This handout lists just a few of the patterns for punctuation. For a complete list consult a style guide such as *A Writer’s Reference*, ask a writing consultant, or visit the Purdue Web site: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
Punctuation patterns are not something you can learn in one sitting. It will take practice, so give yourself some time to learn the basics.
An independent clause is a group of words put together to express a complete idea. *Example: The people laughed.*

A semicolon joins two independent clauses together

OR

connects two independent clauses with a transition word.

Use a comma and one of the FANBOYS: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so,* to connect two independent clauses together.

Adding in a little bit of *extra information* requires commas.

A dependent clause might look like a sentence, but it isn’t. It *depends* on an independent clause to complete it.

A colon tells the reader a list is coming.

Use commas to set up dialogue in your text.

James Michener says, “I’m not a very good writer, but I’m a great re-writer.”

“I’m not a very good writer, but I’m a great re-writer,” James Michener claimed.

“I’m not a very good writer,” James Michener proclaimed, “but I’m a great re-writer.”