# What Is a Conjunction?

(a general brief idea)



A conjunction is the glue that holds words, phrases and <u>clauses</u> (both <u>dependent and independent</u>) together. There are three different kinds of conjunctions—coordinating, subordinating, and correlative—each serving its own, distinct purpose, but all working to bring words together.

# What is a Coordinating Conjunction?

Coordinating conjunctions are what come to most people's minds when they hear the word "conjunction." They can join together words, phrases and independent clauses. There are seven of them, and they're easy to remember if you can just remember FAN BOYS:

- For Explains reason or purpose (just like "because") I go to the park every Sunday, for I love to watch the ducks on the lake.
- And Adds one thing to another I go to the park every Sunday to watch the ducks on the lake and the shirtless men playing soccer.
- Nor Used to present an alternative negative idea to an already stated negative idea *I don't go for the fresh air nor really for the ducks. Honestly, I just like the soccer.*
- **But** Shows contrast The soccer in the park is entertaining in the winter, **but** it's better in the heat of summer.
- Or Presents an alternative or a choice *The men play on teams: shirts or skins*.
- Yet Introduces a contrasting idea that follows the preceding idea logically (similar to "but") I always take a book to read, yet I never seem to turn a single page.
- So Indicates effect, result or consequence I've started dating one of the soccer players, so now I have an excuse to watch the game each week.

Learn more about coordinating conjunctions.

# What is a Subordinating Conjunction?

A subordinating conjunction always introduces a dependent clause, tying it to an independent clause. In contrast to coordinating conjunctions, a subordinate conjunction can often come first in a sentence. This is due simply to the nature of the relationship between the dependent and the independent clause. In English, there are lots of subordinating conjunctions, but the most common ones are "after," "although," "as," "because," "before," "how," "if," "once," "since," "than," "that," "though," "until," "when," "where," "whether," and "while." Here are a few examples of how subordinating conjunctions are used:

• "Because of you, I never stray too far from the sidewalk" (Kelly Clarkson).

- "If you leave me now, you'll take away the biggest part of me" (Peter Cetera/Chicago).
- "When I see you smile, I can face the world" (Bad English).
- "[You] don't know what you've got 'til it's gone" (Cinderella).
- "I guess I'll never be the same **since** I fell for you" (B.B. King).
- "As I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I take a look at my life and realize there's nothing left" (Coolio). Learn more about <u>subordinating conjunctions</u>.

# What are Correlative Conjunctions?

Correlative conjunctions are sort of like tag-team conjunctions. They come in pairs, and you have to use both of them in different places in a sentence to make them work. They include pairs like "both/and," "whether/or," "either/or," "neither/nor," "not/but" and "not only/but also."

- I **either** want the cheesecake **or** the frozen hot chocolate.
- I'll have **both** the cheesecake **and** the frozen hot chocolate.
- I didn't know **whether** you'd want the cheesecake **or** the frozen hot chocolate, so I got you both.
- Oh, you want **neither** the cheesecake **nor** the frozen hot chocolate? No problem.
- I'll eat them both **not only** the cheesecake **but also** the frozen hot chocolate.
- I see you're in the mood **not** for dessert **but** appetizers. I'll help you with those too.

# Adverbial Clauses of Time (Ch.: 79):

# A- When, as, while, until, before, after, hardly...before, no sooner...then (or when) 'When' only:

- 1- If there are **two events** that one of which **in the main clause** (past continuous) **is longer** than that in minor clause (simple past). For example:
  - They were playing when they heard a scream
- 2- When referring to the **circumstances or conditions** in minor clause for something in the main clause:
  - When the snakes are fully grown, they can be over two metres long.
- 3- To mean every time:
  - I still feel tired when I wake up in the morning
- 4- To talk about past period of our life:
  - His mother called him Robert when he was a baby.

'as' is preferred to be used when talking about **two things changing at the same time**. 'while' can be used but with a **continuous form**:

As the cheese matures, its flavor improves.

While the cheese is maturing, its flavor improves.

'while' (informal speech) and 'as' (more formal) are used to talk about two long actions that continue at the same time:

While Linda cleaned the house, I went shopping.

'while' and 'when' are preferred rather than 'as' to avoid ambiguity since 'as' can be used to show reasons. But all the three ones can mean (during the time that):

While you were playing golf, I went to the cinema. (adverbial of time clause)

## B-Before, after, until

1- Before, after: action sequence

I put on my coat **before** I went out.

- 2- Until:
- until = before (up to a time in the minor clause):
  I had to wait six weeks until\before the parcel arrived.
- Until = to a particular time then, stopped They sat on the beach until the sun set.
- Until = to describe a result of something in the main clause: He cleaned it until it shone.

C-hardly...before, no sooner...then (or when), scarcely....before

S +had + (hardly, no sooner, scarcely) + P.P....(before, then, when) S + simple past.

The concert had hardly begun before all the lights went on.

# Adverbial Clauses of Reasons (Ch.: 80):

## ${f A.}$ Because, since, as, so, Seeing that , seeing as

'because' is used to give a reason for something that is important for the listener. It is used when focusing on the reason more than the result. For Example:

They missed the meeting **because** the flight was delayed

- \*'because' is mostly used in informal speaking and writing
- \*'because' can be used at the beginning of a sentence with a comma at the end of its clause. For Example:

because my brother did not keep his promise, I could not go fishing

• \*'because' can be used in conversation without the main clause in informal speaking or writing. For Example:

A:would you like to go to school there? B:yes

A:why? B:because my best friend goes there

It has the same meaning of 'because'. It is used in informal speaking or writing.

Compare between:

1.because my mother arrived, I won't be able to meet you

(It introduces the reason)

2. My mother arrived, so I won't be able to meet you. (It introduces the result)

#### Since, as

'since' and 'as' are used in formal speaking or writing. For Example:

- Since I'm hungry, I wanted to eat something first
- -As we lost the last game, we couldn't qualify for the semi-final

#### Seeing that, seeing as

'seeing that' and 'seeing as' are used to give a reason in informal speaking or writing. For example:

-Ken just had to apologies, seeing that/seeing as he knew he'd made a mistake

## **B.** for, in that , in as much as

In formal or literary written English, a reason can be introduced with **for, in that, in as much** as (less commonly use)

#### For

It is a formal alternative to "because". For example:

McDonalds is famous for its big mac.

It is followed by noun or noun phrase. 'For' introduces a new reason to the listener. 'For' clause cannot be at the beginning of a sentence. For example:

We must begin planning now, for the future may bring unexpected change

#### in that, in as much as

They Introduce clauses to clarify what has been said by adding details:

The film is unusual **in that** it features only four actors.

Clara and I have quite an easy life, in as much as neither of us has to work too hard but we earn quite a lot of money.(or in as much as...., Clara and I...)

## C. Prepositions: Because of , due to and owing to

They can be used before a noun or noun phrase to give a reason for something. For example:

We were delayed **because of** an accident

She was unable to run **owing to /due to** leg injury

• 'because' cannot be used alone before NP. For example:

We were delayed **because** there was an accident.

• 'owing to' cannot be used directly after a form to be. For example:

The company's success is **due to** the new director.

• 'owing to' can be used after a form of be in two situations :

1/ after (be+ a degree of adverb), such as: entirely, largely, mainly, partly.

..be+ a degree adverb + owing to/due to... For example:

The low election turnout was partly **due to /owing to** the bad weather.

2/ we can use the following: It was **owing to**....that , It was **due to**....that

For example: It was **owing to** his absence that they lost the match.

### D. For, with

'for' and 'with' can be followed by a noun phrase to give a reason. For has a similar meaning to "as a result of" and is common in most styles of English. For example:

She was looking all the better **for** her stay in hospital.

'With' has a similar meaning to "as a result of there being". For example:

With so many people ill, I've decide to cancel the meeting.

# Adverbial Clauses of Purpose and Result (Ch.: 81):

In order\so as + to -inf, in order that, so\such that, in such a way that, such..that, so...that

## A- In order\so as + to -inf.

For example:

Positive: He took the course in order to get a better job

Negative: He took the course in order not to get a better job

In spoken **informal** English, it can be like that:

**Positive**: He took the course **to** get a better job.

**Negative**: He took the course **not to** get a better job (rare and mostly unacceptable)

Not to....., but to..... (contrastive meaning):

I came to see you **not** (in order\so as) **to** complain **but** (in order\so as) **to** apologize.

#### **B-** In order that\ so that

Formal: She stayed at work in order that she could complete the report.

Less or Informal:- She stayed at work so that she could complete the report

- She stayed at work so she could complete the report

Modal verbs (can, could, might, may, should, must, would, will) are mostly used in the clause of 'so that\ such that'.

### C- Such that, in such a way that, such..that, so...that (to introduce a result)

Formal writing: The model was designed such that (in a way that, in order that) the value could be accurate.

Less formal: The model was designed in such a way that the value could be accurate.

The model was designed in **such a way as to get** accurate values.

It is **such a popular play that** many people attended it.

The play is **so popular that** many people attended it.

## Adverbial Clauses of Contrast (Ch.: 82):

## Although, though, even if, even though, while, whilst, whereas

## A- Although, though

Formal: Although he failed to score himself, he helped Johns to do so

Informal: Though he failed to score himself, he helped Johns to do so

Also:

Despite the fact that he failed to score himself, Jack helped Johns to do so

In spite of the fact that he failed to score himself, jack helped Johns to do so

In spite of failing to score himself, Jack helped Johns to do so

Despite failing to score himself, Jack helped Johns to do so

Hot Though the night air is, they slept soundly. (special emphasis on adj.) Hot as the night air is, they slept soundly.

**▼ Hot** <u>although</u> the night air is, they slept soundly. (only though)

# B- Even if, even though

- Even though = despite the fact that ( not 'even although') (a sure speaker)
- Even if = whether or not (not a sure speaker)
  Even if her dad is a Spanish one, she does not speak Spanish.
  Even though her dad is a Spanish one, she does not speak Spanish.

## C- While, whilst, whereas

**Formal: while, whilst** = although(The clause cannot be after the main clause)

They are used to qualify things said in the main clause or conflict with it.

'whilst' is avoided for by some people and is mostly a literary one. For example:

While\ Whilst there is no evidence that Peter cheated, we were all astonished that he passed the exam.

The diesel model of the car, while\whilst more expensive, is better value for money.

While\ whereas can be used to refer to contrast. They can come before or after the main clause. For example:

Dave gets lots of homework while/whereas Sue gets very little

Whereas cannot be used when what is said in the minor clause makes unexpected things in the main clause. For example:

While\ although Sophie's father is from Spain, she does not speak Spanish.

D- Non-finite clauses (ing and –ed participle clauses) can be used after them in addition to clauses with omitted subject and verbs. For example:

While **welcoming the government's decisions**, workers are still unhappy about working conditions.

Although **not huge**, the garden needs constant attention. (= Although **it is** not huge, the garden....)

# Adverbial Clauses of Condition 'if1' (Ch.: 83):

#### **Real Conditionals:**

**A-** It is a clause structure used for talking about possibilities that may happen at **future time**. It starts with conjunctions like 'if' and 'unless'

If clause: present (simple or continuous), main clause: future simple:

If you leave (are leaving) now, you will be able to catch the train.

If you are going to leave now, you will be able to catch the train. (in conversation)

**Take** another sandwich if you **are** hungry. (Imperative form in the main clause: advice, offer, give instructions)

**B-**It can be used to mention certain condition under which something is true having similar meaning to 'when': The video **pauses** if you **press** thin button. (simple present verbs)

**C-** A **present perfect** tense (in addition to **simple present**) can be used in if clause + A future form (**will ,present continuous ,or be going to**) in the main clause to refer to future time:

I will lend you this story if I have finished it before you go on holiday.

If you have not paid the bill by Friday, we are taking the carpets back

- The possible difference in meaning between the following is:

If I have failed my maths exam again, I'm going to give up the course.

(I have taken the exam before this time, not my first attempt), and

If I fail my maths exam again, I'm going to give up the course,

(I may or may not have taken the exam before this time)

#### **D-** Unreal Conditional

Unreal conditions are untrue, not possible, or imaginary and will not happen in the future. The tense used in such situation is past forms

- If + S + were to +infinitive verb, S + would + bare verb:
  If the technology were to become available, we would be able to expand the business.
- Notice that it is usually that the pattern above cannot be used with verbs, such as: belong, doubt, enjoy, know, like, remember and understand. But instead of it, the past form of such verbs is used:

If I knew they were honest, I would gladly, lend them the money. (x if I were to know)

- Sometimes this pattern is used to make suggestions be **more polite**: Would it be too early for you if we were to meet at 5:30?

**E-** To say that one situation is dependent on another situation person:

- 'if it was not for' + NP
- 'if it were not for' +NP more formally
- 'if it had been not for' + NP

If it was not /were not for Vivian, the conference would not be going ahead.

If it had not been for Dad, I would not have gone to college.

**NOTE** that 'Were' is more formal and mostly used in imaginary situations:

If I were a bird, I would have two wings and fly.

I wish I were a child. (I am adult now)

Suppose (or imagine) I were to lower the prices.

I remember it as if it were yesterday.

Sue is her apprentice, as it were. (sue is not really her apprentice)

I would rather it were forgotten.

I would really like to do counting. **If only I weren't** so poor at maths.

In formal language, the following form of dropped 'if' can also be used:
 Were it not for Vivian, the conference would not be going ahead.
 Had it not been for Dad, I would not have gone to college

- **but for** + **noun** with a similar meaning can be used, particularly in **formal** contexts:

The village school would have been closed years ago but for the determination of teachers and parents to keep it open. (formal language)

(or: If it hadn't been for the determination of teachers and parents to keep it open, the village school would have been closed years ago (less formal))

(or: Had it not been for the determination of teachers and parents to keep it open, the village school would have been closed years ago (more formal))

## Adverbial Clauses of Condition 'if2' (Ch.: 84):

**A-** In **spoken English**, if-clauses can be used without a main clause particularly, in polite requests, instructions, etc. having the auxiliaries: **will, would, can, could**. For example:

If I might just say a few words. (polite request, no main clause=I want to speak)

If we could get back to the subject. (only if clause =let's go back to talk about it)

**B-** With the auxiliaries 'should, were, or had' in the conditional if clause, 'if' can be omitted and put the verb at the beginning of the clause, particularly in **formal English**. For example: **Should any of this cost** you anything, send me the bill.

(= If any of this should cost you anything, send me the bill)

It would be embarrassing, were she to find out the truth.

(= It would be embarrassing, if **she were to find out** the truth.)

Had they not rushed to hospital, he would have died.

(= If they hadn't rushed to hospital, he would have died.)

C- 'will' can be used in if clause in the following situation only:

- when talking about a result of something in main clause:

Open a window if it **will help** you to sleep. (sleeping is the result of opening it) - in requests ('would' is more polite)

If you will (or would) take your seats, ladies and gentleman, we can begin the meeting.

- Disapproving or refusal of something:

Well, if you will go to bed so late, I'm not surprised. (I do not like such a thing)

There's no point in trying to teach the class if they won't pay attention

**D-** In a real conditional sentence, *(if...happen to (spoken English), if...should*, or *if...should happen)* are used to talk about something which may be possible, but is not very likely to happen.

If you happen to be in our area, drop in and see us.

(or: If you should (happen to) be in our area, .....)

**Notice** that such structure cannot be used in impossible situations:

If the north sea froze in winter, you could walk from London to Oslo.

(but not: If the north sea happened to freeze/should (happen to)freeze in winter,..)

E- In comparison clauses:

- 'as if can be used followed by:

(a *noun phrase*, *-ing clause*, *past participle*(*-ed*) clause, or *to-infinitive*) to show a comparison with a situation in main clause. It is done to give an explanation or to say that something appears to be the case but is not:

Richard walked in as if nothing had happened. (NP)

His hands made a circular motion ,as if steering a bus through a sharp bend.(ing)

After scoring, flower fell to the floor as if hit by a bullet.(past participle)

As if to convince herself that Rob was really there, she gently touched his cheek.

- 'as though' can be used instead of 'as if'.

The crowd reacted as though they were watching a boxing match.(or...as if...)

- In **informal speech**, some people use 'like' with the same meaning:

He walked into the room *like* nothing had happened.(or... as if...)

## Adverbial Clauses of Condition If ...not\Unless\ Whether (Ch.: 86):

A- Unless=except if, refers to future time in real condition:

Unless it rains, I 'll pick you up at six.

If it does not rain, I'll pick you up at six.

- B- Unless=if...not in real condition. But sometimes, only 'if...not' is preferred in the following situations:
  - **Unexpected action**: I will be amazed if he does not pass the exam.
  - Questions: if we cannot help him, what we will do?
  - Unreal condition: If I weren't so tired, I would help you.

#### **Note** that:

- 'unless' can be used in unreal condition (in addition to 'if.. not') when the main clause is negative:

She wouldn't have gone to university unless her parents had insisted.

She wouldn't have gone to university if her parents hadn't insisted.

-It is **only 'unless'** that can be used in conditional sentences when having an **afterthought**:

We can leave now-unless you'd rather wait for Jack.

C- When having more than one option, preference or possibility; 'if', 'whether' or 'whether or not' can be used:

Do you whether\if Jack is at home?

I don't know if Jack is coming or not

I don't know if or not Jack is coming

I don't know whether Jack is coming or not

I don't know whether or not Jack is coming

#### D- 'Whether' is:

• only used:

- After preposition and before a to-infinitive:

We argued **about whether** red or white is nicer.

We argued about if red or white is nicer. (informal)

We couldn't decide whether to go or to stay here.

- In N (or adj.)+ as to whether (=about or concerning):

There was some disagreement as to whether he was able to play.

I was **unsure as to whether** he was able to play.

Other nouns and adjectives are like: conflict, confusion, debate, discussion, doubt, question, speculation, uncertainty, concerned, indifferent, uncertain, undecided.

- Preferred:
- After the following verbs: advice, choose, consider, depend on, discuss, talk about, think about. For example:

You should **consider whether** the car is good value

- In a clause functions as a subject or complement:

Whether he is the suitable person is still unclear. (clause= S)

The first problem is whether the oil was enough. (clause= C)

## References

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