



TCS Writing Centre

Conjunctive Adverbs and Punctuation

Conjunctive adverbs are often used to **connect** *independent clauses* (a group of words with a subject and verb that can stand alone as a complete thought) with other independent clauses as well as with *dependent clauses* (a group of words with a subject and a verb that cannot stand alone as a complete thought).

Here is a list of commonly used conjunctive adverbs:

consequently
finally
for instance
hence
however
in addition
moreover
nevertheless
still
therefore
then
thus

When a **conjunctive adverb** is used to connect independent clauses, put a semicolon before the adverb and a comma after it, as shown in the following example:

Sarah and Tom had a mutual love of animals and adventure; consequently, it made sense for them to go into the safari business together.

A conjunctive adverb also may appear within an independent clause. In this case, use commas to set off the conjunctive adverb:

Sarah's talents lay in organization and financial management. Tom's talents, however, were more interpersonal in nature.

Some words and phrases function like conjunctive adverbs. The words or phrases in the following list are punctuated in the same way as conjunctive adverbs:

in fact

indeed

for example

for instance

at any rate

on the one hand

on the other hand

The following sentence correctly uses a semicolon with a phrase that functions as a conjunctive adverb:

Tom was able to use his people skills to obtain a number of useful grants; in fact, one grant helped him to buy their company's first four-wheel drive safari vehicle.

When these words or phrases do not separate independent clauses, use commas to set them off from the rest of the sentence:

This very vehicle was, in fact, the one I was riding in when I saw the giraffe.

Finally, writers often misuse semicolons with the word *although*, which is not a conjunctive adverb.