What kinds of sentences are most commonly used in academic writing?

The truth be told, grammar is generally not a popular topic of conversation among student nurses. Grammar terms such as “conjunctive adverbs” or “dangling participles” are less popular than nursing topics like enemas or head lice. Nevertheless, some knowledge of grammar can significantly improve your sentence structure and punctuation.

In an effort to make grammar fun (or at least more bearable), I have explained some of the most common grammatical patterns in academic writing as if they were mathematical formulas.

Although more information on each formula is provided on this website (see Formulas One to Four), the grammar formulas are summarized here based on these example sentences:

I like working the day shift. I do not like working the night shift. (two complete sentences)

I saw two patients this afternoon on my clinical rotation. Each case required substantial nursing care. (two complete sentences)

**Formula One**

Complete sentence + comma + FANBOYS + complete sentence

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I like working the day shift, but I do not like working the night shift.

I saw two patients this afternoon on my clinical rotation, and each case required substantial nursing care.

**Notice the use of the comma before the FANBOYS**
I like working the day shift; however, I do not like working the night shift.

I saw two patients this afternoon on my clinical rotation; moreover, each case required substantial nursing care.

I like working the day shift. However, I do not like working the night shift.
Last week, I saw five patients on my clinical rotation. Moreover, each case required substantial nursing care. I was exhausted at the end of the rotation.

**Formula Four**

Although + main idea + comma + complete sentence.

If  
Since  
When  
While  
After  
Before

OR

Complete sentence + although + main idea.

if  
since  
when  
while  
after  
before  
because

***Notice when the comma is used (or not used).***

Although I like working the day shift, I do not like working the night shift.

Or

I like working the day shift although I do not like working the night shift.

When I saw two patients this afternoon on my clinical rotation, each case required substantial nursing care.

Or

My nursing practice was challenging this afternoon because each case required substantial care.