Four ways to join clauses

We have already learned that clauses can be joined in several ways. In this lesson, we will closely examine some of these techniques.

Study the examples given below.

She returned home safely. Everyone was happy.
We can join these two clauses in four different ways.

Using a semicolon

A semicolon doesn't separate two clauses like a full stop but it indicates a stronger pause than a comma.

She returned home safely; everyone was happy.
Using a coordinating conjunction

We use coordinating conjunctions to connect two independent clauses. The most common coordinating conjunctions are: and, but, yet, for, so and or.

She returned home safely and everyone was happy.
Using a subordinating conjunction

Clauses introduced by a subordinating conjunction cannot stand on their own. They need to be attached to an independent or main clause. Subordinate clauses are usually introduced by conjunctions like *when, as, because, while, since, if* etc.

When she returned home safely, everyone was happy.
A subordinate clause can come before or after the main clause. When a sentence begins with a subordinate clause, we usually separate it with a comma. Commas can be omitted when the subordinate clause goes after the main clause.

Everyone was happy when she returned home safely.
Another example is given below.

He opened the window. The cat jumped in.

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We can join these pairs of clauses using the models given above.

He opened the window; the cat jumped in.
When he opened the window, the cat jumped in.
The cat jumped in when he opened the window.
Another pair of sentences is given below.

The maid lit the fire. The room became warmer and brighter.
The maid lit the fire; the room became warmer and brighter.
When the maid lit the fire, the room became warmer and brighter.
The room became warmer and brighter when the maid lit the fire.