

ELL/ESL: CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions fuse together words and sentences. Three main kinds of conjunctions exist in English: *coordinating*, *correlative*, and *subordinating* conjunctions. Each has a slightly different meaning and using them correctly will open up different kinds of sentences for you. This resource will teach you the proper grammar for conjunctions.

Tip: A common grammar mistake is putting phrases together incorrectly to make **run-on sentences**, which are confusing and lengthy. Mastering conjunctions can help keep your writing **clear and concise**.

KINDS OF CONJUNCTIONS

- Coordinating Conjunctions** – Coordinating conjunctions are the simplest kind of conjunctions. They join together words, phrases, and independent clauses.
 - There are seven coordinating conjunctions in English. These are often remembered using the acronym **Fanboys: For And Nor But Or Yet So**
 - When using them to combine two complete sentences (independent clauses), put a comma before the conjunction.
 - Example:* I would love to go to the water park today, **but** it is raining.
 - Example:* The dog knew he was not supposed to bark at the mailman, **yet** he did so enthusiastically.
 - When using the conjunction at the beginning of the sentence, put the comma in the middle where the two independent clauses join.
 - Example:* **So** that I can enjoy my weekend, I decided to finish all my homework on Friday.
 - When putting together individual ideas or phrases, you *do not* need a comma before the conjunction.
 - Example:* I will go to the store **and** buy something.
 - Example:* I neither know **nor** care the reason why.
- Correlative Conjunctions** – Correlative conjunctions work in **pairs**. They connect together two equal grammatical terms, with one conjunction coming in front of each term. Each pair of conjunctions has a unique meaning that will enhance your sentence.

Examples:

Both/and	As much/as	Hardly/when
Whether/or	Just as/so	So/as

Either/or	Scarcely/when	So/that
Neither/nor	If/then	As many/as
Not/but	No sooner/than	Barley/when
Not only/but also	As/as	What with/and
Such/that	Rather/than	

- a. Generally, you do not need to include a comma to separate correlative conjunction pairs.
 - i. *Example:* **Not only** does the forest have lions and tigers **but also** bears!
 - ii. *Example:* I don't know **whether** I want to go to dinner **or** a movie.
- b. However, if a comma is needed for other grammatical reasons like joining two independent clauses, it should be used even if a correlative conjunction pair is present.
 - i. *Example:* **Not only** does the forest have lions and tigers, **but it also** has bears!
 1. Here, there is a new independent clause after the word tigers: "it also has bears." Because that phrase could be a sentence on its own, separate the independent clauses.

3. **Subordinating Conjunctions** – Subordinating conjunctions are used to join together an independent clause and a dependent clause. These conjunctions are used to indicate cause-and-effect relationships, contrasts, or other kinds of connections between phrases.

Examples:

After	Although	As
As if	As long as	As much as
As much as	As soon as	As though
Because	Before	By the time
Even if	Even though	If
In order that	In case	In the event that
Lest	Now that	Once
Only	Only if	Provided that
Since	So	Supposing
That	Than	Though
Till	Unless	Until

When	Whenever	Where
Whereas	Wherever	Whether or not
While		

- a. If a subordinate conjunction is in the middle of the sentence, it generally *does not* need a comma before it.
 - i. *Example:* I will be there **as soon as** possible.
 - ii. *Example:* They will keep working **until** the end of the day.
- b. If a subordinate conjunction begins a sentence, that whole clause is followed by a comma.
 - i. *Example:* **Whenever** I have pizza, I order it with a lot of toppings.
 - ii. *Example:* **While** I do enjoy going to the movie theater, I would rather rent a movie and watch it at home.

MORE EXAMPLES

1. *Combine these sentences:* I like to play board games. I enjoy watching movies.
 - a. **Incorrect:** I like to play board games and I enjoy watching movies.
 - i. Here, the coordinating conjunction “and” combines two independent clauses, so there needs to be a comma before “and.”
 - b. **Correct (A):** I enjoy playing board games, and I enjoy watching movies.
 - c. **Correct (B):** I enjoy playing board games and watching movies.
 - i. You can remove the second subject and verb so that you use the same verb, “enjoy,” to refer to how you feel about both board games and watching movies.
2. *Combine these sentences:* I am not tired. I am not hungry.
 - a. **Incorrect:** I am not tired I am not hungry.
 - i. If you combine two complete sentences without a conjunction, it is a run-on sentence.
 - b. **Correct:** I am neither tired nor hungry.
 - i. Using the correlative conjunctions “neither” and “nor” allows you to negate both adjectives at the same time.
3. *Combine these sentences:* I am your best friend. I will do everything I can to help you.
 - a. **Correct (A):** I am your best friend, and I will do everything I can to help you.
 - i. Here, the word “and” functions like a + sign. It’s very simple. However, if you use a subordinating conjunction instead, you can more clearly show the relationship here.
 - b. **Correct (B):** As long as I am your best friend, I will do everything I can to help you.
 - i. This way, the connection between the two sentences is abundantly clear: the reason the speaker will do everything they can to help their friend is because of that friendship.

PRACTICE NOW