WHAT IS A CONJUNCTION?
A conjunction is a word that is used to connect elements of a sentence, such as words, phrases, or clauses. There are three types of conjunctions: subordinating conjunctions, coordinating conjunctions, and correlative conjunctions.

Subordinating Conjunctions
Subordinating conjunctions form sentences into word clusters called subordinate or dependent clauses, which serve as parts of sentences. Dependent clauses cannot stand alone and must be connected to independent clauses to form complex sentences.

Everyone was relieved *when* the final exam was over.

Here, “when” is the subordinating conjunction and “when the final exam was over” is the subordinate clause (for more information on subordinate clauses, please refer to the Independent/Dependent Clause page).

Some common subordinating conjunctions:

- After
- Although
- As
- As if
- As long as
- As though
- Because
- Before
- Even if
- Even though
- If
- If only
- In order that
- Now that
- Once
- Provided
- Rather than
- Since
- So that
- That
- Though
- Without
- Unless
- Until
- When
- Whenever
- Where
- Whereas
- Whereas
- Wherever
- Whether
- While
- Within
- Besides

Here are some more examples of subordinating conjunctions:

*After* a long drive, it feels good to stretch your legs.
Everyone was excited *because* school was almost over for the year.
Shannon said *that* she knew the answer.
I like walking *because* it is good exercise and enjoyable.
Coordinating conjunctions are single words that connect similar elements in a sentence (the same part of speech or structure), such as adjectives, nouns, or clauses. Coordinating conjunctions are:

- and
- but
- or
- for
- yet
- so
- nor

Some examples:

- I have not traveled to Japan, China, or Australia. Here, the coordinating conjunction “or” connects words of the same type, in this case nouns.
- After a double shift at work, I am tired, cranky, and sore. Here, the coordinating conjunction “and” connects adjectives.
- I would love to go to New York with you tonight, but I have already made other plans. Here, the coordinating conjunction “but” connects two independent clauses (sentences).

Correlative Conjunctions

Like coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions connect similar elements in a sentence (the same part of speech or structure), such as adjectives, nouns, and clauses. However, unlike coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions are combinations of coordinating conjunctions, not just a single word. Correlative conjunctions always work in pairs (see below) and link grammatically equivalent items. Some common correlative conjunctions are:

- Both...and
- Not only...but also
- Not...but
- Either...or
- Neither...nor
- Whether…or
- As...as

Some examples:

- To alleviate stress, you must not only recognize the stressors in your life but also find methods of coping with such stress.
- Both exercise and a healthy diet are vital to overall good health.
- Tonight we can either go out to dinner or call for take-out.
- I am not going to the movies tonight, but I can go tomorrow if you are interested.
- I’ll bet that neither of you completed your homework nor your chores.
- Whether you like Jack Nicholson or not, you must admit he is a great actor.
- As much as I would love to go skydiving, I am terrified of heights.

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