Coordinating Conjunctions (FANBOYS)

Coordinating conjunctions connect two equal words, phrases, or clauses.

**FANBOYS**
There are seven coordinating conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. A useful strategy to remember them is to memorize the acronym FANBOYS:

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*Joining Independent Clauses*
An independent clause can stand by itself as a complete sentence. To join two independent clauses, writers often use a comma followed by a coordinating conjunction. The basic structure of a sentence that uses a coordinating conjunction is as follows:

Subject + verb + object, [coordinating conjunction] subject + verb + object.

Joining two independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction creates a *compound sentence*.

Examples: I like football, *and* I like hockey.

The directions are complicated, *but* I am starting to understand them.

In the first example, the coordinating conjunction is *and*. It separates the two independent clauses: “I like football” and “I like hockey.” In the second example, the coordinating conjunction is *but*. It separates the two independent clauses: “The directions are complicated” and “I am starting to understand them.”

In both examples, there is an independent clause on both sides of the coordinating conjunction, and a comma is required before the coordinating conjunction.

*Joining Words and Phrases*
Coordinating conjunctions can connect two words. When just two words are connected using a coordinating conjunction, no comma is needed.
Examples: My favorite foods are burritos and sushi.
I will eat either a hamburger or a hotdog.

Coordinating conjunctions can also join more than two items. In a series that lists more than two items, the coordinating conjunction precedes the final item. A comma should be placed before the coordinating conjunction.

Examples: I recently bought new straps, pedals, and toe clips for my bike.
Jaime wants a tablet, a sword, or a cell phone for his birthday.

Coordinating conjunctions can also join phrases. When two phrases are connected using a coordinating conjunction, no comma is needed.

Examples: I want to study at my university library or at the local coffee shop.
Phil was entranced by the dancer’s stage presence and graceful movements.

Activity
Insert commas and coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) when appropriate to complete the sentences.

1. My favorite desserts include cookies, cheesecake and tiramisu.
2. I wanted to spend my entire summer reading books but I had to get a job.
3. I finished my homework so my mom let me go outside.
4. I could not play outside for I had to study for a test.
5. I want to eat at the new Chicago pizza joint or at a steakhouse.
6. I have no money but I keep shopping.
7. I have neither done the dishes nor the laundry.
8. We should bring either pizza or cake to the party.

Answer Key for Activity
1. My favorite desserts include cookies, cheesecake, and tiramisu.
2. I wanted to spend my entire summer reading books, but I had to get a job.
3. I finished my homework, so my mom let me go outside.
4. I could not play outside, for I had to study for a test.
5. I want to eat at the new Chicago pizza joint or at a steakhouse.
6. I have no money, but I keep shopping.
7. I have neither done the dishes nor the laundry.
8. We should bring either pizza or cake to the party.