

Coordinating Conjunction

Definition of Coordinating Conjunction

Coordinating [conjunction](#) is a type of conjunction that connects two syntactically equal, and similarly constructed clauses, phrases, and words. In fact, it joins the elements which are similar in structure and importance. Coordinating conjunction is a common type of conjunction in the English language. There are seven such conjunctions, which can be remembered by using mnemonic, or acronym, “FANBOYS,” which stands for “For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, and Still.”

Sometimes, a coordinating conjunction may occur at the beginning of a new [sentence](#), but usually it joins two similarly constructed sentences. For instance, “I didn’t know, **nor** did any of my family member seem to know, that the medicinal leaf my grandma burned was marijuana.” (*World’s Fair*, by E.L. Doctorow).

Types of Coordinating Conjunction

Coordinating conjunction has four types, which are:

Cumulative Conjunction

Cumulative conjunctions merely add a new statement to another existing statement. Examples of cumulative conjunction include: *and*, *both*, *as well as*, *but also*, *not only*, etc. For instance, “Alice is both beautiful **and** clever.”

Adversative Conjunction

This type of conjunction expresses contrast or opposition between two clauses or statements. Examples of adversative conjunction include: *yet*, *but*, *still*, *while*, *whereas*, and *nevertheless*, etc. For instance, “Edward is very rich, **still** he is not happy.”

Alternative Conjunction

An alternative conjunction presents two alternatives, or sometimes indicates an option between them. It is also called a “disjunctive conjunction.” Examples of alternative conjunction include: *either...or*, *or*, *neither...nor*, *otherwise*, *nor*, and *else*, etc. For instance, “We will **neither** follow their orders, **nor** quit.”

Illative Conjunction

An illative conjunction states an inference. Examples of illative conjunction include: *so*, *for*, etc. For instance, “She works very hard **so** she will win.”

Examples of Coordinating Conjunction in Literature

Example #1: *The Big Sea* (by Langston Hughes)

“They were not cordial to Negro patronage, unless you were a celebrity like Bojangles. So Harlem Negroes did not like the Cotton Club and never appreciated its Jim Crow policy in the very heart of their dark [community](#)...”

This passage has used an illative conjunction “so,” which derives inference from the previous sentence, giving a cause-effect relationship to these sentences.

Example #2: *Pride and Prejudice* (by Jane Austen)

“Its banks were **neither** formal, **nor** falsely adorned. Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place where nature had done more, **or** where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste. They were all of them warm in her admiration; and at that moment she felt that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!”

Austen has perfectly used the alternative coordinating conjunction, “*neither...nor*” to describe the bank. She also uses “*or*” to contrast her feelings about the beauty of the place

Example #3: *Preface to Milton* (by William Blake)

“*And* did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England’s mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God,
On England’s pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine,
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?”

Blake has used the cumulative coordinating conjunction “*and*” at the beginning of sentence in this verse. This conjunction gives continuation of thought by joining sentences with “and.”

Example #4: *Charlotte’s Web* (by E.B. White)

“Do you understand how there could be any writing in a spider’s web?”

“Oh, no,” said Dr. Dorian. “I don’t understand it... When the words appeared, everyone said they were a miracle. But nobody pointed out that the web itself is a miracle.”

In this excerpt, E. B. White has used the adversative conjunction, “*but*.” Here, Dorian refers to words, then draws the reader’s thoughts to the web, calling it a “miracle,” which is contrary to the readers’ expectations.

Example #5: *You Take Manhattan* (by Joseph Epstein)

“In no other city does life seem such a perpetual balancing of debits and credits, of evils and virtues, as it does in New York. No other city seems so charming **yet** so crude, so civilized **yet** so uncouth.”

This passage makes use of the adversative conjunction, “*yet*,” to present a

“civilized,” and “uncouth.”

Function

The function of coordinating conjunction is to connect words, clauses, or sentences of equal syntactic importance, to give proper meaning to sentences. In simple words, it acts as a coordinator. When writers use coordinating conjunctions liberally, it can lead to nonsensical or rambling sentences, and finally to run-on sentences. Used appropriately, however, the coordinating conjunction can improve the quality of the writing, giving it a natural flow, cohesion, and continuation of thought or ideas.