I went to the store" can be its own sentence or be part of a larger sentence. It is therefore an independent clause.

A *dependent clause* also has a subject and verb, but a dependent clause cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Example: "When I went to the store" cannot form a complete sentence on its own, though it has a subject and verb. It is therefore a dependent clause.