



# Connors Writing Center

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## Conjunctions

**Conjunctions** connect words or groups of words to each other. There are four kinds of conjunctions: coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, and conjunctive adverbs.

**Coordinating conjunctions** must link the same part of speech—two or more nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions, phrases, or clauses.

**and but or yet nor for so**

A strong *but* warm breeze blew across the desert. (two adjectives: strong & warm)

Please print *or* type the information on the application form. (two verbs: print & type)

Her arguments were easy to ridicule *yet* hard to refute. (two phrases of equal importance: “easy to ridicule” & “hard to refute”)

Note how the two linked words in the following sentence are not the same part of speech:

He was angry *and* a dwarf.

This sentence is awkward because “angry” is an adjective and “dwarf” is a noun, thus they are incompatible.

**Correlative conjunctions** join equal elements (parts of speech or phrases), and they come in pairs.

**both...and just as...so not only...but also either...or neither...nor whether...or**

*Both* Bechtel *and* Kaiser submitted bids on the project. (two proper nouns: Bechtel & Kaiser)

Maisha *not only* sent a card *but also* visited me in the hospital. (two action phrases: sent a card & visited me)

**Subordinating conjunctions** introduce adverb clauses and signal the relationship between the adverb clause and another clause, usually an independent clause. An adverb clause answers the question how, when, or why. An independent clause is group of words that can stand on its own as a complete sentence. In the following sentence, the subordinating conjunction *when* signals a time relationship, letting us know that one event (the fire alarm going off) caused the other (the jumping).

I jumped *when* the fire alarm went off.

**after**                      **although**                      **as**                      **as if**                      **because**                      **before**  
**if**                              **in order that**                      **once**                      **since**                      **so that**                      **than**  
**though**                      **unless**                              **until**                      **when**                      **where**                      **while**

(over)

**Subordinating conjunctions (examples):**

*Once* sales improve, the company will be able to pay its bills.  
My grandmother began traveling *after* she sold her house.

**Conjunctive adverbs** connect two sentences. They explain how the first sentence relates to the second. They can be considered both adverbs and conjunctions because they modify the second clause and connect the second clause to the first.

<b>also</b>	<b>anyway</b>	<b>besides</b>	<b>certainly</b>	<b>finally</b>	<b>furthermore</b>
<b>however</b>	<b>incidentally</b>	<b>indeed</b>	<b>instead</b>	<b>likewise</b>	<b>meanwhile</b>
<b>moreover</b>	<b>namely</b>	<b>nevertheless</b>	<b>next</b>	<b>now</b>	<b>otherwise</b>
<b>similarly</b>	<b>still</b>	<b>then</b>	<b>therefore</b>	<b>thus</b>	<b>undoubtedly</b>

The cider tasted bitter; *however*, each of us drank a tall glass of it.  
The cider tasted bitter; each of us, *however*, drank a tall glass of it.  
The cider tasted bitter. Each of us drank a tall glass of it, *however*.

Conjunctive adverbs can be moved to different positions in a clause (part of a sentence).

Independent clauses (parts of a sentence that could stand alone as a complete sentence) connected by a conjunctive adverb must be separated by a semicolon or a period, not just a comma.

**This handout was adapted from:** *The St. Martin's Handbook* 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, edited by Andrea A. Lunsford. Bedford/St. Martin's 2003.