

CHAPTER

4 Conjunctions

LEARNING OUTCOMES

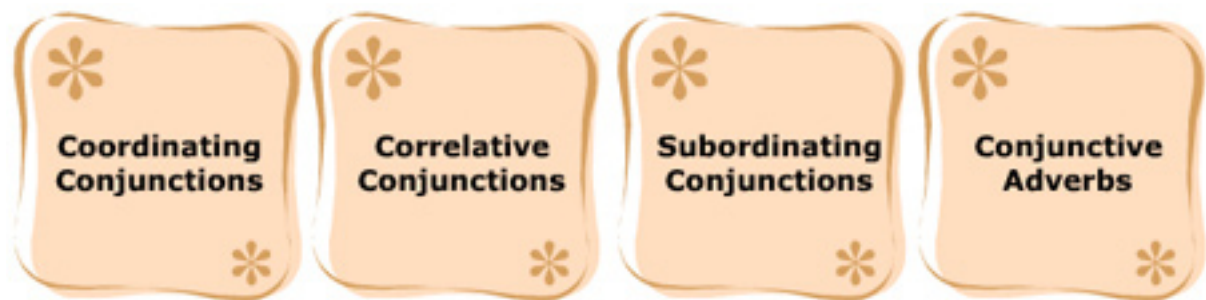
By the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

1. Define what a conjunction is and its functions;
2. Identify the different types of conjunctions; and
3. Identify some common pitfalls and gray areas in the use of conjunctions and how to avoid/correct them.

INTRODUCTION

A conjunction is a word that joins two words, phrases, clauses and/or sentences together.

Different books on grammar will categorise conjunctions differently, but for this chapter, we will learn four broad categories of conjunctions.

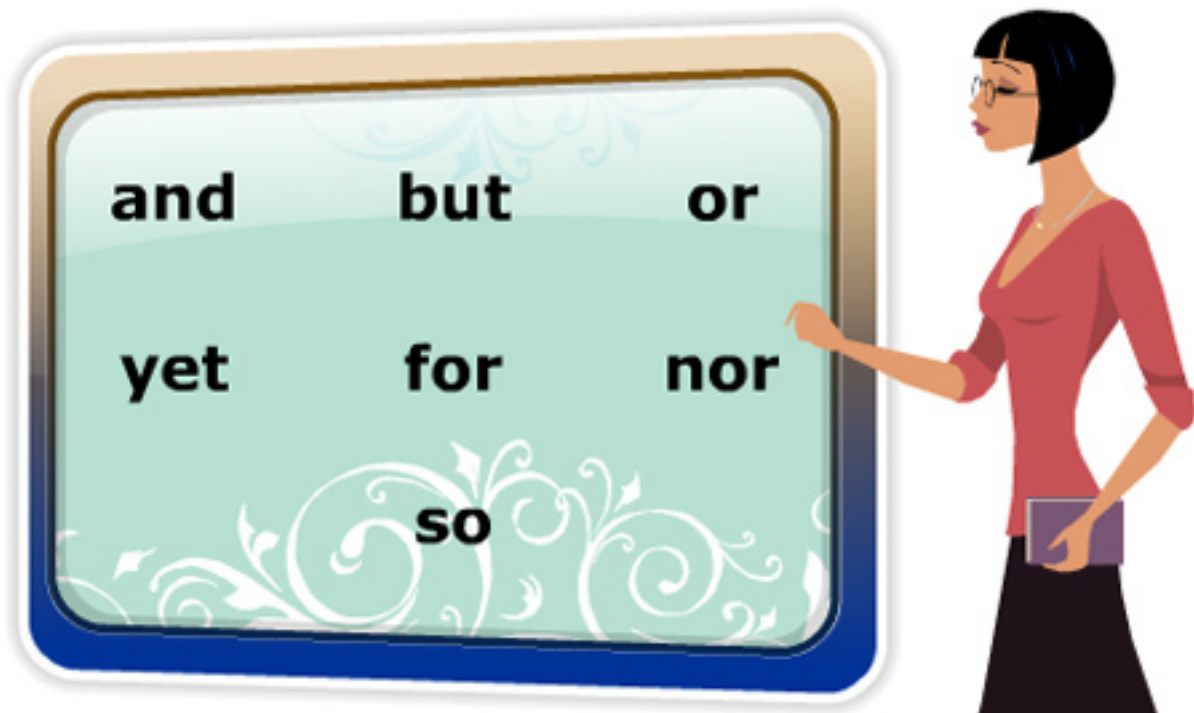


A conjunction is a word that **joins** two words, phrases, clauses and/or sentences together.

In this chapter we will also look at some familiar problems when conjunctions are used and how to avoid them, or correct them if they are present.

4.1 COORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

In English there are seven coordinating conjunctions. Figure 4.1 shows the seven coordinating conjunctions.



4.1.1 And

We use “and” to join words, phrases or sentences together. “And” functions in the following ways:

- (a) To suggest that one idea is linked to another in sequence.

Example:

Andrew dialed the number **and** waited for a response.



- (b) To show that one idea is the result of another.

Example:

He saw the burglar **and** quickly ran out of the room.



- (c) To suggest that one clause is conditionally dependent upon another (usually the first clause is an imperative).

In other words, only if the first clause is committed, the second clause would follow. See the example given.

Example:

Drive fast, **and** you'll meet an accident soon.



Grey area: Beginning a sentence with “and”.

There are many teachers who argue that sentences should never begin with “and”. This is, however, not a rule in English grammar, and it is perfectly acceptable to begin a sentence with “and”, although it is usually for less formal uses.

See the examples below:

Vasantha can sing very well. **And** she knows classical Indian dances too. (Informal)

Vasantha can sing very well. **In addition**, she knows classical Indian dances too. (Formal)



4.1.2 But

We use “but” to show contrast. Here are instances in which “but” is used:

- (a) To suggest a contrast that is unexpected in light of the first sentence (clause).

Example:

She studied very hard for the exam **but** still failed it.



- (b) To show an exception.

Example:

Everybody **but** Simon is attending the concert.



4.1.3 Or

(a) To show choice or alternatives.

For example:

You can either read the story **or** watch the movie.
(joining two verb phrases)



Do you want to go to Paris **or** London for the holidays?

(b) To show possible consequence if an action fails to take place.

For example:

Please finish your homework, **or** your teacher will punish you.



4.1.4 Yet

“Yet” functions in the same way as “nevertheless” or “but”. It is also often used together with other coordinating conjunctions such as “and” or “but”.

For example:

She studied very hard for the exam **and yet** still failed it.



4.1.5 For

“For”, in certain instance, can be used as a conjunction (although it is more often used as a preposition). It functions in the same way as “since” or “because”.

For example:

He was contented just sitting in the cool room, **for** he had traveled a long way.



I don't want to drink coffee so late in the day, **for** it will cause me sleeplessness later.

4.1.6 Nor

“Nor” is used to join two negative expressions.

For example:

You shouldn't have lent him the money, **nor** should you have allowed him to take the car.



4.1.7 So

The conjunction “so” is used to mean “therefore”. It shows that the second clause or sentence is the result of the first.

For example:



He liked physics, **so** he decided to study engineering.

My siblings wanted a pet, **so** we decided to adopt a stray cat.



Whenever you are joining two clauses or sentences together with a conjunction, place a comma before the conjunction. Look at the examples provided above for clarification.



Fill in the blanks with the correct coordinating conjunctions.

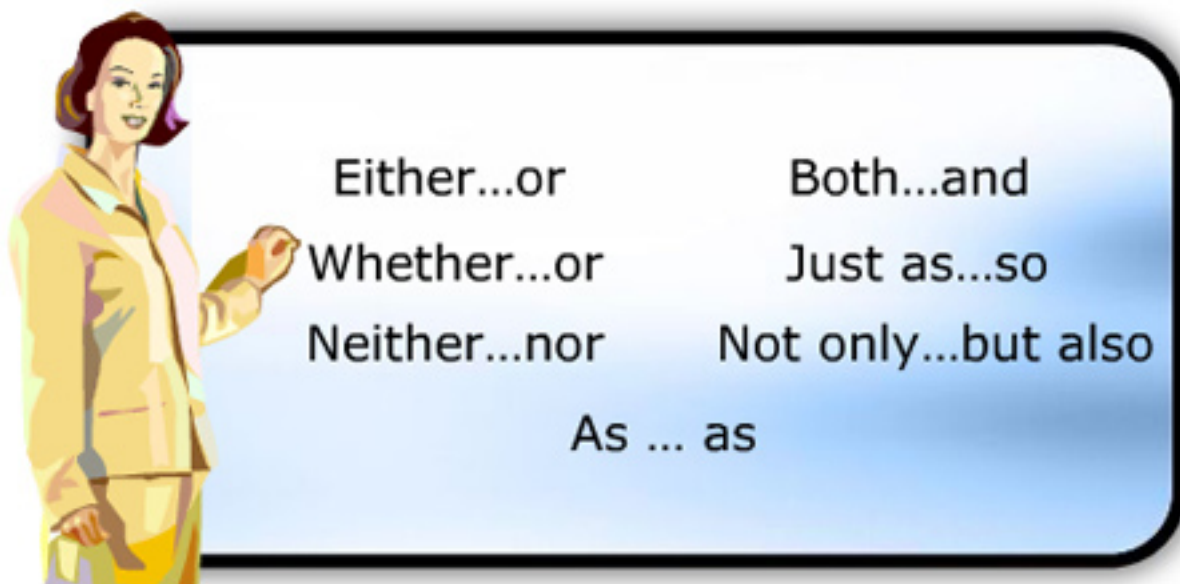
1. I don't know the answer to your question _____ I can find out for you.
2. Rita _____ May wanted to visit the famous temple _____ the heavy rain prevented them.
3. Faizal wanted a motorcycle, _____ he started saving his monthly allowances every month to buy one.
4. You cannot blame him for the problem, _____ can you expect him to solve it by himself.
5. Although he was ill, _____ he studied hard every day _____ did very well for his exams.
6. Which dress looks better on me? The green one _____ the red one?
7. Mr. Tan bought his wife a bracelet _____ each of his daughters a watch.
8. He put up a roof directly above the window _____ that rain water will not get into his room.
9. They thought they knew the way to the market _____ they were wrong.
10. You better leave now, _____ you will miss your plane.
11. They blamed him for the problem _____ it was not his fault.
12. Ahmad left the office without an umbrella _____ he was caught in the rain.
13. Nathan did not volunteer any answers during the quiz _____ he did not study the night before.
14. Tell her that she cannot leave until she has corrected the problem _____ she was the one who caused it.
15. It was a bright _____ sunny day, _____ my friends and I decided to go trekking.
16. He didn't call me _____ I'm not sure if he is coming _____ not.
17. Puan Ramli spent the whole morning cleaning the house _____ cooking several dishes, _____ her son, Megat, is returning from Canada tonight to spend one month with her.

18. Dominic was too tired to travel further, _____ he booked a room in the motel.
19. After the heavy downpour, several villages were flooded _____ many roads were closed to traffics.
20. I couldn't afford to pay the rent, _____ I moved out to look for a cheaper place.
21. Cynthia cannot decide if she should buy a new pair of shoe _____ a new dress, _____ she decided to buy both.
22. After the competition was over _____ the winner was announced, all the participants were treated to a grand dinner.

4.2 CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

Correlative conjunctions always come in **pairs**. They are used to join similar elements and must be grammatically **equal** or **paralleled**.

Figure 4.2 shows the examples of correlative conjunctions.



- (a) Either...or, neither...nor and whether...or are used to show choice.

For example:

Either Jane **or** Roslan will have to lead the team, now that Jeswant is injured.



You can **neither** see her **nor** speak to her after what you have done.

Whether you like it **or** not, I am still going to paint the house purple.



- b) Both...and emphasises the parallelism between the two subjects in the sentences.



Both Fatimah **and** her brother are unable to attend Mei Lin's wedding tomorrow.

Both my uncle **and** my cousin live in the city.



- (c) **Just as...so** shows continuity between two sentences.

For example:

Just as it was in the old days that people work hard to make a living, **so** it is today.



Just as her father was a doctor, **so** is Johana.

- (d) **Not only...but also** suggests “in addition to”.

For example:

He is **not only** rich **but** is **also** kind-hearted.



You should **not only** work hard **but** you should **also** work smart.

(e) As...as is used to show comparison.

For example:

Chong is **as** tall **as** his father when he was 18 years old.



ACTIVITY



1. _____ Ramli _____ Shamsul knows how to speak Tamil.
2. _____ did the woman lose her purse, _____ she _____ lost her keys.
3. _____ my brother _____ his friend won the chess competition last year.
4. My dog doesn't bark _____ loudly _____ yours.
5. You can opt to study _____ English _____ Japanese as your additional language in college.
6. I am not sure _____ Juanita can attend the party _____ not, but I will include her name in the list anyway.
7. Mrs. Chan has met _____ Tom _____ Richard, but she seems to prefer Richard more.
8. You should not sleep late every night. _____ should you smoke _____ drink alcohol as it is bad for your health.
9. Halim is not sure _____ he should eat a snack now _____ wait for dinner.
10. James doesn't like science subjects, so he will _____ study chemistry _____ biology.
11. My sister is planning a vacation but she cannot decide _____ to go to London _____ Bangkok.
12. Although Micheal is _____ rich _____ as Jackson, he is not as stingy.
13. She decided to go to Bangkok at last. Bangkok is _____ cheaper, _____ it has _____ many more things to see and do.
14. The meal was disappointing. _____ the vegetable dishes _____ meat dishes were overcooked.
15. If you buy this television model, you can take home _____ a DVD player, an oven toaster, _____ a rice cooker for free.

4.3 SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

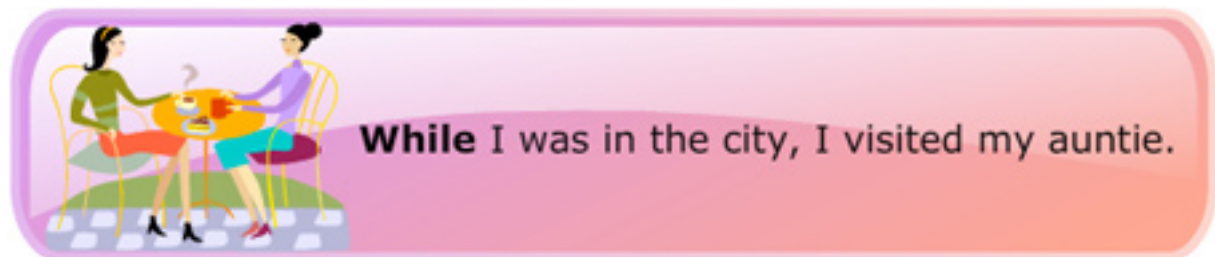
A subordinating conjunctions comes at the beginning of a subordinate (or dependent) clause (see Chapter 7 for more information).

It is used to show the relationship between the subordinate clause and the rest of the sentence. It also makes the clause depend on the rest of the sentence for its meaning. In other words, without the subordinating conjunction, the subordinate clause's relationship to the rest of the sentence will be vague.

Consider the following example:

I visited my auntie. I was in the city.

The two sentences show no relationship unless a subordinating conjunction “while” is introduced. When this is done, the relationship will become clear.



Some subordinating conjunctions, such as **after**, **before**, **since** are also prepositions, but when used as conjunctions, they introduce a clause and subordinate the dependent clause to the independent one in the sentence.

Table 4.1 shows a list of common subordinating conjunctions and their functions.

Table 4.1: Common Subordinating Conjunctions and Their Functions

Conjunction	Function	Example
After	To show time	We had a party after the exams.
Although, though	To show contrast	Although he was tired, he continued studying late into the night.
As if, as though	To show cause and effect	He spoke about the incident as if he was there to witness it.
As long as	To show cause and effect	You can do what you want as long as you are happy.
Because	To show cause and effect	I didn't buy that house because it was too expensive.
Before	To show time	I arrived at the meeting before it started.
Even if	To show cause and effect	Even if it rains, the football match will go on.
Even though	To show contrast	Mr. Raju is healthy even though he may be very old.
If, if only	To show cause and effect	Sita will succeed if/ if only she works harder.
Now that	To show time	Now that it is winter, many animals will go into hibernation.
Once	To show time	Once you have tasted my mother's cooking, you will want to come back for more.
Rather than	To show contrast	Rather than take the elevator, you should take the stairs.
Since	To show cause and effect	Since he is unwell, why don't you take over the chair of this meeting?
So that	To show consequence	Mr. Tan works two jobs so that he can put his children through education.
Than	To show comparison	James is fatter than Chen.
That	To show cause and effect	He was so stressed at work that he had to take month-long vacation.
Till, until, unless	To show cause and effect	You cannot go out until/unless you have finished your homework.
When	To show time	You can go out when you have finished your chores.

Other subordinating conjunctions include: **as soon as**, **whenever**, **whereas** and **while**.



Provide a suitable subordinating conjunction for each sentence. There may be more than one answer to some of them.

1. _____ it was raining, we didn't get wet.
2. I couldn't go on a holiday this year _____ I didn't have any money.
3. _____ my wife likes to travel abroad, I prefer to stay home for my vacation.
4. My sister passed her driving test on a first attempt _____ I had to take the test four times.
5. Halim will be late today _____ his car is being repaired.
6. _____ Marika understand speak Chinese, she could not follow the story in the film.
7. Julian got the job _____ he has no experience.
8. Mr. Tan does not drink coffee _____ it makes him nervous.
9. He went to a local university _____ it was cheaper than a foreign one.
10. Do not do heavy exercise _____ heavy meal.
11. I feel sad _____ I read about the plight of the poor in the newspapers.
12. Mr. Murugan will move to Kuala Lumpur _____ he sells his house in Tampin.
13. _____ she couldn't find a red blouse, she bought a blue one instead.
14. _____ you don't see him now, you never will. He is migrating to Canada for good.
15. I took the opportunity to visit Empire States Building _____ I was in New York for work.

Grey Area: “Than” versus “Then”

Users of English sometimes get confused between the usage of “than” and “then” because they look almost alike and sound exactly the same.

A simple rule to remember the difference is this:

(a) **“Than” is a conjunction that is used to make a comparison.**

For example:

That girl is taller **than** me.



This job is more suitable for me **than** the previous one.



(b) **“Then” can be an adverb or a conjunction.**

“Then” has several functions:

(i) **To show a certain point in time.**

I wasn't ready **then**, so I couldn't go.

(ii) **To mean “next”, or “afterwards”.**

I went to the cinema and **then** to the restaurant.

(iii) To mean “in addition to”.

The house is Rp800,000, and **then** there is the repair cost.

(iv) To mean “therefore”.

If you want to catch the opening ceremony, **then** you have to be early.



Basically, what you need to remember is this when in doubt:
if it is not a comparison, you use “then”.

Grey Area: “As” versus “Like”

Technically, “as” is a conjunction while “like” is a verb. In today’s usage however, both are used more or less in the same way, although there is a slight grammar rule that tells us when “as” should be used and when “like” should be.

The rule is as follows: We use “like” *when no verb follows*.

Consider the following examples:



He cried **like** a baby.

He cried **as if** he were a baby.
(The verb “were” is present)



Informally however, people tend to use “like” and “as” interchangeably, and this is now acceptable.

4.4**CONJUNCTIVES ADVERBS**

The last group of conjunctions is known as conjunctive adverbs (or adverbial conjunctions). They are called thus because it is unclear if they are conjunctions or adverbs. These are used to join sentences together to create complex relationships between ideas.

There are many conjunctions under this group.

(a) To Show Addition

Again, also, and, and then, besides, equally important, finally, first, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, last, moreover, next, second, still, too.

Example:

If you are not doing well in a subject, you should **first** speak to your teacher, **and then** talk to your parents about sending you for tuition classes. **Last**, you can buy more revision books on subject and practice doing the problems. If you **still** find it difficult to cope, you can seek **further** help from your friends.

b) To Show Comparison

Also, in the same way, likewise, similarly.

Examples:

John is fat; his brother is **also** fat.



Fatimah teaches in a primary school. **Similarly**, her husband is a teacher too but he teaches at a secondary school.

(c) To Show Concession

Granted, naturally, of course.

Examples:

Granted that you are weak in math, it does however not mean that you should give up so quickly.





Of course it is hot! There is no shelter from the sun here.

(d) To Show Emphasis

Certainly, indeed, in fact, of course.

Examples:

I told him to do it already. **In fact**, I just told him five minutes ago.



It is **certainly** true that she is already 35 years old.

(e) To Show Example or Illustration

After all, as an illustration, even, for example, for instance, in conclusion, indeed, in fact, in other words, in short, it is true, of course, namely, specifically, that is, to illustrate, thus, truly.

Examples:



There are many countries in Asia; **for example**, China, India and Malaysia.

I will present four case studies to **illustrate** my point.



(f) To Summarise

All in all, altogether, as has been said, finally, in brief, in conclusion, in other words, in particular, in short, in simpler terms, in summary, on the whole, that is, therefore, to put it differently, to summarise

Examples:



All in all, I have to say that this trip has been very enjoyable.

In conclusion, I want to thank everyone who has helped made this project a success.



To summarise, smoking is bad for health and we should avoid getting into the habit.



To summarise, smoking is bad for health and we should avoid getting into the habit.

(g) To Show Time Sequence

After a while, afterward, again, also, and then, as long as, at last, at length, at that time, before, besides, earlier, eventually, finally, formerly, further, furthermore, in addition, in the first place, in the past, last, lately, meanwhile, moreover, next, now, presently, second, shortly, simultaneously, since, so far, soon, still, subsequently, then, thereafter, too, until, until now, when.

Examples:

He was **formerly** a headmaster but now he is retired.

I told him leave **earlier** if he wanted to avoid the traffic jam.

He came by **shortly** after you left.

Mrs. Chong is **presently** the president of the Housewives' Association in Taman Seputih.

He ate his burger and rode the motorcycle **simultaneously**.

Because conjunctive adverbs are simultaneously conjunctions and adverbs, they lead to all kinds of punctuation problems. It will be useful to have a good dictionary and grammar book to help you in this area.

Here are some general rules you can follow:

Rule 1

Place a full stop (.) or a semi-colon (;) period before the conjunctive adverb to separate two independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb. A conjunctive adverb is not strong enough to join two independent clauses without the aid of a semi-colon.

Rule 2

Put a comma (,) following the conjunctive adverb when it appears at the beginning of the dependent clause.

Rule 3

Remember, conjunctive adverbs behave like adverbs (see Chapter 6) and therefore may move around in the sentence in which they appear. When they appear at the end of the clause, a comma should be placed before the conjunctive adverb. If they appear in the middle of the clause, they are normally enclosed in commas, though this rule is not absolute and is not applied to very short sentences.



A good website to consult on matters pertaining to conjunctive adverbs can be found here:

http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/gram_conj_adv.html

ACTIVITY



Join the following sentence pairs with appropriate conjunctive adverbs.

1. Nancy works hard. I predict success for her.
2. John studies very hard. He has been disappointed in his grades.
3. My time job pays well. I want to quit.
4. My part-time job pays well. I consider myself very lucky.
5. It rained everyday last week. We still have a shortage of water supply.
6. It rained everyday last week. The water restrictions have been lifted.
7. My parents never attended college. They are eager for me to go to the university.
8. My parents never attended college. They don't understand why education is so important to me.
9. The village suffered a terrible drought. All its crops were destroyed.
10. The village suffered a terrible drought. The government came to its aid.

SUMMARY

1. Conjunctions are special words used to link sentences together to create a more complex idea.
2. There are four broad categories of conjunctions: coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs.
3. There are seven coordinating conjunctions: and, but, or, yet, for, nor, and so. A subordinating conjunction appears at the start of a dependent clause.
4. A correlative conjunction always comes in pairs. They are used to join similar elements and must be grammatically equal or paralleled.
5. A subordinating conjunctions comes at the beginning of a subordinate (or dependent) clause. It is used to show the relationship between the subordinate clause and the rest of the sentence.
6. A conjunctive adverb takes many forms and has many functions, and because it is unclear if it is a conjunction or an adverb, it can pose problems for punctuation.
7. Although some general rules have been provided in the course of this chapter, it would be useful to consult a good dictionary whenever you have problems or doubts.

KEY TERMS

Subordinating conjunction

Conjunctive adverbs

Coordinating conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions

REFERENCES

Celce-Murcia, Marianne; Larsen-Freeman, Diane (1998). *The grammar book: An ESL/EFL teacher's course*, 2nd ed.. Heinle & Heinle.

Halliday, M. A. K. (2004). *An introduction to functional grammar*, 3rd. edition. London: Hodder Arnold.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Fill in “a”, “an” or “the” in the blanks. If you think that an article is not necessary, leave it empty.

1. The is _____ old house by the river. It has been abandoned for _____ long time now. _____ windows are all broken and _____ door has become unhinged.
2. She was bitten by _____ insect while camping at Taman Cera. Now, _____ swelling has enlarged and she may have to go to _____ hospital for treatment.
3. I couldn't understand _____ word he was saying and had difficulty trying to give him _____ advice. I think you are _____ best person to talk to him.
4. Yesterday, after _____ plane landed at _____ airport, _____ ambulance arrived to take _____ passenger to the nearby clinic.
5. _____ zoo recently announced that it has acquired three tigers and _____ Indian elephant as part of its exhibit. Now there will be more attractions apart from _____ usual monkeys and deer.
6. _____ capital city of _____ Malaysia is Kuala Lumpur. It is also _____ cultural center of _____ country and has many attractive sights for _____ interested tourist.
7. I found _____ recipe for mutton curry yesterday and decided to make it. So I went to _____ market this morning to buy some meat and vegetables. To my horror, I realized that I did not bring _____ single sen with me as I had accidentally taken out _____ purse from my handbag.
8. My aunty bought _____ car last month. It is _____ second-hand car that can go the maximum of 90 kilometers _____ hour. _____ car is now parked in _____ shed next to her house.
9. Ever since I bought my son _____ computer, he has been spending _____ lot of time figuring out how to operate it. He uses it to write _____ assignments and play _____ games. He is _____ very disciplined boy, so I am not worried that he will become addicted to it.
10. _____ Mrs Tan wants to see _____ Principal. I have taken her to _____ office but _____ Principal is not around at the moment. _____ woman is waiting in the lounge at _____ moment.