Subordinating Conjunctions

**14**

In this chapter, you will:

* Learn about types of conjunctions used in English Language
* Learn how to use and apply conjunctions in academic texts

In [grammar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammar), a **conjunction** is a [part of speech](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Part_of_speech) that connects [words](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Words), [phrases](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phrase), or [clauses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clause) that are called the [conjuncts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conjunct) of the conjunctions. The term [discourse marker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Discourse_marker) is mostly used for conjunctions joining [sentences](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sentences). This definition may overlap with that of other parts of speech, so what constitutes a "conjunction" must be defined for each [language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Language). 

**14.1 What are conjunction?**

Conjunctions are connectors between words, phrases, clauses or sentences. There are three types of conjunctions: coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions and correlative conjunctions.

**14.2 Coordinating conjunctions**

There are only seven coordinating conjunctions which are for, and, nor, but, or, yet and so.

Note:

When using a coordinating conjunction to join two sentences, use a comma before the conjunction.

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| **Coordinating conjunctions** | **What is linked?** | **Example** |
| and | noun phrase + noun phrase | 1. Homesickness is a feeling faced when separated from homes, families and neighborhoods. |
| but | sentence + sentence | 1. Herbal soups may look simple but they are actually full of nutrition. |
| or | verb + verb | 1. In some performances, dancers may walk on coals or eat glass or fire. |
| so | sentence + sentence | 1. Whatever feedback that you receive from your actions will be taken into consideration, so mistakes will never be repeated. |

Among the coordinating conjunctions, the most common, of course, are *and, but*, and *or*. It might be helpful to explore the uses of these three little words. The examples below by no means exhaust the possible meanings of these conjunctions.\*

***And:***

* To suggest that one idea is chronologically sequential to another: “Tashonda sent in her applications *and* waited by the phone for a response.”
* To suggest that one idea is the result of another: “Willie heard the weather report *and* promptly boarded up his house.”
* To suggest that one idea is in contrast to another (frequently replaced by *but* in this usage): “Juanita is brilliant *and* Shalimar has a pleasant personality.
* To suggest an element of surprise (sometimes replaced by yet in this usage): “Hartford is a rich city *and* suffers from many symptoms of urban blight.”
* To suggest that one clause is dependent upon another, conditionally (usually the first clause is an imperative): “Use your credit cards frequently *and* you’ll soon find yourself deep in debt.”
* To suggest a kind of “comment” on the first clause: “Charlie became addicted to gambling — *and* that surprised no one who knew him.”

***But:***

* To suggest a contrast that is unexpected in light of the first clause: “Joey lost a fortune in the stock market, *but* he still seems able to live quite comfortably.”
* To suggest in an affirmative sense what the first part of the sentence implied in a negative way (sometimes replaced by on the contrary): “The club never invested foolishly, *but* used the services of a sage investment counselor.”
* To connect two ideas with the meaning of “with the exception of” (and then the second word takes over as subject): “Everybody *but* Goldenbreath is trying out for the team.”

***Or:***

* To suggest that only one possibility can be realized, excluding one or the other: “You can study hard for this exam *or* you can fail.”
* To suggest the inclusive combination of alternatives: “We can broil chicken on the grill tonight, *or* we can just eat leftovers.
* To suggest a refinement of the first clause: “Smith College is the premier all-women’s college in the country, *or* so it seems to most Smith College alumnae.”
* To suggest a restatement or “correction” of the first part of the sentence: “There are no rattlesnakes in this canyon, *or* so our guide tells us.”
* To suggest a negative condition: “The New Hampshire state motto is the rather grim “Live free *or* die.”
* To suggest a negative alternative without the use of an imperative (see use of *and* above): “They must approve his political style or they wouldn’t keep electing him mayor.”

**14.3 Subordinating conjunctions**

A subordinating conjunction (sometimes called a dependent word or subordinator) comes at the beginning of a [subordinate (or dependent) clause](http://plato.algonquincollege.com/applications/guideToGrammarUS/?page_id=240#dc) and establishes the relationship between the dependent clause and the rest of the sentence. It also turns the clause into something that depends on the rest of the sentence for its meaning.

* He took to the stage as though he had been preparing for this moment all his life.
* Because he loved acting, he refused to give up his dream of being in the movies.
* Unless we act now, all is lost.

Notice that some of the subordinating conjunctions in the table below — after, before, since — are also prepositions, but as subordinators they are being used to introduce a clause and to subordinate the following clause to the independent element in the sentence.

There are many subordinating conjunctions. Subordinators are usually a single word, but there are also a number of multi-word subordinators that function like a single subordinating conjunction. They can be classified according to their use with regards to time, cause and effect, opposition or condition. The examples for subordinating conjunctions are as follow:

A: after, although, as, as if, as long as, as much as, as soon as, as though

B: because, before, by the time

E: even if, even though

I: if, in order that, in case

L: lest

O: once, only if

P: provided that

S: since, so that

T: then, that, though, till

U: unless, until

W: when, whenever, where, wherever, while, whereas

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| **Subordinating conjunctions** | **Example** |
| after | 1. The institution receives the recognition **after** the implementation of the recycle programme. |
| since | 1. **Since** few years back, Twitter service has been described as a form of social networking and micro-blogging. |
| while | 1. **While** there are some negative aspects to globalization, this essay will argue the positive consequences of globalization. |
| although | 1. **Although** the course itself may be attractive, does the institution have a reputation for quality education? |
| even if | 1. However, **even if** the cost is higher than the current location, it may be worth relocating if the new location will generate more business. |
| because | 1. Japanese is one of the hardest languages to learn **because** the written and spoken codes are different. |

### The Case of Like and As

Strictly speaking, the word like is a preposition, not a conjunction. It can, therefore, be used to introduce a prepositional phrase (“My brother is tall like my father“), but it should not be used to introduce a clause (“My brother can’t play the piano ~~like~~ as he did before the accident” or “It looks ~~like~~ as if basketball is quickly overtaking baseball as America’s national sport.”). To introduce a clause, it’s a good idea to use as, as though, or as if, instead:

* ~~Like~~ As I told you earlier, the lecture has been postponed.
* It looks ~~like~~ as if it’s going to snow this afternoon.
* Johnson kept looking out the window ~~like~~ as though he had someone waiting for him.

In formal, academic text, it’s a good idea to reserve the use of like for situations in which similarities are being pointed out:

* My red dress is like Sarah’s red dress.

However, when you are listing things that have similarities, such as is probably more suitable:

* He enjoyed a wide variety of healthy foods, ~~like~~ such as smoothies, salads, and fish.

### Omitting That\*

The word that is used as a conjunction to connect a subordinate clause to a preceding verb. In this construction that is sometimes called the “expletive that.” Indeed, the word is often omitted to good effect, but the very fact of easy omission causes some editors to take out the red pen and strike out the conjunction that wherever it appears. In the following sentences, we can happily omit the that (or keep it, depending on how the sentence sounds to us):

Isabel knew [that] she was about to be fired.

* She definitely felt [that] her fellow employees hadn’t supported her.
* I hope [that] she doesn’t blame me.

Sometimes omitting the that creates a break in the flow of a sentence, a break that can be adequately bridged with the use of a comma:

* The problem is, production in her department has dropped.
* Remember, we didn’t have these problems before she started working here.

As a general rule, if the sentence feels just as good without the that, if no ambiguity results from its omission, if the sentence is more efficient or elegant without it, then we can safely omit the that. Theodore Bernstein lists three conditions in which we should maintain the conjunction that:

* When a time element intervenes between the verb and the clause: “The boss said yesterday that production in this department was down fifty percent.” (Notice the position of “yesterday.”)
* When the verb of the clause is long delayed: “Our annual report revealed that some losses sustained by this department in the third quarter of last year were worse than previously thought.” (Notice the distance between the subject “losses” and its verb, “were.”)
* When a second that can clear up who said or did what: “The CEO said that Isabel’s department was slacking off and that production dropped precipitously in the fourth quarter.” (Did the CEO say that production dropped or was the drop a result of what he said about Isabel’s department? The second that makes the sentence clear.)

**Beginning a Sentence with Because**

Somehow, the notion that one should not begin a sentence with the subordinating conjunction because retains a mysterious grip on people’s sense of writing proprieties. This might come about because a sentence that begins with because could well end up a fragment if one is not careful to follow up the “because clause” with an independent clause.

* Because e-mail now plays such a huge role in our communications industry.
* Because e-mail now plays such a huge role in our communications industry, the postal service would very much like to see it taxed in some manner.

Practice 1: Choose the correct answer.

Headaches can be related to tension, stress (1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ a lack of sleep. It can be accompanied by nausea, vomiting or fatigue. You would want to rule out as many causes as possible (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ running to the doctor. Some headaches are irritating (3) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ others are debilitating. (4)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ they are addressed quickly, headaches can also get you into a vicious cycle that spirals into general ill health. Children can suffer from the same types of headaches as adults too (5)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ their symptoms may vary. Wearing dental braces can cause headaches, especially (6)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ an adjustment (7) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ these headaches are often temporary.

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|  | A. but | B. and | C. while | D. after |
|  | A. because | B. even if | C. before | D. although |
|  | A. while | B. or | C. even if | D. while |
|  | A. Even if | B. And | C. Since | D. Both |
|  | A. since | B. once | C. and | D. although |
|  | A. while | B. after | C. since | D. but |
|  | A. even if | B. while | C. and | D. but |

Practice 2: Fill in the blanks with suitable conjunctions.

such as and however but

because as well as although

A gemstone or gem is a piece of attractive mineral, which, when cut and polished, is used to make jewellery (1) and other adornments. However, certain rocks, (2) such as lapis-lazulli (3) and organic materials like amber or jet, are not minerals (4) although are still used for jewellery, and are therefore often considered to be gemstone as well.

Most gemstone are hard. (5) However, some soft minerals are used in jewellery (6) because of their lustre or other physical properties that have aesthetic value. Rarity is another characteristic that lend value to a gemstone.

Apart from jewellery, from earliest antiquity until the 19th Century, engraved gems and hardstone carvings (7) as well as cups were major luxury art forms; the carvings of Carl Faberge were the last significant works in this tradition.

The traditional classification in the West, which goes back to the Ancient Greeks, begins with a distinction between precious (8) and semi-precious stones; similar distinctions are made in other cultures. This distinction is unscientific and reflects the rarity of the respective stones in ancient times, (9) and their quality: all are translucent with fine colour in their purest forms, except for the colourless diamond.

The traditional distinction does not necessarily reflect modern values (10) however, while garnets are relatively inexpensive, a green garnet called Tsavorite, can be far more valuable than a mid-quality emerald.

Practice 3: Fill in the blanks with suitable subordinating conjunctions.

(1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ many do not have much knowledge on this particular topic, the “dangers of cell phone radiation” is a rarely discussed topic among the people of this country. Radiation exists because (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ you receive or make a phone call from your cell phone, radio waves are transmitted from the cell phone’s antenna to a receiving tower or satellite. (3)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ this happens, radiation is generated. The main problem of using a cell phone is (4)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the most vulnerable part of our body to be hit by the highest quantity of microwave is our brain. This is because the antenna of a cell phone is usually placed nearest to our heads. It is proven that the antenna of a cell phone is placed less than 5cm from our brain.

To avoid radio wave exposure to vital organs when using your cell phone, your usage environment must be taken into consideration (5)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to have a deflective barrier between you and the handset itself.

Several Safe Approved Shields are made to deflect excessive radio wave or microwave exposure for cell phone usage in near-field proximity of the body. Deflection materials are used because of their unique ability to provide a non-saturing barrier. This same technique is used to create a shield between you and the cell phone handset (6)\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the cell phone radiation can be avoided.

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|  | A. Because | B. Even if | C. While |
|  | A. only if | B. when | C. after |
|  | A. When | B. Since | C. Even if |
|  | A. that | B. although | C. until |
|  | A. while | B. once | C. in order |
|  | A. because | B. so that | C. as if |