

A hand holding a pen is shown writing on a document. The document is slightly out of focus, but the hand and pen are the central focus. The background is a light, neutral color. The text is overlaid on the lower-left portion of the image.

Comma Sense

To use a comma or not to use a comma--
that is the question...

Clause (the baby ate)

- A clause is a group of words containing at least a subject and a verb.
- The breakdown
 - Independent
 - Dependent

Independent (I shall haunt you till your dying day)

- This clause can stand alone
- However, it can become part of a larger sentence.
- By using a semicolon or coordinating conjunctions, you can connect an independent clause with a phrase or other clause.

Dependent (If you're very sweet to me...)

- A dependent clause has a subject and a verb, but it is introduced by a relative pronoun or subordinating conjunction.
- Relative Pronouns:
 - They relate information from the clause to its antecedent.
- Who, whom, which, that, what, whatever, whoever, and whichever

Dependent continued

- Subordinating conjunctions
 - They are classified according to the relationship they express between clauses
- Before, after, when, until, while, as soon as, as long as, where, wherever, so that, in order that, so, because, since, if, unless, provided that, except, although, though, even though, despite, in spite of...

APPLICATION

- When a dependent clause is placed at the beginning of the main clause, it needs a comma.
- If a dependent clause comes at the end of the main clause, you do not use a comma.
- Example
 - *As soon as they were married*, she began to miss her bulldog
 - He only ate Doritos *so that I wouldn't eat them myself*.

NOTE: This presentation is not an original work; it is primarily a compilation of information, ideas, and examples borrowed from various sources, including: the *Prentice-Hall Reference Guide*, the *Little, Brown Handbook – Brief Version*, and the *Longman Writer's Companion*.

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