

Grammar reference

Co-ordinating conjunctions

These join two parts of a sentence together. These parts (clauses) are similar in both importance and structure, and are grammatically equal. A comma is used to separate longer clauses. You don't need a comma when clauses are short.

Examples

Jack likes coffee, **but** Jill likes tea.
 Give me my freedom **or** you will be sorry!
 He likes apples, bananas **and** pears, **but** doesn't like berries.
 They are kind, **so** when they had extra money in their budget, they donated it to charity.

English controversy

You can begin a sentence with and, but, so, that, because and other conjunctions – there are no rules against it!

Memory trick for the super short and common co-ordinating conjunctions - FANBOYS

For **A**nd **N**or **B**ut **O**r **Y**et **S**o

Sub-ordinating conjunctions

In complex sentences, these join a subordinate (dependent) clause to a main clause. The dependent clause “depends” on the main clause – it can't exist alone.

Examples

Although she doesn't like the taste, she ordered a coffee at the cafe.
Even though he had read it three times, he wants to read it again.
 She quickly packed her bag **before** it got too late.
Since the bushfires, I haven't been able to relax during summer.

The more common subordinating conjunctions: after, although, as, because, before, how, if, since, than, that, until, when, while

Past tense vs Past perfect

Past tense		Past perfect	
When we describe past events exactly in the order they happened.	She ate breakfast, then went to school.	When we look back from the past moment to an earlier event or experience.	She had never seen a koala until she visited Australia.
An action in the past that interrupted another action in the past progressive.	She drove until she became too tired.	An action that began in the past and continued until another past event.	She had driven for 8 hours when she became too tired to continue.
Signal words:	<i>first, then</i>	Signal words:	<i>already, up to then, before then, even though</i>