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Charts of Connecting Words and Transition Signals

Coordinating Words

Coordinating conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions connect grammatically equal elements. Coordinating conjunctions are sometimes called the “Fan Boys” conjunctions—For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So.

Conjunction	Function	Example
for	Connects a reason to a result	I am a little hungry, for I didn't eat breakfast this morning.
and	Connects equal similar ideas	John likes to fish and hunt.
nor	Connects two negative sentences	She does not eat meat, nor does she drink milk.
but	Connects equal different ideas	I like to eat fish but not to catch them.
or	Connects two equal choices	Do you prefer coffee or tea?
yet	Connects equal contrasting ideas	It is sunny yet cold.
so	Connects a result to a reason	I did not eat breakfast this morning, so I am a little hungry.

Paired (correlative) conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions are always in pairs. Like coordinating conjunctions, they connect grammatically equal elements. (Please also read the section Parallelism on pages 179–181.)

Conjunction Pairs	Example
both . . . and	Both San Francisco and Sydney have beautiful harbors.
not only . . . but also	Japanese food is not only delicious to eat but also beautiful to look at.
either . . . or	Bring either a raincoat or an umbrella when you visit Seattle.
neither . . . nor	My grandfather could neither read nor write, but he was a very wise person.
whether . . . or	The newlyweds could not decide whether to live with her parents or to rent an apartment.

Subordinating Words

A subordinating word is the first word in a dependent clause. Common subordinating words include the following.

Subordinating Conjunctions for Adverb Clauses

Time (When?)	
after	After we ate lunch, we decided to go shopping.
as, just as	Just as we left the house, it started to rain.
as long as	We waited as long as we could.
as soon as	As soon as the front door closed, I looked for my house key.
before	I thought I had put it in my coat pocket before we left.
since	I have not locked myself out of the house since I was 10 years old.
until	Until I was almost 12, my mother pinned the key to my coat.
when	When I turned 12, my mother let me keep the key in my pocket.
whenever	I usually put the key in the same place whenever I come home.
while	While I searched for the key, it rained harder and harder.

Subordinating Conjunctions for Adverb Clauses (continued)

Place (Where?)	
where	I like to shop where prices are low.
wherever	I try to shop wherever there is a sale.
anywhere	You can find bargains anywhere you shop.
everywhere	I use my credit card everywhere I shop.
Manner (How?)	
as, just as	I love to get flowers(,) as most women do.*
as if	You look as if you didn't sleep at all last night.
as though	She acts as though she doesn't know us.
Distance (How far? How near? How close?)	
as + <i>adverb</i> + as	We will hike as far as we can before it turns dark. The child sat as close as she could to her mother. The child sat as close to her mother as she could.
Frequency (How often?)	
as often as	I call my parents as often as I can.
Reason (Why?)	
as	I can't take evening classes(,) as I work at night.*
because	I can't take evening classes because I work at night.
since	I can't take evening classes since I work at night.
Purpose (For what purpose?)	
so that	Many people emigrate so that their children can have a better life.
in order that	Many people emigrate in order that their children can have a better life.
Result (With what result?)	
so + <i>adjective</i> + that	I was so tired last night that I fell asleep at dinner.
so + <i>adverb</i> + that	She talks so softly that the other students cannot hear her.
such a(n) + <i>noun</i> + that	It was such an easy test that most of the students got A's.
so much/many/ little/few + <i>noun</i> + that	He is taking so many classes that he has no time to sleep.

*This is an exception to the usual rule for commas. Many writers use a comma before *as*.

Subordinating Conjunctions for Adverb Clauses (continued)

Condition (Under what condition?)	
if	We will not go hiking if it rains.
unless	We will not go hiking unless the weather is perfect.
Partial contrast	
although	I love my brother although we disagree about almost everything.
even though	I love my brother even though we disagree about almost everything.
though	I love my brother though we disagree about almost everything.
Contrast (Direct opposites)	
while	My brother likes classical music, while I prefer hard rock.
whereas	He dresses conservatively, whereas I like to be a little shocking.

Subordinating Words for Adjective Clauses

To refer to people	
who, whom, whose, that (informal)	People who live in glass houses should not throw stones. My parents did not approve of the man whom my sister married. An orphan is a child whose parents are dead.
To refer to animals and things	
which	My new computer, which I bought yesterday, stopped working today.
that	Yesterday I received an e-mail that I did not understand.
To refer to a time or a place	
when	Thanksgiving is a time when families travel great distances to be together.
where	An orphanage is a place where orphans live.

Subordinating words for noun clauses

<i>That</i> Clauses	
that	Do you believe that there is life in outer space?
<i>If/Whether</i> Clauses	
whether	I can't remember whether I locked the door.
whether or not	whether or not I locked the door.
whether . . . or not	whether I locked the door or not .
if	I can't remember if I locked the door.
if . . . or not	if I locked the door or not .
<i>Question</i> Clauses	
who, whoever, whom	Whoever arrives at the bus station first should buy the tickets.
which, what, where	Do you know where the bus station is?
when, why, how	We should ask when the bus arrives.
how much, how many	Do not worry about how much they cost.
how long, how often, etc.	He didn't care how long he had to wait.

Notice that some subordinating conjunctions can introduce different kinds of dependent clauses. *That* can introduce either noun clauses or adjective clauses, and *where* can introduce either a noun, an adjective, or an adverb clause. It normally is not important to know the kind of clause.

I can't remember **where** I put the house key. (noun clause; direct object of *remember*)

It's not in the place **where** I usually put it. (adjective clause; tells *which place*)

I always put it **where** I will see it when I go out the front door. (adverb clause; tells *where I put it*)

Conjunctive Adverbs

Conjunctive adverbs can appear at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of one independent clause, but we often use them to connect two independent clauses.

Remember to put a semicolon before and a comma after the conjunctive adverb if an independent clause follows.

Conjunctive Adverb	Examples
To add a similar idea	
also besides furthermore in addition moreover	Community colleges offer preparation for many jobs; also , they prepare students to transfer to four-year colleges or universities. ; besides, ; furthermore, ; in addition, ; moreover,
To add an unexpected or surprising continuation	
however nevertheless nonetheless still	The cost of attending a community college is low; however , many students need financial aid. ; nevertheless, ; nonetheless, ; still,
To add a complete contrast	
in contrast on the other hand	Most community colleges do not have dormitories; in contrast , most four-year colleges do. ; on the other hand,
To add a result	
as a result consequently therefore thus	Native and nonnative English speakers have different needs; as a result , most schools provide separate classes for each group. ; consequently, ; therefore, ; thus,
To list ideas in order of time	
meanwhile afterward then subsequently	Police kept people away from the scene of the accident; meanwhile , ambulance workers tried to pull victims out of the wreck. The workers put five injured people into an ambulance; afterward , they found another victim. ; then, ; subsequently,
To give an example	
for example for instance	Colors can have different meanings; for example , white is the color of weddings in some cultures and of funerals in others. ; for instance,
To show similarities	
similarly likewise	Hawaii has sunshine and friendly people; similarly , Mexico's weather is sunny and its people hospitable. ; likewise,

Conjunctive Adverb	Examples
To indicate “the first statement is not true; the second statement is true”	
instead on the contrary rather	The medicine did not make him feel better; instead , it made him feel worse. ; on the contrary , ; rather ,
instead (meaning “as a substitute”)	They had planned to go to Hawaii on their honeymoon; instead , they went to Mexico.
To give another possibility	
alternatively on the other hand	You can live in a dorm on campus; on the other hand , you can rent a room with a family off campus. ; alternatively ,
otherwise (meaning “if not”)	Students must take final exams; otherwise , they will receive a grade of Incomplete.
To add an explanation	
in other words that is	Some cultures are matriarchal; in other words , the mothers are the head of the family. ; that is ,
To make a stronger statement	
indeed in fact	Mangoes are a very common fruit; indeed , people eat more mangoes than any other fruit in the world. ; in fact ,

Transition Signals

Transition Signals and Conjunctive Adverbs	Coordinating Conjunctions and Paired Conjunctions	Subordinating Conjunctions	Others: Adjectives, Prepositions, Verbs
To list ideas in order of time			
first, ... first of all, ... second, ... third, ... next, ... then ... after that, ... meanwhile, ... in the meantime, ... finally, ... last, ... last of all, ... subsequently, ...		before after until when while as soon as since	the first (reason, cause, step, etc.) the second ... the third ... another ... the last ... the final ...

To list ideas in order of importance			
first, ... first of all, ... first and foremost, ... second, ... more important, ... most important, ... more significantly, ... most significantly, ... above all, ... most of all, ...			the first ... (reason, cause, step, etc.) an additional ... the second ... another ... a more important (reason, cause, step, etc.) the most important ... the most significant ... the best/the worst ...
To add a similar or equal idea			
also, ... besides, ... furthermore, ... in addition, ... moreover, ... too as well	and both ... and not only ... but also		another ... (reason, cause, step, etc.) a second ... an additional ... a final ... as well as
To add an opposite idea			
however, ... on the other hand, ... nevertheless, ... nonetheless, ... still, ...	but yet	although even though though	despite in spite of
To explain or restate an idea			
in other words, ... in particular, ... (more) specifically, ... that is, ...			
To make a stronger statement			
indeed, ... in fact, ...			
To give another possibility			
alternatively, ... on the other hand, ... otherwise, ...	or either ... or whether ... or		
To give an example			
for example, ... for instance, ...			such as an example of to exemplify
To express an opinion			
according to ... in my opinion, ... in my view, ...			to believe (that) to feel (that) to think (that)

To give a reason			
for this reason, ...	for	because	as a result of because of due to
To give a result			
accordingly, ... as a consequence, ... as a result, ... consequently, ... for these reasons, ... hence, ... therefore, ... thus, ...	so		the cause of the reason for to cause to result (in) to have an effect on to affect
To add a conclusion			
all in all, ... in brief, ... in short, ... to conclude, ... to summarize, ... in conclusion, ... in summary, ... for these reasons, ...			
To show similarities			
likewise, ... similarly, ... also	and both ... and not only ... but also neither ... nor		alike, like, just like as, just as as well as well as compared with or to in comparison with or to to be similar (to) too
To show differences			
however, ... in contrast, ... instead, ... on the contrary, ... on the other hand, ... rather, ...			instead of