

Conjunctions

Introduction to Conjunctions

Conjunctions are the **words that join sentences, phrases or other words**. They act as connectors, linkers or bridges.

Common Conjunctions 1

Coordinating conjunctions join words, phrases or sentences of equal importance. There are seven basic coordinating conjunctions—**For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So**.

FOR

Sethu must have been sick, **for** he was looking very pale.

Here, 'for' joins 'Sethu must have been sick' with 'he was looking very pale'.

This conjunction shows the reason why 'Sethu must have been sick'.

AND

The jewel thief was hiding in the basement, **and** the police was looking for him on the ground floor.

Here, 'and' joins 'the jewel thief was hiding in the basement' with 'the police was looking for him on the ground floor'.

This conjunction shows addition. It adds one sentence ('the police was looking for him on the ground floor') to another ('the jewel thief was hiding in the basement').

At the circus, I saw a lion, a python, a hippopotamus, a giraffe **and** a chimpanzee.

Here, 'and' joins all the items in the series (lion, python, hippopotamus, giraffe, chimpanzee).

Once again, the conjunction expresses addition. It adds together all the animals seen at the circus.

NOR

Honey does not want to go to school, **nor** does he wish to study at home.

Here, 'nor' joins 'Honey does not want to go to school' with 'does he wish to study at home'.

This conjunction joins two negative choices—*does not want to go to school* and *does not wish to study at home*.

BUT

The bowlers managed to beat the batsmen many times, **but** they could not take a wicket.

Here, 'but' joins 'the bowlers managed to beat the batsmen many times' with 'they could not take a wicket'.

In this case, the idea that comes after the conjunction (*failing to take a wicket*) shows its contrast to the idea that comes before the conjunction (*beating the batsmen*).

He is experienced **but** out of form.

Here, 'but' joins 'experienced' with 'out of form'.

Once again, this conjunction joins two opposite ideas—*experience* and *lack of form*.

OR

I could do this work by myself, **or** we could do it together.

Here, 'or' joins 'I could do this work by myself' with 'we could do it together'.

This conjunction shows a choice between *doing the work alone* and *doing the work together*.

Use a fork **or** a spoon, but do not use your hands.

Here, 'or' joins 'a fork' with 'a spoon'.

Once again, the conjunction shows a choice between the *fork* and the *spoon*.

YET

The two actors are fierce rivals, **yet** they respect each other's work.

Here, 'yet' joins 'the two actors are fierce rivals' with 'they respect each other's work'. Both the joined parts have the same importance.

In this case, the idea that follows the conjunction (*respect for each other's work*) contrasts with the idea that comes before the conjunction (*fierce rivalry*).

Note:

'Yet' is similar to 'but'. In sentences where the part coming after the conjunction is of an unexpected or a surprising nature, any one of them can be used.

However, when the part following the conjunction is not of a surprising nature, it is always safe to use 'but'.

For example:

I would like to go for the wedding, **but** I have important work to complete.

They would like to play the game, **but** they have to sit on the bench today.

Let us replace 'but' with 'yet' in these sentences.

I would like to go for the wedding, **yet** I have important work to complete.

They would like to play the game, **yet** they have to sit on the bench today.

These sentences do not make the same sense as the previous two sentences. **Therefore, whenever in doubt, use 'but' instead of 'yet'.**

SO

The boys were making a lot of noise, **so** the teacher had to punish them.

Here, 'so' joins 'the boys were making a lot of noise' with 'the teacher had to punish them'.

In this case, the idea that comes after the conjunction (*punishment*) shows that it is the result of the idea that comes before the conjunction (*making a lot of noise*).

The following conjunctions **are used in pairs. They perform the same role as that performed by coordinating conjunctions.** They are **called correlative conjunctions.**

EITHER—OR

As a birthday gift you may have **either** a puppy **or** a parrot.

NEITHER—NOR

Tarun wanted **neither** the chocolate **nor** the apple pie.

BOTH—AND

Both my uncle **and** my aunt have won medals at the Olympics.

NOT ONLY—BUT ALSO

Aamir **not only** acted in the movie **but also** directed it.

Common Conjunctions 2

Subordinating conjunctions join a subordinate clause with a main clause. Simply speaking, a subordinate or dependent clause cannot stand as a separate sentence, while a main or an independent clause can stand as a separate sentence.

The following are some of the relations shown by different subordinating conjunctions:

Showing the Relation of Time

The crowd went mad **after** the fall of Sachin's wicket.

Priti had seen the movie **before** it was seen by Raji.

He has told me to wait **till** he comes back.

I cannot predict the outcome of the game **until** the first fifteen overs have ended.

While they were discussing the movie, their teacher entered the class.

Some children danced **while** others sat and watched.

The guard opened the door **when** the thieves were opening the safe.

When I hit the ball, the ball stays hit.

Showing the Relation of Reason or Cause or Purpose

Jagjit did not laugh at the joke **because** he failed to understand it.

As Manu does not eat green vegetables, his haemoglobin count is very less.

Since your cousins are coming only for a day, you may take a leave from school.

The princes are fighting **so that** one of them can win the competition.

Showing the Relation of Condition

The children will not go to school **if** you don't get new schoolbags for them.

You cannot hope to win the gold medal **unless** you practise regularly.

Showing the Relation of Contrast

Although I am not a big cricket fan, I rarely left my seat during the final yesterday.

Though he is studying for the English exam, his focus is on the Math paper that follows.

I would like to try again **even though** I have failed five times before.

Rishi plays the guitar **whereas** Ranbir plays the piano.

Showing the Relation of Uncertainty or Doubt

I cannot say **if** it has stopped raining.

I don't know **whether** this is the right way to approach the problem.