

10. Conjunctions

Definition

A conjunction is a word that connects not only individual words, but larger parts of sentences to one another. By larger parts we mean phrases, clauses and sentences, not just words.

Etymology

Latin *con-* 'together' + *iugare* 'join together'

Marking:

Conjunctions will be marked with a two-headed arrow sitting above them.

Types of conjunction

There are three main conjunction types:

- coordinating conjunctions (e.g. *or, and, but*)
- subordinating conjunctions (e.g. *until, because, whether*)
- correlative conjunctions (e.g. *not only...but also, neither...nor, whether...or*)

You and your students will explore each type.

Conjunctions constitute a closed, non-alterable word class. Below is a table of common conjunctions designating their type.

Type	Function	Examples
Coordinating conjunctions	To join elements that have equal status in a sentence	for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so (FANBOYS)
Subordinating conjunctions	To join subordinate clauses to main clauses	although, because, if, for, how, unless, until
Correlative conjunctions	These join sentence elements in the same way as coordinating conjunctions, but function as a pair.	both...and, either...or, neither...nor, whether...or, not only...but also



10.1 Conjunctions table

Activity 1 - Discovering conjunctions

Sometimes when we are talking or writing, we like to say more than just one idea in one sentence at a time. If we talked only in complete sentences that had one subject, one verb, what do you think our speech and writing would be like? (BORING AND STILTED ARE SOME OF THE POSSIBLE ANSWERS HERE)

Let's take the example passage:

Many people write films, and often they write about their own lives and experiences. This is a relatively easy task, yet Some filmmakers, write purely from their strange imaginations. Take "Sharknado", for instance; a film not only about sharks and tornadoes, but about sharks in a tornado attacking human cities. The result is surprisingly compelling.

In the first sentence, there are two main ideas, first that people write films, and second that they often write about their own lives and experiences.

Which word joins those ideas together? (AND)

How does the word *and* join them? As equal or unequal parts of the sentence? (AS EQUALS)

Even in the last part of that first sentence, there are two things that people write about, joined as equals by a word. What two things? (THEIR OWN LIVES AND THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES)

What word joins them? (AND)

Do you know a name for a word that joins two ideas together like this? (A CONJUNCTION)

Write the definition.

A conjunction is a word or words that joins two ideas together.

Activity 2 - Coordinating conjunctions

Suggested dialogue

We looked at the word *and*, which we agreed made two elements in the sentence equal. The name for this type of conjunction is *coordinating conjunction*.

The seven major coordinating conjunctions can be remembered with a simple acronym: FANBOYS

This stands for:

for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so

We mark conjunctions by putting a two-headed arrow above them. Let's mark the conjunctions in the passage. Now let's mark the whole passage.

Activity 3 - Subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions connect what's known as subordinate clauses to main clauses. We will discover more about clauses in the following chapters. What we need to discuss here is that when subordinate and main clauses go together, they form *complex sentences*. The conjunctions are used to join them by showing time, place or cause. Consider:

Michelle might go for a swim if the rain ever stops.

We have the main clause *Michelle might go for a swim*, the subordinating conjunction *if* and then the subordinate clause *the rain ever stops*.

Subordinate clauses are named this way because they depend on the main clause for their meaning.

The list below shows some common subordinating conjunctions.

after	how	though
although	if	till (or 'til)
as	inasmuch	unless
as if	in order that	until
as long as	lest	when
as much as	now that	whenever
as soon as	once	where
as though	provided (that)	whereas
because	since	wherever
before	so that	whether
even if	than	while
even though	that	why

10.2 Subordinating conjunctions list



Activity 4 - Correlative conjunctions

Some conjunctions combine with other words to form a pair. These are called *correlative conjunctions*. They always appear together, joining various sentence elements. They should be treated as coordinating conjunctions.



Examples

1. Ian is skilled *not only* in IT *but also* in linguistics.
 Note: it is also acceptable to say *not only...but...*, omitting the word *also* in longer constructions. See the example passage and discuss.
2. Simon claimed he was *neither* a football *nor* a basketball fan.
3. *Whether* Jacqi paints *or* does yoga, something peaceful is always created.

Below is a list of common correlative conjunctions.

both...and	not only...but (also)	not...but
either...or	neither...nor	whether...or

10.3 Common correlative conjunctions list



Have students suggest possible additions to the example sentence and join them with some of the conjunctions above. For example:

Coordinating conjunction

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge but left her hat behind.

Subordinating conjunction

My big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge after she finally caught him.

Correlative conjunction

Either my big green dragon slowly ate the teacher on a bridge or I'm imagining things.