



However ≠ But

“However” Does Not Equal “But” (A Personal Pet Peeve)

Only one of the following sentences is grammatically correct. Which one is it?

- A. The study’s results were clear, but the research team debated how to represent them.
- B. The study’s results were clear, however the research team debated how to represent them.

The correct answer is A because this is a **compound sentence** that requires a **coordinating conjunction** (“but”). If your eyes just glazed over at those grammar terms, fear not—there’s an easy way to figure it out.

To find out if “however” is correct in your sentence, read it out loud and replace “however” with “but.” Our example sentence definitely sounds better with “but.” HOWEVER, “however” can also work—if you set up the sentence correctly. “But” is a coordinating conjunction and “however” is a **conjunctive adverb**, so they take different punctuation. If you’re still dying to use “however,” here’s how to do it:

- The study’s results were clear; however, the research team debated how to represent them.

You can use “however” to join two short sentences into one. But you need a semicolon before and a comma after “however.”

If you really want to get into the weeds with coordinating conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs, and the punctuation used with each part of speech, visit Grammarly’s [How to Use Conjunctive Adverbs](#) or Purdue OWL’s [Commas vs. Semicolons in Compound Sentences](#). Everyone else, feel free to avoid the complicated explanations and use our simple tip.