

CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions are words that link other words, phrases, or clauses together.

Example:

I like cooking and eating, but I don't like washing dishes afterward. Sophie is clearly exhausted, yet she insists on dancing till dawn.

Conjunctions allow to form complex, elegant sentences and avoid the choppiness of multiple short sentences. Make sure that the phrases joined by conjunctions are parallel (share the same structure).

Coordinating Conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions allow you to join words, phrases, and clauses of equal grammatical rank in a sentence. The most common coordinating conjunctions are for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so.

Example:

I'd like pizza or a salad for lunch. We needed a place to concentrate, so we packed up our things and went to the library. Jesse didn't have much money, but she got by.

(Notice the use of the comma when a coordinating conjunction is joining two independent clauses.)

Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions are pairs of conjunctions that work together. Some examples are either/or, neither/nor, and not only/but also.

Example:

Not only am I finished studying for English, but I'm also finished writing my history essay. I am finished with both my English essay and my history essay.

Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions join independent and dependent clauses. A subordinating conjunction can signal a cause-and-effect relationship, a contrast, or some other kind of relationship between the clauses. Common subordinating conjunctions are because, since, as, although, though, while, and whereas. Sometimes an adverb, such as until, after, or before can function as a conjunction.

Example:

I can stay out until the clock strikes twelve.

Here, the adverb until functions as a coordinating conjunction to connect two ideas: I can stay out (the independent clause) and the clock strikes twelve (the dependent clause). The independent clause could stand alone as a sentence; the dependent clause depends on the independent clause to make sense.

EXERCISES

Complete each sentence using the subordinating conjunction from the parenthesis:

1. I visit the Grand Canyon _____ I go to Arizona. (once, whenever, wherever)
2. This is the place _____ we stayed last time we visited. (where, when, how)
3. _____ you win first place, you will receive a prize. (wherever, if, unless)
4. You won't pass the test _____ you study. (when, if, unless)
5. I could not get a seat, _____ I came early. (as, though, when)
6. We are leaving Wednesday _____ or not it rains. (if, whether, though)
7. Pay attention to your work _____ you will not make mistakes. (so that, unless, or)
8. The musicians delivered a rousing performance _____ they had rehearsed often. (though, as, once)
9. She's honest _____ everyone trusts her. (if, so, when)
10. Write this down _____ you forget. (or, when, lest)

Answers: 1 – whenever, 2 – where, 3 – if, 4 – unless, 5 – though, 6 – whether, 7- so that, 8 – as, 9 – so, 10 – lest

EXERCISES

Complete each sentence using the correct correlative conjunction pair from the parenthesis:

1. I plan to take my vacation _____ in June _____ in July. (whether / or, either / or, as / if)
2. _____ I'm feeling happy _____ sad, I try to keep a positive attitude. (either / or, whether / or, when / I'm)
3. _____ had I taken my shoes off _____ I found out we had to leave again. (no sooner / than, rather / than, whether / or)
4. _____ only is dark chocolate delicious, _____ it can be healthy. (whether / or, not / but, just as / so)
5. _____ I have salad for dinner, _____ I can have ice cream for dessert. (if / then, when / than, whether / or)
6. _____ flowers _____ trees grow _____ during warm weather. (not only / or, both / and, not / but)
7. _____ do we enjoy summer vacation, _____ we _____ enjoy winter break. (whether / or, not only / but also, either / or)
8. Calculus is _____ easy _____ difficult _____ (not / but, both / and, either / or)
9. It's _____ going to rain _____ snow tonight. (as / if, either / or, as / as)

10. Savory flavors are _____ sweet _____ sour. (often / and, neither / nor, both / and)

Answers: 1 – either / or, 2 – whether / or, 3 – no sooner / than, 4 – not / but, 5 – if / then, 6 – both / and, 7 – not only / but also, 8 – not / but, 9 – either / or, 10 – neither / nor

EXERCISES

Complete each sentence using the correct coordinating conjunction from the parenthesis:

1. My car has a radio _____ a CD player. (but, or, and)
2. Sharon hates to listen to rap music, _____ will she tolerate heavy metal. (but, nor, or)
3. Carol wanted to drive to Colorado, _____ Bill insisted that they fly. (and, or, but)
4. I'm afraid of heights, _____ I appreciate the view from the top of this building. (and, yet, nor)
5. I have to be on time, _____ my boss will be annoyed if I'm late. (and, nor, for)
6. Do you like chocolate _____ vanilla ice cream better? (or, nor, and)
7. I have to go to work at six, _____ I'm waking up at four. (but, so, yet)
8. I was on time, _____ everyone else was late. (so, but, for)
9. Nadia doesn't like to drive, _____ she takes the bus everywhere. (but, yet, so)
10. Our trip to the museum was interesting, _____ there were several new artifacts on display. (but, for, yet)

Answers: 1 – and, 2 – nor, 3 – but, 4 – yet, 5 – for, 6 – or, 7- so, 8 – but, 9 – so, 10 – for