

# Conjunction

## Definition of Conjunction

Etymologically, the term “conjunction” is derived from an old French term meaning “joining together.” In grammar, a conjunction connects sentences, phrases, clauses, and words. A conjunction can also add meaning to the other words within a [sentence](#). Conjunctions can be placed at the beginning of a sentence or at some point in the middle. Conjunctions are essential to the English language, and their proper usage helps writers improve the effectiveness of their writing.

The most commonly used conjunctions in grammar include:

- and
- for
- but
- so
- since
- unless
- yet
- before
- because
- after
- wherever
- while
- whether
- neither
- though
- if
- as long as

For instance, Dr. Seuss uses “because” as a conjunction in this line: “You won’t lag behind, **because** you’ll have the speed.” (*Random House*, by Dr. Seuss)

## Types of Conjunction

Three types of conjunction exist in English grammar. Examples of these three types are provided below:

### **Coordinating Conjunctions**

Coordinating conjunctions connect two words, two phrases, or two independent or dependent clauses that are similarly constructed (i.e. that contain equal clauses, phrases or words). These conjunctions can be remembered by the acronym “FANBOYS,” which stands for:

for  
and  
nor  
but  
or  
yet  
so

Example: “The milkman is running away, **and** the cat is chasing him.”

### **Subordinating Conjunctions**

Subordinating conjunctions connect independent and dependent clauses by uniting them as a subordinating [clause](#). The subordinating clause then functions as an [adverb](#) within the sentence, providing answers to questions that arose in the main clause, such as “when” or “why.” A [subordinating conjunction](#) fulfills the conditions imposed upon the subsequent subordinate clause.

The most commonly used subordinating conjunctions in the English language include:

although  
after  
as  
as if  
as far as  
as long as  
as though  
as soon as  
before  
because  
even though  
even if

every time  
in order that  
so  
since  
so that  
though  
than  
until  
unless  
when  
where  
whenever  
whereas  
while  
among others

Example: “**Because** she had a long day, Hanna decided to take a long drive.”  
(Answers the question “why.”)

### Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions always appear in pairs. A correlative conjunction is similar to a [coordinating conjunction](#), because both join elements of similar importance together within a sentence. Correlative conjunctions include:

either ... or  
both ... and  
neither ... nor  
not only ... but also  
whether ... so  
as much ... as

Example: “You **either** go on a trip **or** prepare your presentation for the office.”

### Examples of Conjunctions in Literature

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Example #1: *A Farewell to Arms* (by Ernest Hemingway)

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“Maybe she would pretend that I was her boy that was killed **and**  
we would go in the front door **and** the porter would take off his

cap **and** I would stop at the concierge's desk **and** [ask](#) for the key **and** she would stand by the elevator ...”

Hemingway has used the coordinating conjunction of “and” between the clauses give above. All of the clauses within this sentence are similarly constructed.

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#### Example #2: *Progress and Change* (by E. B White)

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“I have just been refining the room in which I sit, **yet** I sometimes doubt that a writer should refine **or** improve his workroom by so much as a dictionary: one thing leads to another **and** the first thing you know he has a stuffed chair **and** is fast asleep in it.”

The above excerpt is an example of a correlative conjunction. The first three clauses are joined by correlative conjunctions as highlighted.

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#### Example #3: *Rose Madder* (by Stephen King)

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“She does not come here to worship **or** to pray, **but** she has a sense of rightness **and** ritual about being here, a sense of duty fulfilled, of some unstated covenant's renewal.”

These lines present a good example of coordinating conjunctions connecting syntactically equal clauses. Here, the coordinating conjunctions include “or,” “but” and “and.”

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#### Example #4: *Animal Farm* (by George Orwell)

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“**As soon as** the light in the bedroom went out, there was a stirring and a fluttering all through the far buildings.”

In these lines, Orwell has used the subordinating conjunction, which joins

supports the idea presented in the main clause by using the subordinating conjunction “as soon as.”

## **Functions of Conjunctions**

Not only does a conjunction connect nouns, phrases, and clauses, but it also joins together ideas, thoughts, and actions. A conjunction is especially useful when making a list of separate things. In other words, a conjunction adds meaning by joining words together.

If properly used, conjunctions can add to the natural flow of the writing. However, if improperly used, conjunctions may cause the writing to become disjointed, incoherent, or choppy. Conjunctions improve upon sentences, helping writers from all walks of life more effectively get their messages across.