

Coordination and Subordination

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Coordinating conjunctions are used to join independent clauses to make compound sentences. The coordinating conjunctions are as follows: *and*, *but*, *for*, *nor*, *or*, *so*, and *yet*. You can use coordinating conjunctions to revise run-on sentences and comma splices (see above). You can also use coordinating conjunctions to make writing less choppy by joining short, simple sentences. Consider the following examples.

- Independent Clauses: I wanted more popcorn. Sam wanted Junior Mints.
Joined Together: I wanted more popcorn, but Sam wanted Junior Mints.

In this example, it is necessary to put a comma before the coordinating conjunction *but* because there are two independent clauses being combined. Another way to think of this is that *I wanted more popcorn* and *Sam wanted Junior Mints* could stand on their own as independent sentences. So, there must be a comma and a conjunction between them.

- Independent Clauses: I wanted more popcorn. I didn't want any more soda.
Joined Together: I wanted more popcorn but no soda.

In this example, we've combined the sentences with the coordinating conjunction *but*. We've also eliminated some of the words so that the sentence wouldn't sound redundant. In this case, it isn't necessary to put a comma before *but* because there are not two independent clauses joined together.

Subordinating conjunctions are used to join independent clauses to make complex sentences. The subordinating conjunctions are as follows: *after*, *although*, *as*, *as if*, *because*, *before*, *even if*, *even though*, *if*, *if only*, *rather than*, *since*, *that*, *though*, *unless*, *until*, *when*, *where*, *whereas*, *wherever*, *whether*, *which*, and *while*.

You can use subordinating conjunctions to correct run-on sentences and comma splices. And you can use them to combine sentences so that writing is less choppy. Consider the following examples.

- Complex Sentence: I wanted to get more soda because it's hard to eat popcorn without it.

In this sentence, the subordinate clause is at the end. It would also be correct to place the subordinate clause at the beginning of the sentence:

Because it's hard to eat popcorn without it, I wanted to get more soda.

Notice that when the subordinate clause comes at the beginning, it's necessary to insert a comma.

- Complex Sentence: While I was getting more soda and popcorn, I missed a really important part of the movie. (Subordinate clause at the beginning of the sentence).

I missed a really important part of the movie while I was getting more soda and popcorn.
(Subordinate clause at the end of the sentence).

Subordination and Coordination Exercise

Join the two independent clauses to make a compound sentence. Use one of the coordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet). Remember to use a comma before the connecting word.

1. He enjoys walking through the country. He often goes backpacking on his vacations.
2. He often watched TV when there were only reruns. She preferred to read instead.
3. I didn't know which job I wanted. I decided to wait to decide.

Join the two independent clauses to make a complex sentence. Use one of the subordinating conjunctions (after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, if only, rather than, since, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whereas, wherever, whether, which, and while). Remember to use a comma if the subordinating conjunction comes at the beginning of the sentence.

1. I stayed up all night studying for my Algebra exam. I was so tired all day today.
2. Jerry and Elaine always go to movies together. They don't go to movies together when Jerry is dating someone.
3. Mad Season is a great band. They only put out one album.