

Conjunctive Adverbs (Handy Transition Words): Another item on your menu of choices as a writer

Conjunctive adverbs are handy for adding meaning to a sentence. **Overall**, they are particularly good at showing relationships between ideas in text, whether it is within one sentence or between sentences. **For example**, the sentence you are now reading started with a conjunctive adverb, and that helped you to see that I was stopping the explanation of the previous sentences to give a specific example. They are useful, and are, **therefore**, good words to get familiar with!

One good thing to know about conjunctive adverbs is that they don't have the same kind of grammatical power that subordinators or coordinating conjunctions have. **In other words**, conjunctive adverbs cannot subordinate an independent clause, and they can't hook two IC's together. **Thus**, they can open sentences, interrupt sentences, and end sentences, all without changing anything grammatically. It's all up to the writer and how they want to direct the reader. But if you use them to show the relationship between IC's in the same sentence, remember, since they are not coordinating conjunctions, boysfans, you'll need a semi-colon to hook those sentences together.

Are there any other specific punctuation we have to use with conjunctive adverbs? Yes—conjunctive adverbs and commas are great pals. Again, think back on what you know about punctuation. We use commas to set off introductory words or word groups in front of an independent clause, and we use commas to show interruptions inside a clause. We also use commas to stick a little tag on at the end of a sentence; the conjunctive adverb is one of those kinds of words or word groups. **Consequently**, whenever you use these handy little words, you set them off with commas.

Let's look at how you can put these words to use in your writing. Let's start with *however*, which shows that the second idea is not expected or is some kind of contradiction to what was just written before.

*I loved my math class. **However**, I dropped it because I was too busy.*

*Or I loved my math class; **however**, I dropped it because I was too busy. (Semi-colon replaced period, like it can do for hooking sentences together.)*

Or you could move the conjunctive adverb to the end of the second sentence.
*I loved my math class. I dropped it because I was too busy, **however**.*

Or you could even interrupt your sentence to put in your conjunctive adverb.
*I loved my math class. I dropped it, **however**, because I was too busy.*

They are usually remarkably mobile creatures; they are comfortable before, in the middle, or as the tail-end of a thought.

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