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.

For
And
Nor
But
Or
Yet
So

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 and the tables are set up on the patio. (and connects two nouns)
   I sat and talked on the patio. (and connects two verbs)
   The chairs are old and 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, and the barbecue are set up on the patio. (and connects three nouns)
I sat, talked, and ate on the patio. (and connects three verbs)
The chairs are old, dirty, and broken. (and connects three adjectives)

When a co-ordinate conjunction connects **three or more words or phrases** in a sentence, commas are optional.

3) The chairs, the tables, and the barbecue are set up on the patio, but dinner will not be served until 8 p.m.

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

### Review: Independent Clauses

A clause is **independent** when it does not depend on another clause to complete its meaning. An independent clause can stand alone as a complete sentence.

*It was not approved by the committee.* (complete sentence formed by one independent clause)

The same rules apply for all co-ordinate conjunctions.

**Examples:**

*The dinner was good, yet 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, so we just had coffee.* (so connects two independent clauses)

*Skirts or 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, yet 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, yet expensive.* (yet connects two adjectives)
2) *The dinner was in good taste, yet in the expensive range.* (yet connects two prepositional phrases)
3) *The dinner was good, yet 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 and for the teachers.*
   The co-ordinate conjunction *and* connects two prepositional phrases.

2) *The program was developed not only for the students, but also 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:** *Although 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.

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

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, for 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 because it has large windows.*

The subordinate conjunction *because* introduces the dependent clause.

Note that a comma is **not** 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:** *Although 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