

How To: Joining Sentences with Subordinators

Subordinators are sentence joining words that, like the coordinators, help us show a variety of relationships between ideas. Here are the subordinators we use most often:

Subordinator	Logical Relationship	Example
<i>although, though even though while, whereas</i>	contrast	<i>Although</i> I am a senior, I have 40 more credits to take.
<i>because, since</i>	result/cause	School is taking longer <i>because</i> I have to work.
<i>if</i>	condition	I can go to the movies <i>if</i> I finish my homework.
<i>unless</i>	condition	I cannot go to the movies <i>unless</i> I finish my homework. (if I don't finish)
<i>before after when, whenever until, as soon as</i>	time	I'll try to finish my homework <i>before</i> I go to the movies.

When we put a subordinator in front of a sentence, we change the sentence from an independent clause to a dependent (or subordinate) clause. A dependent clause cannot be a sentence by itself, so we have to join it to an independent clause:

Because she purchased her ticket in advance, (dependent clause)
she got a discount fare. (independent clause)

She got a discount fare (independent clause)
because she purchased her ticket in advance. (dependent clause)

Here is the rule to remember when using the subordinators to join two logically related ideas:

The dependent clause can come first or second in the sentence, but the two logically related ideas must appear in the same sentence.

She bought a ticket in advance. (sentence)
Because she bought a ticket in advance. (fragment, not a sentence)
Because she bought a ticket in advance, she got a discount fare. (sentence)

PUNCTUATION: When the subordinate clause comes first in a sentence, it is followed by a comma, following this pattern: *subordinate clause + comma + independent clause*.

