STUDENT
LEARNING
SERVICES

Conjunctions

Conjunctions are connectors. In other words, conjunctions connect words, phrases, and clauses of equal grammatical value or rank within a sentence.

1. CO-ORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS

The most common conjunctions are the co-ordinate conjunctions *and*, *nor*, *but*, and *or*. There are **seven** co-ordinate conjunctions. You can remember them as **FANBOYS**:

For
And
Nor
But
Or
Yet
So

Consider the following sentences:

1) *The chairs <u>and</u> the tables are set up on the patio.* (*and* connects two nouns)
    I sat <u>and</u> talked on the patio. (*and* connects two verbs)
    The chairs are old <u>and</u> dirty. (*and* connects two adjectives)

    When a co-ordinate conjunction connects only **two words or phrases** in a sentence, no commas are used.

2) The *chairs, the tables, <u>and</u> the barbecue are set up on the patio.* (*and* connects three nouns)

    I sat, talked, <u>and</u> ate on the patio. (*and* connects three verbs)
    The chairs are old, dirty, <u>and</u> broken. (*and* connects three adjectives)

    When a co-ordinate conjunction connects **three or more words or phrases** in a list, the final comma is optional**.** This comma This comma is called the Oxford comma, and whether or not you use it is a style choice.
    .
3) *The chairs, the tables, and the barbecue are set up on the patio, <u>but</u> dinner will not be served until 8 p.m.*

    When a co-ordinate conjunction connects **two independent clauses**, a comma is used.

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The rules outlined in 1), 2), and 3) above apply for all co-ordinate conjunctions.

Examples: *The dinner was good, <u>yet</u> expensive.* (*yet* connects two adjectives. Note that even though *yet expensive* is not an independent clause, a comma is added before to denote a negative statement after.)

We could not afford dessert, <u>so</u> we just had coffee. (*so* connects two independent clauses)

Skirts <u>or</u> pants are appropriate. (*or* connects two nouns)

The words, phrases, and clauses that are connected by the co-ordinate conjunctions must be of **equal grammatical value**. In other words, co-ordinate conjunctions can connect adjectives, nouns, verbs, prepositional phrases, infinitives, independent clauses, and any other structures that share the same grammatical form.

The following sentence shows the co-ordinate conjunction **_yet_** connecting two items of unequal grammatical value:

The dinner was good, <u>yet</u> in the expensive range. **(INCORRECT)**

The co-ordinate conjunction *yet* should join two **equal** words, phrases or clauses. The first word to be connected is the adjective *good*. The words that come after the co-ordinate conjunction form the prepositional phrase *in the expensive range*. The adjective and the prepositional phrase are not equal.

To create equal grammatical value, *yet* should connect two adjectives, two prepositional phrases, or two independent clauses.

1) *The dinner was good, <u>yet</u> expensive.* (*yet* connects two adjectives)
2) *The dinner was in good taste, <u>yet</u> in the expensive range.* (*yet* connects two prepositional phrases)
3) *The dinner was good, <u>yet</u> it was served without a smile.* (*yet* connects two independent clauses)

2. CORRELATIVE CONJUNCTIONS

Correlative conjunctions perform the same function as co-ordinate conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs; they also connect elements of equal grammatical value.

Correlative conjunctions are always paired. When greater emphasis is desired, these paired conjunctions are used instead of co-ordinate conjunctions.

Consider the following pair of sentences:

1) *The program was developed for the students <u>and</u> for the teachers.* The co-ordinate conjunction *and* connects two prepositional phrases.

2) *The program was developed <u>not only</u> for the students, <u>but also</u> for the teachers.* Greater emphasis is created by using a pair of correlative conjunctions, *not only* and *but also*, to connect the same two prepositional phrases.

Note that the two prepositional phrases joined by the correlative conjunctions are parallel in structure.

Other Pairs of Correlative Conjunctions

either ... or   neither ... nor   both ... and

3) SUBORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS

Subordinate conjunctions connect **unequal** sentence elements such as **independent clauses** and **dependent clauses**.

Example: *<u>Although</u> the program was developed for the students, it was not approved by the committee.*

The word *although* is a subordinate conjunction that begins a **dependent** clause.

Review: Dependant Clauses

A clause is **dependent** when it depends on another clause, the **independent clause**, to complete its meaning.

<u>Although</u> the program was developed for the students, (dependent clause) *it was not approved by the committee.* (independent clause)

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Consider the following sentences:

1) *Paul likes his new office.*
2) *It has large windows.*

These two complete sentences become independent clauses when connected with the co-ordinate conjunction *for*.

> *Paul likes his new office,* <u>*for*</u> *it has large windows.*

Note that a comma is used before the co-ordinate conjunction connecting two independent clauses.

The same two sentences may also be joined with a subordinate conjunction.

> *Paul likes his new office* <u>*because*</u> *it has large windows.*

The subordinate conjunction *because* introduces the dependent clause.

Note that a comma is <u>not</u> used before the subordinate conjunction connecting the independent clause to the dependent clause.

However, if the dependent clause is at the **beginning** of the sentence, a comma is used at the end of the dependent clause.

Example: *<u>Although</u> the program was developed for the students, it was not approved by the committee.*

Examples of Other Subordinate Conjunctions

after	so that	when	before
that	whereas	if	though
since	until	while	whether
unless	as though	in order that	as

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