

Coordinating Conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions are what come to most people's minds when they hear the word "conjunction," and they do exactly what their name implies – they make things go together. They can join together words, phrases and independent clauses.

- **For** - Explains reason or purpose (just like "because"). *I go to the park every Sunday, for I love to watch the ducks on the lake.*
- **And** - Adds one thing to another. *I go to the park every Sunday to watch the ducks on the lake and the men playing soccer.*
- **Nor** - Used to present an alternative negative idea to an already stated negative idea. *I don't go for the fresh air nor really for the ducks.*
- **But** - Shows contrast. *The soccer in the park is entertaining in the winter, but it's better in the heat of summer.*
- **Or** - Presents an alternative or a choice. *The men play on teams: shirts or skins.*
- **Yet** - Introduces a contrasting idea that follows the preceding idea logically (similar to "but"). *I always take a book to read, yet I never seem to turn a single page.*
- **So** - Indicates effect, result or consequence. *I've started dating one of the soccer players, so now I have an excuse to watch the game each week.*

Subordinating Conjunctions

Out of the three different kinds of conjunctions (coordinating, correlative and subordinating), subordinating conjunctions are the most difficult to recognize, but they are not that hard to master. In fact, you probably use them all the time without even noticing, but let's take a closer look at them to see what's going on.

What Is a Subordinating Conjunction?

A subordinating conjunction is a word that connects a main clause to a subordinate clause. A main clause is an independent clause that can stand alone by itself as a sentence. In other words, a main clause does not need any additional information to operate as a sentence. For example, the sentence "The student failed the test" is an example of a main clause.



A subordinate clause is a dependent clause that adds some extra information to the main clause. These phrases cannot stand by themselves, and their meaning is dependent upon that of the independent clause. They are not sentences! For example, "because she didn't study" is not a complete idea worthy of being defined as a sentence. However, combine the two clauses, and we have "The student failed the test because she didn't study." A complete idea has been expressed, and enough information has been presented in order to fully explain the thought.

- **after** - "Your heart will break like mine, and you'll want only me after you've gone".
- **although** - "Although I've been here before, he's just too hard to ignore"
- **as** - "As I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I take a look at my life and realize there's nothing left".
- **as long as** - "I don't care who you are, where you're from or what you did as long as you love me".
- **because** - "I'm everything I am because you loved me".
- **before** - "Just call me angel of the morning, angel. Just touch my cheek before you leave me, baby".
- **even if** - "Even if the sky is falling down, you'll be my only".
- **if** - "If you leave me now, you'll take away the biggest part of me".
- **once** - "Once you pop, you can't stop".
- **now that** - "Baby, now that I've found you, I won't let you go".
- **since** - "I guess I'll never be the same since I fell for you".
- **though** - "Walk on through the wind, walk on through the rain though your dreams be tossed and blown".
- **unless** - "We're never going to survive unless we get a little crazy" (Seal).
- **until** - "[You] don't know what you've got 'til it's gone" (Cinderella).
- **when** - "When I see you smile, I can face the world" (Bad English).
- **where** - "There's a light burning bright, showing me the way, but I know where I've been".
- **while** - "I look at the world, and I notice it's turning while my guitar gently weeps"

Correlating Conjunctions

What Are Correlative Conjunctions?

Correlative conjunctions are sort of like tag-team conjunctions. They come in pairs, and you have to use both of them in different places in a sentence to make them work. They get their name from the fact that they work together (co-) and relate one sentence element to another. Correlative conjunctions include pairs like “both/and,” “whether/or,” “either/or,” “neither/nor,” “not/but” and “not only/but also.”

- I want **either** the cheesecake **or** the frozen hot chocolate.
- I’ll have **both** the cheesecake **and** the frozen hot chocolate.
- I didn’t know **whether** you’d want the cheesecake **or** the frozen hot chocolate, so I got you both.
- Oh, you want **neither** the cheesecake **nor** the frozen hot chocolate? No problem.
- I’ll eat them both - **not only** the cheesecake **but also** the frozen hot chocolate.
- I see you’re in the mood **not** for dessert **but** appetizers. I’ll help you with those too.

Here are some more pairs of correlative conjunctions:

- **as/as** - Bowling isn’t as fun as skeet shooting.
- **such/that** - Such was the nature of their relationship that they never would have made it even if they’d wanted to.
- **scarcely/when** - I had scarcely walked in the door when I got the call and had to run right back out again.
- **as many/as** - There are as many curtains as there are windows.
- **no sooner/than** - I’d no sooner lie to you than strangle a puppy.
- **rather/than** - She’d rather play the drums than sing.