SO VS. SO THAT

“So” acts as a coordinating conjunction and indicates a response or counter action. “So that” introduces a subordinate clause. It shows an action producing an intended result or a cause producing an effect.

HOW TO USE “SO” AND “SO THAT”

1. Separate two complete sentences with a comma and “so” – The first sentence conveys action, so the second sentence expresses a response/counter action.
2. Separate two complete sentences with “so that” – The first sentence communicates an action/cause so that the second sentence can address the result/effect.
3. Introduce a subject-verb clause with “so that” and a comma – The first subject-verb clause states the intended result/effect, and the second reveals the action/cause.

EXAMPLES

Separate two complete sentences with a comma and “so.”

- Jake bought the marshmallows (action), so Tina bought the chocolate and graham crackers (response).
  - “So” indicates Tina’s response to Jake’s action.

Separate two complete sentences with “so that.”

- Pavlov rang the bell (action) so that the dog would salivate (intended result).
  - “So that” emphasizes that ringing the bell causes the dog to salivate.

Introduce a subject-verb clause with “so that” and a comma.

- So that she would not be late for class (intended result), Elizabeth set her alarm (action).
  - “So that” indicates the intended result of Elizabeth setting her alarm.