

32 Conjunctions

326 Co-ordinating conjunctions: and, but, both . . . and, or, either ... or, neither . . . nor, not only . . . but also

These join pairs of nouns/adjectives/adverbs/verbs/phrases/clauses:

He plays squash and rugby.
I make the payments and keep the accounts.
He works quickly and/but accurately.
He is small but strong. She is intelligent but lazy.
We came in first but (we) didn't win the race.
Both men and women were drafted into the army.
Ring Tom or Bill. She doesn't smoke or drink.
He can't (either) read or write.
You can (either) walk up or take the cable car.
He can neither read nor write.
Not only men but also women were chosen.

327 besides, however, nevertheless, otherwise, so, therefore, still, yet, though

These adverbs/conjunctions can join clauses or sentences and are then often known as 'conjuncts'. But they can also, with the exception of nevertheless and therefore (conjunctions), be used in other ways and sometimes as other parts of speech. Their position will vary according to how they are used-

A besides (preposition) means 'in addition to'. It precedes a noun/pronoun/gerund:

Besides doing the cooking I look after the garden. besides (adverb) means 'in addition'. It usually precedes the clause it introduces, but can follow it:

I can't go now; I'm too busy. Besides, my passport is out of date. moreover could replace besides here in more formal English. anyway or in any case could be used here in more informal English:

Anyway, my passport's out of date.

B however (adverb of degree, see 41) precedes its adjective/adverb:

You couldn't earn much, however hard you worked. however (conjunction) usually means 'but'. It can precede or follow its clause or come after the first word or phrase:

I'll offer it to Tom. However, he may not want it or

He may 'not want it however or Tom, however, may not want it or

If, however, he doesn't want it. . .

' But when two contrasting statements are mentioned, however can't; mean 'but/nevertheless/all the same':

They hadn't trained hard, but/however/nevertheless/all the same they won or they won, however/nevertheless/all the same, (See also 329.)

• otherwise (adverb) usually comes after the verb:

It must be used in a well-ventilated room. Used otherwise it could be harmful. otherwise (conjunction) means 'if not/or else':

We must be early; otherwise we won't get a seat. or could also be used here in colloquial English;

We must be early or (else) see won't get a seat.

so (adverb of degree) precedes its adjective/adverb:

I was so hot that. . . They ran so fast that. . . so (conjunction) precedes its clause:

Our cases were heavy, so we look a taxi.

therefore (conjunction) can be used instead of so in formal English. It can come at the beginning of the clause or after the first word or phrase; or before the main verb:

There is fog at Heathrow; the plane, therefore, has been diverted/the plane has therefore been diverted/therefore the plane has been diverted.

••• still and yet can be adverbs of time (see 37):

The children are still up. They haven't had supper yet. '•' still and yet (conjunctions) come at the beginning of the clauses they introduce.

still (conjunction) means 'admitting that/nevertheless'. yet (conjunction) means 'in spite of that/all the same/nevertheless'. You aren't rich; still, you could do something to help him. They are ugly and expensive; yet people buy them.
 though/although normally introduce clauses of concession (see 340):
 Though/Although they're expensive, people buy them. though (but not although) can also be used to link two main clauses. though used in this way means 'but' or 'yet' and is placed sometimes at the beginning but more often at the end of its clause:
 He says he 'll pay, though I don't think he will or
 He says he 'll pay; I don 'f think he will, though.

328 Subordinating conjunctions: **if, that, though/although, unless, when** etc.

Subordinating conjunctions introduce subordinate adverb or noun clauses and are dealt with in the chapters on the different types of clause.

See chapter 21 for conditional clauses, chapter 33 for purpose clauses
 chapter 34 for adverb clauses of reason, result, concession, comparison
 and time, and chapter 35 for noun clauses.

Some conjunctions have more than one meaning and may introduce more than one type of clause.

Pairs and groups of conjunctions which are sometimes confused with each other or with other parts of speech are dealt with below.

329 though/although and in spite of (preposition phrase), despite (preposition)

Two opposing or contrasting statements, such as He had no qualifications and He got the job, could be combined as follows:

A With but, however or nevertheless as shown in 327 above:

He had no qualifications but he got the job.

He had no qualifications; however he got the Job/he got the job, however.

He had no qualifications; nevertheless he got the job.

B With though/although:

He got the job although he had no qualifications. Although he had no qualifications he got the job.

C With in spite of/despite + noun/pronoun/gerund:

In spite of/having no qualifications he got the job. He got the job in spite of having no qualifications.

despite = in spite of. It is chiefly used in newspapers and in formal English:

Despite the severe weather conditions all the cars completed the course.

D Note that though/although requires subject + verb:

Although it was windy . . .

and that in spite of/despite requires noun/pronoun or gerund:

In spite a/the wind . . .

Some more examples:

Although it smelt horrible . . . = In spite of the horrible smell. . . Although it was dangerous . . .

= In spite of the danger . . . Though he was inexperienced . . . = In spite of his inexperience/his being inexperienced . . .

330 **for and because**

These conjunctions have nearly the same meaning and very often either can be used. It is, however, safer to use **because**, as a clause introduced by **for** (which we will call a 'for-clause') has a more restricted use than a clause introduced by **because**:

1 A for-clause cannot precede the verb which it explains:

Because it was wet he took a taxi. (for is not possible.)

2 A for-clause cannot be preceded by not, but or any conjunction:

He stole, not because he wanted the money but because he liked stealing. (for not possible)

3 A for-clause cannot be used in answer to a question:

Why did you do it? ~ I did it because I was angry. (for not possible)

4 A for-clause cannot be a mere repetition of what has been already stated, but always includes some new piece of information:
 He spoke in French. She was angry because he had spoken in French, (for is not possible.) But She was angry, for she didn't know French. (Here for is correct; because is also possible.)
 The reason for these restrictions is that a for-clause does not tell us why a certain action was performed, but merely presents a piece of additional information which helps to explain it. Some examples of for-clauses:
 The days were short, for it was now December. He took the food eagerly, for he had eaten nothing since dawn. When I saw her in the river I was frightened- For at that point the currents were dangerous.
 In speech a short pause is usually made before a for-clause and in written English this place is usually marked by a comma, and sometimes, as in the last example above, by a full stop. because could be used in the above sentences also, though for is better.

331 when, while, as used to express time

A **when** is used, with simple tenses:

1 When one action occurs at the same time as another or in the span of another:

When it is wet the buses are crowded.

When we lived in town we often went to the theatre.

2 When one action follows another:

When she pressed the button the lift stopped.

B **as** is used:

When the second action occurs before the first is finished:

As / left the house I remembered the key.

This implies that I remembered the key before I had completed the action of leaving the house; I was probably still in the doorway. *While I was leaving* would have the same meaning here, but *When I left* would give the impression that the act of leaving was complete and the door shut behind me.

2 For parallel actions: *He sang as he worked.*

3 For parallel development:

As the sun rose the fog dispersed.

As it grew darker it became colder = The darker it grew, the colder it became.

As she came to know him better she relied on him more.

As he became more competent he was given more interesting work.

If we used **when** here we would lose all idea of simultaneous progression or development.

4 To mean **while** (= during the time that):

As he stood there he saw two men enter the bar.

But there is no particular advantage in using **as** here, and **while** is safer.

332 as meaning when/while or because/since

A Restricted use of **as** (= **when/while**)

as here is chiefly used with verbs indicating action or development. It is not normally used with the type of verb listed in 168, except when there is an idea of development, as in B3 above. Nor is it normally used with verbs such as *live, stay, remain*.

B **as** used with the above verbs/types of verb normally means because/since;

As he was tired . . . = Because he was tired . . .

As he knew her well. . . = Because he knew her well. . .

As it contains alcohol. . . = Since/Because it contains alcohol. . .

As he lives near here . . . = Since/Because he lives . . .

C With most verbs, **as** can be used with either meaning:

As/While he shaved he thought about the coming interview.

As/Because he shaved with a blunt razor he didn't make a very good job of it.

If in doubt here, students should use **while** or **because**.

D **as** + noun can mean either **when/while** or **because/since**:

As a student he had known great poverty = When he was a student he had known great poverty.

As a student he gets/got in for half price = Because he is/was a student he gets/got in . . .

As a married man, he has to think of his family = Because/Since he is a married man . . .

as meaning **when/while** here is usually followed by a perfect tense.

as meaning **because/since** can be followed by any tense.

as, when, while used to mean **although, but, seeing that**

as can mean **though/although** but only in the combination adjective + **as** + subject + **to**

be/to seem/to appear:

Tired as he was he offered to carry her = Though he was tired he offered to carry her.

Strong as he was, he couldn't lift it.

while can mean **but** and is used to emphasize a contrast:

'At sea' means 'on a ship', while 'at the sea' means 'at the seaside'.

Some people waste food while others haven't enough.

while can also mean **although** and is then usually placed at the beginning of a sentence:

While I sympathize with your point of view I cannot accept it.

when can mean seeing **that/although**. It is therefore very similar to **while**, but is chiefly used to introduce a statement which makes another action seem unreasonable. It is often, though not necessarily, used with a question:

How can you expect your children to be truthful when you yourself tell lies?

It's not fair to expect her to do all the cooking when she has had no training or experience.

Do not confuse **when** and **if**

When he comes implies that we are sure he will come. *If he comes* implies that we don't know whether he will come or not. (For **if** in conditional sentences, see chapter 21.)