



Note-Taking Template

Now that you have read the selection entitled “The Origin of African-American Folktales,” use the format below to take two-column notes on the information. Some of the main ideas and details have been filled in as a guide for you; you will be filling in the remaining information.

Main Ideas

A. conditions/hardships of slaves
in America

B. lies/misconceptions about
African race

C. In 19th century whites began
to perceive African cultures

D. Out of the experience of
slavery in the new world

Relevant Details

- brought here by force as slaves
- forced to leave family, social groups,
and customs behind
- forced to speak English, but not
allowed to read or write it
- compelled to do hard labor
- forced to live without citizenship or
rights
- thought of as inferior and less intel-
ligent than whites
- believed they were neither creative
nor artistic
- because they had no written language,
whites thought they had no literature
- used rumors and lies to justify
slavery
- began to realize Africans had oral
tradition going back 100s of years
- was used to pass on tribal history,
morals, and legends to next generation
- some had positions for poets,
storytellers, and musicians
- combined old world w/new lives to
create folktales
- characters in folktales were like
people on plantations
- they showed small, helpless characters
winning over more powerful ones
- slaves came to identify the rabbit
with themselves



Summarizing

A **summary** is a shortened version of a selection that includes only the important information. Use your two-column notes and the following format to write a summary of the selection “The Origin of African-American Folktales.”

To do this, start with the topic sentence below. Then write a summary sentence for each main idea from your notes by combining each main idea from the left-hand side of your notes with the most relevant detail(s) on the right. Write each sentence below. A few have been done for you as examples.

Topic: *African-American folktales*

Controlling idea: *originated in Africa and changed in the U.S.*

Topic sentence: *African-American folktales originated in Africa and evolved as black Africans were forced into slavery and brought to the United States.*

Main idea A: *Slaves in America were seen as property and suffered many hardships, such as being forced to do hard physical labor and enduring terrible living conditions.*

Main idea B: *Many white people, out of ignorance or deception, falsely believed that black Africans were less intelligent and had no literary or artistic heritage.*

Main idea C: *In truth, Africans had a very advanced civilization with a strong tradition of music and oral literature.*

Main idea D: *In adapting to their changed lives in America, the slaves altered their tales to reflect their new circumstances, often portraying themselves as small but clever animals.*

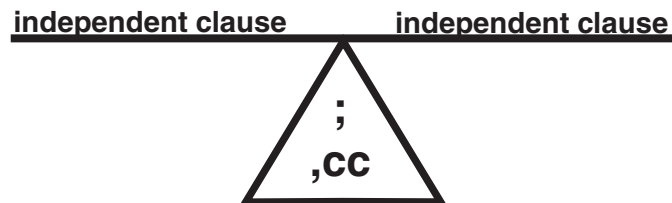
End your summary by writing a concluding sentence that restates the main idea in the topic sentence. *Black Africans used their history of oral tradition and literature to help them survive their hardships as slaves in this country.*



Compound Sentences—Introduction

A **compound sentence** is made up of two independent clauses joined by either a coordinating conjunction or a semicolon (;). A comma is used before the coordinating conjunction. An **independent clause** is a clause that must have both a subject and a predicate, and it must be able to stand alone as a complete sentence.

This visual shows how a compound sentence must be balanced with an independent clause on each side of either a semi-colon or coordinating conjunction.



Here are two independent clauses (the subjects are underlined once and the predicates are underlined twice).

slave owners forced their slaves to speak American English

they were not allowed to learn how to read or write it

These two independent clauses may be combined with the coordinating conjunction “but” to form a compound sentence.

Slave owners forced their slaves to speak American English, (but) they
were not allowed to learn how to read or write it.

There are **7 coordinating conjunctions**, and they can be easily remembered by using the acronym **FANBOYS**.

F or	(serves same function as “because”)
A nd	(combines two like or similar ideas)
N or	(continues a negative idea)
B ut	(shows a contrast)
O r	(shows a choice)
Y et	(same as using “but”)
S o	(shows a cause/effect relationship)



When deciding which coordinating conjunction to use to form a compound sentence, you need to first determine the relationship between the two independent clauses. You can do this by changing the above definitions into questions. For example, “Is there a contrast between the two ideas in the clauses?” or, “Are the ideas similar in each?”

To illustrate the process, read the following two independent clauses:

many whites had negative opinions about Africa and its people
most white Americans and Europeans had never been there

In determining the relationship between the two clauses, you might ask yourself . . .

- Is there a choice presented in the two clauses? **(or)**—no
- Does the second clause happen as a result of the first? **(so)**—no
- Is the relationship between the two clauses the same? **(and)**—no
- Is there a contrast between the two clauses? **(but or yet)**—yes

Your compound sentence would be:

Many whites had negative opinions about Africa and its people, (yet) most white Americans and Europeans had never been there.

In some circumstances, a **semicolon (;)** can take the place of a coordinating conjunction to join two independent clauses. This is done when the relationship between the two clauses is clear without the use of a coordinating conjunction. This is most often the case when the conjunction “and” could be used. Try taking out “and” and inserting a semicolon. See if the sentence still makes sense.

For example, compare the two compound sentences below:

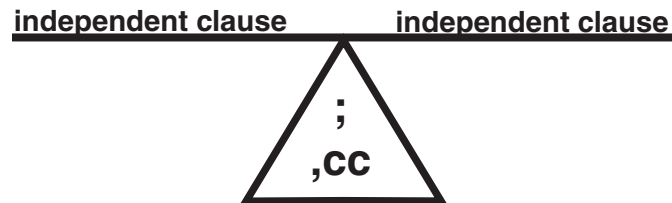
Slaves were forced to do hard labor, and they were warned never to run away.
Slaves were forced to do hard labor; they were warned never to run away.

Note that it is not correct to join two independent clauses with a comma to form a compound sentence. This creates a run-on sentence, as in the faulty sentence below:

Slaves were forced to do hard labor, they were warned never to run away.



Compound Sentences—Exercise



A. List the seven coordinating conjunctions:

for , and , nor , but , or , yet , so _____

B. Use a coordinating conjunction or a semicolon (;) to combine each pair of independent clauses into a compound sentence and write it on the lines provided. The first one is done for you. *There are a number of ways students may complete these sentences correctly.*

1. Africans had a rich oral tradition of literature
many tribes had strong histories of music as well

Africans had a rich oral tradition of literature, and many tribes had strong histories of music as well.

2. American and European whites believed that black Africans had no artistic abilities
they thought blacks had no literary history

American and European whites believed that black Africans had no artistic abilities, and they thought blacks had no literary history.

3. many slave traders made up stories about black Africans
slave owners could justify what they were doing

Many slave traders made up stories about black Africans, so slave owners could justify what they were doing.