

The Fascinating World of Conjunctive Adverbs



Celia M. Elliott
University of Illinois
cm Elliott@illinois.edu



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So what is a “conjunctive adverb”?

An adverb that connects two *independent* clauses (both have a subject & a verb)

Explains the relationship between the two clauses

- cause & effect
- sequence or priority
- contrast
- comparison

Examples: therefore, nevertheless, still, thus, consequently, hence, otherwise, furthermore, moreover, accordingly, besides, however

Conjunctive adverbs act like regular conjunctions, but they're punctuated differently

Coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) that join independent clauses require a *comma* before the conjunction

“I think best in the mornings, **but** I fall asleep in the afternoons.”

Conjunctive adverbs take a *semicolon* before and a *comma* after

“I think; **therefore**, I am.”

English Dirty Trick #478

***However* is both a conjunctive adverb (CA) and an interrupter (I) and is punctuated differently depending on its use**

CA: “I think; **however**, I am cautious in undertaking the activity.

I: “I think, **however**, that safety measures are required.”

How can you tell? If the words following *however* form an independent clause, then it's a conjunctive adverb and takes a semicolon and comma

To recap:

Punctuation is important—faulty punctuation can cause mistakes in interpretation of highly technical material

“The reason it’s worth standing up for punctuation is not that it’s an arbitrary system of notation known only to an over-sensitive elite who have attacks of the vapours when they see it misapplied. The reason to stand up for punctuation is that without it, ~~there is no reliable way of~~ communicating meaning.”—Lynne Truss, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*

is ambiguous.



cmelliot@illinois.edu

<http://physics.illinois.edu/people/Celia/>