

The Basic Rules of Grammar

1. There are three key parts that make a sentence:
 - Main Clause (Independent Clause)
 - Dependent Clause (of which the Subordinate Clause is one...)
 - Phrase (A string of words, usually without a verb)
2. A Main Clause (Independent Clause) has several features:
 - A verb
 - A subject
 - A full stop
 - A capital letter
 - It makes sense on its own

Two main clauses can be linked together using a co-ordinating conjunction. They are both 'main' or independent clauses and they can stand alone, as sentences, or they can be linked with a co-ordinating conjunction. These are most easily remembered with the mnemonic FANBOYS: For, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)

3. A Dependent Clause has several features:
 - A verb
 - It does not make sense on its own

There are several types of dependent clauses:

- Subordinates, which begin with a subordinating conjunctions: after/although/as/as if/as long as/as much as/as soon as/as though/because/before/even if/even though/how/if/inasmuch/in order that/lest/now that/ provided that/since/so that/than/that/though/till('til)/unless/until/when/whenever/where/ wherever/while/whilst
- Relative (embedded) clauses, which begin with relative pronouns: whilst/while/who whom/whose/that/whichever/whomever/whoever
- Clauses that begin with gerunds (ING verbs)

4. A Phrase is a group of words:
 - They do not have a verb (except verb phrases, which we'll ignore for now!)
 - They do not make sense on their own
5. If you add a subordinate clause to the end of a main clause, you do not need a comma.
6. If you add a subordinate (dependent) clause before the main clause, you do need a comma.
7. If you embed a relative clause in the middle of a main clause, you must put a comma at the beginning and the end of the subordinate clause.
8. If you add a clause beginning with a gerund, either at the beginning or the end of a main clause, you should separate it from the main clause with a comma.

9. If you add a main clause to a main clause, you must separate them with either a full stop, a semi colon or a co-ordinating conjunction.

Connectives and conjunctions differ in that conjunctions are words that specifically join clauses in a sentence, whilst a connective is an umbrella term for words that can link sentences together and link paragraphs together, as well as linking clauses within a sentence.

Co-ordinating Conjunctions: for/and/nor/but/or/yet/so

Subordinating Conjunctions: after/although/as/as if/as long as/as much as/as soon as/as though/because/before/even if/even though/how/if/inasmuch/in order that/lest/now that/provided that/since/so that/than/that/though/till('til)/unless/until/when/whenever/where/wherever/while/whilst

Connectives: Firstly/lastly/finally/in conclusion/on the other hand/next/however

Useful Links:

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/clauses.htm>