

A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF CONJUNCTIONS

A conjunction is a word that links words, phrases, or clauses. English has three types of conjunctions: **coordinating** conjunctions, **correlative** conjunctions, and **subordinating** conjunctions. **Coordinating** conjunctions may join single words, or they may join groups of words, but they must always join similar elements: e.g. subject + subject, phrase + phrase, or sentence + sentence. **Correlative** conjunctions also connect sentence elements of the same kind: however, unlike coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions are always used in pairs. **Subordinating** conjunctions, the largest class of conjunctions, connect subordinate clauses to a main, or independent clause.

COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

F	A	N	B	O	Y	S
for	and	nor	but	or	yet	so

An easy way to remember these six conjunctions is to think of the word **FANBOYS**. When using a conjunction to join two sentences (not two nouns or phrases), a comma is placed before the conjunction; however, sometimes the comma may be omitted if the two joined sentences are very short and/or simple in meaning.

1. Mr. and Mrs. Smith were very proud, **for** their children had both become doctors.
“for” introduces the reason for the second clause, meaning “since”
2. The doctor dilated her cervix, **and** he also performed a hysteroscopy.
3. The doctor dilated her cervix **and** performed a hysteroscopy.
Question: Why is there a comma in sentence 2 but not one in sentence 3?
4. The patient did not follow his diet, **nor** did he take his medication.
5. The patient followed his diet, **but** he did not take his medication.
6. The doctor sees patients in Mubarak hospital on Mondays **or** Tuesdays.
7. Radiation **or** chemotherapy may be used to treat the disease.
8. The patient may choose to undergo radiation, **or** she may decide on chemotherapy instead.
Question: Why is there a comma in sentence 8 but not one in sentences 6 and 7?
9. The patient says that he followed the diet, **yet** he did not lose any weight.
10. Mariam wanted to recover, **so** she followed the doctor’s orders.

CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

both...and	not only...but also	either...or	neither...nor	whether...or
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Correlative conjunctions are always used in pairs.

- Both** lupus **and** multiple sclerosis are autoimmune diseases.
Either aspirin **or** panadol can be used to relieve the pain.
Neither aspirin **nor** panadol should be taken on an empty stomach.
Not only has she developed a rash, **but** she **also** has lost hair.

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

Subordinating conjunctions are quite a large class of words; therefore, only a few of the more common ones are included in the chart below.

TIME	CAUSE + EFFECT	OPPOSITION	CONDITION
after	because	although	if
before	since	though	unless
when/whenever	now that	even though	only if
while	as	whereas	whether or not
since	in order that	while	even if
until	so	despite/in spite of (the fact that)	in case (that)
			as long as
PURPOSE			
in order that			
so that			

A comma must be used if a subordinate clause (the one containing the subordinating conjunction) comes first in the sentence.

EXAMPLES AND SENTENCES SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

CONJUNCTION	SAMPLE SENTENCE
after	After the doctor performed the operation, he left the hospital.
since	Students no longer have to go to Khaldiya every day since the Health Sciences Center was established, Since this sentence begins with a dependent clause, a comma must be used.
while	While some patients do better with the new drug, most seem to have fewer side effects with the older one. The operation was performed while the patient was unconscious.
although	Although chicken pox is common, it usually passes with no complications.
even if	Even if the child feels well he should be kept home, as the disease is contagious.
because	The traffic is very heavy during Ramadhan because everyone travels to and from work at the same time.

Note: there is an additional type of sentence connector, which is called a sentence connector or, more technically, a conjunctive adverb. Conjunctive adverbs are words/phrases like “however, moreover, in addition, in conclusion.” They are added to an independent clause, after which the clause remains independent. They are discussed in a separate handout.

Example: Moreover, environmental factors may be involved in causing the disease.