Lesson 10
Parts of Speech: Conjunctions

Conjunctions connect the parts of a sentence: words, phrases, and clauses. You are probably most familiar with the following conjunctions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>And</th>
<th>for</th>
<th>or</th>
<th>yet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>but</td>
<td>nor</td>
<td>so</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In these sentences, the conjunctions are underlined:

That model is old and unpopular, but it should not be scrapped.
Either you or Gretchen should go.
Because she is out of town, she can't attend the meeting.
The report was late; therefore we haven't made a decision yet.

Notice in the following examples that conjunctions may be used to connect clauses (which have both a subject and a predicate) with other clauses, to connect clauses with phrases (which do not have both a subject and a predicate), and to connect words with words:

Words with words: We sell designer clothing and linens.
Clauses with phrases: Their products are expensive but still appeal to value-conscious consumers.
Clauses with clauses: I will call her on the phone today, or I will visit her office tomorrow.

In the following exercises, underline the conjunctions and write in each blank a code for the type of grammatical elements they join (W-W for word to word, P-C for phrase to clause, or C-C for clause to clause):

1. __________ She was not pleased, nor was she easy to reassure.
2. __________ The new model is sporty yet economical.
3. __________ We are proud of your accomplishments and of your reputation in the community.
4. __________ You promised but apparently forgot to send me the documents.
5. __________ We would cancel the order, for we have not yet sold the items already in stock.

Some conjunctions are used in pairs:

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

In the following sentences, take special note of both the underlined conjunctions and the italicized words:

They not only are out of racquets but also are out of balls.
They are not only out of racquets but also out of balls.
They are our of not only racquets but also balls.
With paired conjunctions, you must be careful to construct each phrase in the same way. In other words, if you write *not only are out of racquets*, you cannot write *but also out of balls*; you must include the verb *are* after *but also*. But if you write *are not only out of racquets*, with the verb before the conjunction, you should not include the verb *are* after *but also*. The same need for parallelism exists when using conjunctions to join the other parts of speech, as in these sentences:

He is listed in either *your roster or my roster*.  
He is listed neither in *your roster nor on* the master list.  
They both *gave and received* notice.

In the following exercises, cross out and insert words to make parallel the pairs of conjunctions and the other parts of speech that go with them:

6. She is active in not only a civic group but also in an athletic organization.
7. That is either a mistake or was an intentional omission.
8. The question is whether to set up a booth at the convention or be hosting a hospitality suite.
9. In both overall sales and in profits, we are doing better.
10. She had neither the preferred educational background, nor did she have suitable experience.

In all the previous examples of using conjunctions to join clauses, the clauses have been essentially equal. A different type of conjunction is used to join clauses that are unequal—that is, to join a main clause to one that is subordinate to or dependent on it. Here is a partial list of conjunctions used to introduce dependent clauses:

- although
- before
- once
- unless
- as soon as
- even though
- so that
- until
- because
- if
- that
- when

The dependent clause in each of the following examples is italicized, and the conjunction that links each one to the main clause is underlined:

Send your check now *so that you will not miss this offer*.  
Until we have seen the new personnel guidelines, *we cannot offer any raises*.  
*We have stopped shipping that item, because* we have discovered problems with its safety mechanism.

Can you see that the italicized part of each of these sentences is indeed subordinate to or dependent on the part that is not italicized?

Some of the conjunctions used to introduce dependent clauses, such as *before*, may also be used as prepositions. If a phrase follows such a word, the word is working in the sentence as a preposition; but if a clause follows it, the word is working in the sentence as a conjunction:

- Preposition (phrase): *Before giving up, she tried calculating an acid-test ratio*.  
- Conjunction (clause): *Before she gave up, she tried calculating an acid-test ratio*.

In the following exercises, circle the conjunctions and underline the main clauses:

11. After making this phone call, I intend to leave.
12. He has already asked for a promotion, even though he started working here only a month ago.

13. Be sure to sign this document before you send it back.

14. If I show you how to use the spreadsheet program, will you show me how to use the word-processing program?

15. She'll jump at this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity when she finds out about it.

Some conjunctions function as adverbs. Here are some of them (and related transitional phrases):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Also</th>
<th>In fact</th>
<th>On the other hand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a result</td>
<td>Indeed</td>
<td>Otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequently</td>
<td>Instead</td>
<td>Still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even so</td>
<td>Meanwhile</td>
<td>That is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furthermore</td>
<td>Nevertheless</td>
<td>Therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>However</td>
<td>Next</td>
<td>Thus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These words and phrases link clauses—and sometimes sentences—that are essentially equal. However, unlike other kinds of conjunctions, they may fall either at the beginning of a clause or somewhere within it. Observe the relationship of the conjunctions (underlined) to the verbs they modify in the following sentences:

- They are, in fact, here today. (modifies are)
- Therefore, we will send a replacement. (modifies will send)
- The deadline has passed; however, we will accept your application. (modifies will accept)

Circle the conjunctions working as adverbs in the following exercises, and underline the verbs they modify:

16. The factory was shut down for two weeks; consequently, our stocks of Part C-118 are low.

17. It is indeed a fine example of cooperation.

18. Her experience is limited; on the other hand, her technical skills are excellent.

19. Ask him if he wants it; otherwise give it to me.

20. Meanwhile, they will be preparing the proposal.

In the final exercises for this lesson, underline all words working as conjunctions:

21. After your half-day presentation to management, you were undoubtedly tired but happy to have survived.

22. Send us a lightweight motor, two pulleys, and a winch.

23. Although you could perhaps find a substitute, you would have a hard time finding one.

24. We ask our credit customers to provide either a spotless credit record or substantial collateral.

25. The company nevertheless plans to distribute dividends equal to last year's.
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You can learn more about conjunctions by looking up the following topics in a grammar book:

- adverbial conjunctions
- conjunctive adverbs
- coordinating conjunctions
- correlative conjunctions
- dependent clauses
- independent clauses
- subordinating conjunctions


Lesson 10: Check Your Answers

1. **C-C** She was not pleased, nor was she easy to reassure.

2. **W-W** The new model is sporty yet economical.

3. **P-C** We are proud of your accomplishments and of your reputation in the community.

4. **W-W** You promised but apparently forgot to send me the documents.

5. **C-C** We would cancel the order, for we have not yet sold the items already in stock.

In the following exercises, cross out and insert words to make parallel the pairs of conjunctions and the other parts of speech that go with them:

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15. She'll jump at this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity when she finds out about it.
Circle the conjunctions working as adverbs in the following exercises, and underline the verbs they modify:

16. The factory was shut down for two weeks; **consequently** our stocks of Part C-118 **are** low.

17. It is **indeed** a fine example of cooperation.

18. Her experience is limited; **on the other hand** her technical skills **are** excellent.

19. Ask him if he wants it; **otherwise** give it to me.

20. **Meanwhile**, they **will be preparing** the proposal.

In the final exercises for this lesson, underline all words working as conjunctions:

21. **After** your half-day presentation to management, you were undoubtedly tired **but** happy to have survived.

22. Send us a lightweight motor, two pulleys, **and** a winch.

23. **Although** you could perhaps find a substitute, you would have a hard time finding one.

24. We ask our credit customers to provide **either** a spotless credit record **or** substantial collateral.

25. The company **nevertheless** plans to distribute dividends equal to last year's.