Punctuation Pattern Sheet

A sentence is an independent clause.  

Join independent clauses with the semicolon
Independent Clause;  Independent Clause.  
Alf is a puppet; R2D2 is a robot.

Or join independent clauses by a comma with a conjunction.  
Independent Clause, conjunction Independent Clause.

Alf is a puppet, and R2D2 is a robot.  
Either Alf is the t-v alien, or R2D2 is the alien.  
Neither Alf is an alien, nor R2D2 is an alien.  
They are not aliens, for there is no such thing.  
There is no evidence, but the lack of evidence is not proof.  
Alien beings may exist, so some believe in alien beings.  
Alien beings may exist, yet I doubt their existence.

Commas separate words and phrases so that they do not run together.

The android brought his bat, ball, and glove to the ball park.

Separate introductory words and phrases with commas even when joining independent clauses by semicolons.

Independent Clause;  introductory word, Independent Clause.

; however, 
; therefore, 
; consequently, 
; likewise, 
; moreover, 
; then, 
; still, 
; also, 
; otherwise, 
; nevertheless, 
; in fact, 
; for example, 
; furthermore, 
; instead, 

Alf is a puppet; however, R2D2 is a robot, and both are aliens.

Separate introductory clauses with commas or you will have run on sentences.

Dependent clause, Independent clause.
Words that cause a clause to be dependent:

- after, before, during, while, when, whenever
- once, till, until, as, as if, as long as
- if, whether, since, because, although, though
- which, where, whereas, wherever, what, whatever
- who, whom, whose, how, why
- that, so that, provided that, in order that

- If a dependent clause follows the independent clause, it won’t run on, so the comma is unnecessary.
  Independent clause dependent clause.

- Separate nonrestrictive (nonessential) words with commas.
  Independent, nonessential words, clause.
  Mars, the red planet, will have a space colony.
  That, sir, is not possible.
  My experience, however, tells me that anything is possible.
  A second colony, I believe, will locate on Neptune.

- Do not separate restrictive (essential) words.
  Independent essential information clause.
  The film that I enjoyed for its special effects is Star Wars.
  The android on her left is her butler.

- Separate afterthoughts as nonrestrictive.
  Independent clause, afterthought.
  Einstein explained the theory of relativity, E=mc².

- Use a colon at the end of an independent clause when adding a list.
  Independent clause: word, word, word.
  phrase, phrase, phrase.
  clause; clause; clause.