

## Linking Words (Conjunctions and Connectors)

### Definition

Broadly speaking, **conjunctions and connectors describe the relationship between two statements**. These statements can be written without linking words, but often more information can be succinctly conveyed using these words. **Conjunctions grammatically join two clauses** (independent or dependent, depending on the conjunction) so that it reads as one sentence. Connectors are used between two separate sentences.

### Type of conjunctions

There are four types of conjunctions: **coordinating, correlative, subordinating**, and conjunctive adverbs (discussed elsewhere). One sentence can contain multiple types of conjunctions, and often does.

Coordinating Conjunction	
<b>Definition</b>	These linking words <i>give equal value</i> to the two elements (nouns, adjectives, clauses, etc.) which they coordinate
<b>Words used (limited list)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>And</b> (<i>addition</i>)</li> <li>• <b>or</b> (<i>alternative</i>)</li> <li>• <b>but</b> (<i>contrastive</i>)</li> <li>• <b>yet</b> (<i>contrastive</i>)</li> <li>• <b>nor</b> (<i>negative</i>)</li> </ul> <p style="margin-left: 150px;"><i>Note: For and so are sometimes mentioned as coordinating conjunctions, but modern English rarely uses them anymore for that purpose. They are more commonly used as subordinating conjunctions.</i></p>
<b>Grammar rules</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Conjunctions must go between two elements</b> (nouns, clauses, etc.) they link</li> <li>• Commas are optional EXCEPT for <b>and</b> and <b>but</b>:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>and</b>: if there are more than 2 elements being described, a comma must follow each element being connected. The <b>and</b> must come between the second to last and last element it links. For only 2 elements, no comma is necessary</li> <li>○ <b>but</b>: a comma must always precede <b>but</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• When to use <b>nor</b> vs. <b>or</b>:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>or</b>: links nouns, adjectives, adverb phrases, or positive verb phrases.</li> <li>○ <b>nor</b>: links a negative verb phrases.                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Nor</b> is also often used with “neither.” See the last example sentence below as well as the correlative conjunctions section for more details.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Example Sentences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The graduate student had to teach section <b>and</b> take classes.</li> <li>• The graduate student had to teach section, take classes, <b>and</b> conduct research.</li> <li>• The service animal was not a pony, <b>but</b> a miniature horse.</li> <li>• He was exhausted <b>yet</b> very happy.</li> <li>• Mary had not gone to the store <b>nor</b> had she visited the gym.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Note: Notice here that “not” could be replaced with “neither” and have the same meaning. This is a good way to check if you’ve used <b>nor</b> correctly.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Quick Practice: correct the sentences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ The investigators found a hair clip a bottle of nail polish, and a credit card belonging to the kidnapping victim.</li> <li>⊗ She had a scholarship to ballet school but longed to be a doctor.</li> <li>⊗ Since you cannot swim, you are not allowed on the boat nor near the docks.</li> </ul>
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### Correlative Conjunction

<b>Definition</b>	These are <b>pairs of coordinating conjunctions; these</b> pairs <b>must be used together</b> . Like coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions <i>describe equal elements</i> .
<b>Words used (limited list)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>both...and, not only...but also</b> (combining or addition)</li> <li>• <b>either...or, whether...or not</b> (binary choice)</li> <li>• <b>neither...nor</b> (negative)</li> </ul>
<b>Grammar rules</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first word of the conjunction must go directly before the first subject or clause; the second word of the conjunction must go directly before the second.</li> <li>• <b>both...and</b> can only be used with simple subjects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ However, <b>not only...but also</b> can be used with simple subjects and clauses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Example Sentences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The paper's results were <b>both</b> impressive <b>and</b> innovative.</li> <li>• I will <b>not only</b> grow the cells for the assay, <b>but also</b> interpret the results.</li> <li>• The daughter bought <b>not only</b> a designer purse, <b>but also</b> a custom wallet.</li> <li>• Harry will <b>either</b> go to the market <b>or</b> the mall this afternoon.</li> <li>• I <b>neither</b> want to clean my room <b>nor</b> desire to go caroling.</li> </ul>
<b>Quick Practice: correct the sentences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ Jill neither wanted or needed singing bass novelty.</li> <li>⊗ The child both ate an entire cake and drank a liter of soda; she soon vomited.</li> <li>⊗ Mark wanted either Cheerios and Raisin Bran.</li> </ul>

### Subordinating Conjunction

<b>Definition</b>	These <b>linking words are often used to expand or further describe the main clause/element</b> (the explanation clause is subordinate).
<b>Words used (limited list)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>as, because, since</b> (cause)</li> <li>• <b>so, so that</b> (purpose)</li> <li>• <b>although, though</b> (contrastive)</li> <li>• <b>after, before, until, while</b> (temporal)</li> <li>• <b>if, unless, provided, whichever, whenever</b> (conditional)</li> </ul>
<b>Grammar rules</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The conjunction must go before the subordinating clause (the explanation clause)</li> <li>• Commas must go at the end of the first clause, which can be either the subordinating or main clause</li> </ul>
<b>Example Sentences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Before</b> going to the game (subordinate), we often eat at the pub (main).</li> <li>• <b>Although</b> very cute (sub), pandas are not suitable pets (main).</li> <li>• Candice was feeling lonely (main), <b>so</b> she adopted another cat (sub).</li> <li>• Peanut butter is delicious (main), <b>provided</b> you don't have a nut allergy (sub).</li> </ul>

<b>Quick Practice: correct the sentences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ Mary was hungry while at the grocery store so she bought chips ice cream and an entire cake.</li> <li>⊗ The cable TV is lagging, the internet is fast, though.</li> <li>⊗ Because the island was beautiful, it had an infestation of coconut crabs.</li> </ul>
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## Types of connectors

We can think of **connector**s as functionally similar to coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, but the former **connects complete sentences** (instead of) nouns, clauses, etc. Because connectors often use different words than conjunctions, we need to be careful that we do not use a conjunction where a connector should be and vice versa. Below are some common connectors and their corresponding conjunction. If you often struggle with run-on sentences, try replacing the conjunction with the correct connector!

		Conjunction	Corresponding Connector
<b>Grammar rules</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connectors must go <i>between</i> the two statements which they connect.</li> <li>• Connectors can go before or after the subject of the second sentence.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ex. Mount Kilimanjaro is on the Equator. <u>It</u>, <b>however</b>, has a covering of snow and ice.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A comma must follow a connector if it is the 1<sup>st</sup> word in the sentence. If it's not:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If the connector goes after the subject of the sentence but before the verb, use a comma before and after the connector (see above).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Connectors can sometimes go after the subject and verb of the sentence, but they follow different grammar rules (not discussed). Usually, though, these connectors do not require commas.</li> </ul>	and	also, in addition, additionally, moreover, furthermore
		but	however, even so, though, nevertheless, nonetheless, still, yet, in contrast, on the other hand, on the contrary
		so, because (cause-effect)	therefore, thus, consequently, hence, for this reason, as a result, that is why
		so (similarity)	similarly, likewise
<b>Example Sentences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A ghost named Casper haunted the house. <u>It</u>, <b>though</b>, was not friendly.</li> <li>• We had to get to the beach early. <b>Otherwise</b>, we have missed the sunrise.</li> <li>• The windows were very old. <b>Consequently</b>, the room was cold and drafty.</li> <li>• Steph loves ice cream. Her sister, <b>likewise</b>, adores gelato.</li> </ul>	before	beforehand, before this, first, then, next, afterwards
		or	alternatively, otherwise
		while (same time)	meanwhile, at the same time/moment
<b>Quick Practice: correct the sentences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ Meanwhile, Timmy had fallen in the well. Lassie was at the vet.</li> <li>⊗ The meadow seemed bucolic and innocuous. The people of the village nonetheless knew its dark secret.</li> <li>⊗ PETA loves saving animals. They love shocking the public, also.</li> </ul>		

## When to use conjunction vs. connector

Two main considerations should be taken into account:

1. When **conjunctions are used, this implies that the statement after the conjunction is relaying knowledge already known to the reader. Connectors** are used when **the information is presented in the preceding sentences and is not assumed knowledge.**

<i>If</i> it snows tomorrow, the city will send the plows.	It may snow tomorrow. <i>If so</i> , the city will send the plows.
In the left example, the statement that follows the conjunction implies that the reader already knows that there is a chance of snow. The example on the right must state first that it may snow and then the connector describes the effect of the snow.	

2. Joining the statement with a conjunction implies that they are part of the same idea. By using a connector, the separation between two statements allows their relationship to be more precisely defined, which is especially important for professional writing.

Cars can be dangerous <b>and</b> they pollute.	Cars can be dangerous. <b>Moreover</b> , they pollute.
The left sentence is structured so that “dangerous” and “pollute” are two equal points that emphasize one broader message: cars are bad. The example on the right is structured to make two separate points, and “moreover” indicates that “pollute” is more important.	

## Practice

Re-write the sentence with the appropriate punctuation and linking word. (There are multiple correct answers)

3. She is afraid of dogs | She was bitten by her neighbors' Chihuahua as a child

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4. Tsunamis are highly destructive events | They are rare and often unpredictable

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5. Chickens have wings | They cannot fly

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1. Penny did not pass the class | She never did her homework

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2. The Mayans were one of the most academically advanced cultures in pre-Colombian North America | The cause for the collapse of their civilization is still unknown

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## Sources and Further Reading/Practice:

Grammar and Vocabulary in Academic & Professional English. “Conjunctions versus connectors.”  
<https://guinlist.wordpress.com/2012/11/26/40-conjunctions-versus-connectors/>  
Linguapress. “Conjunctions, coordination and subordination.”  
<http://linguapress.com/grammar/conjunctions.htm>  
Agenda Web. “Conjunctions Exercises.” <http://www.agendaweb.org/grammar/conjunctions.html>