SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Every complete English sentence must contain an independent clause and may contain additional independent or dependent clauses if properly connected. Subordinating conjunctions and phrases signal dependent clauses that must rely (or depend) on information contained within another clause. If not properly connected to that other clause, they become fragments (incomplete ideas).

Coordinating or transitional phrases and conjunctions are used to combine independent clauses; however, when too many ideas are strung together without proper connections or punctuation, they become run-ons. The most common run-on error is the comma splice which occurs when writers try to connect (or splice) 2 independent clauses together with just a comma.

Remember, independent clauses must be punctuated in one of these ways:
1. by a period and capitol letter [end. Begin]
2. by a comma and a short coordinating conjunction [end, but begin]
3. by a semicolon alone [end; begin]
4. by a semicolon preceding a transitional conjunction [end; meanwhile, begin]

TYPES OF CONNECTIVES *

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS
for
and
nor
but
or
yet
so
[remember the acronym: fanboys]

COORDINATING PHRASES
in addition
for example
of course
in the mean time
on the other hand
as a result
in other words
in conclusion

TRANSITIONAL CONJUNCTIONS
however
therefore
meanwhile
nevertheless
consequently
moreover
then
thus

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS
after
although
as
because
before
if
since

SUBORDINATING PHRASES
as if
even though
as long as
in order that
as soon as
so that

*Please note that the words and phrases used to link clauses also create or suggest different meanings (see chart on back).
MEANINGS OF CONNECTIVES

Aside from signaling transitions or making connections between clauses, these connective words and phrases suggest meaning, as follows:

**ADDITION**
and
also
again
moreover
furthermore
in addition

**COMPARISON**
similarly
likewise
in the same way/manner

**CONCESSION**
although
though
even though

**CONTRAST**
but
yet
nor
however
nevertheless
on the other hand

**ILLUSTRATION**
for example
for instance
thus

**REASON**
because
for
since

**TIME**
then
when
after
occasionally
frequently
meanwhile
immediately
eventually
in the mean time

**RESTRICTION**
if
unless

**RESULT**
so
thus
therefore
consequently
as a result

**PRACTICE by punctuating this paragraph:**

My mother has gone back to school to get a degree she's decided to become a nurse last year my father was seriously ill and he had to spend several days in the hospital so she felt helpless she was so impressed by the competence and the professionalism of the nursing staff that's when she decided to become a nurse however she has some prerequisites to take before entering the program

This information was taken from *Writing, Grammar, and Usage* by Carolyn O'Hearn, published in 1989 by Macmillan Publishing Company, New York, New York.