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## **Coordinating Conjunctions**

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## Coordinating Conjunctions

A conjunction is the glue that holds words, phrases and clauses (both dependent and independent) together. A coordinating conjunction is a conjunction that connects words, phrases, and clauses that are coordinate, or equal to each other. There are seven coordinating conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. They can be remembered using the acronym FANBOYS. Below is a chart explaining the differences between the usages of these conjunctions

<b>COORDINATING CONJUNCTION (FANBOYS)</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>EXAMPLE SENTENCE</b>
For	To show reason	<i>She bought a mango, for she was hungry.</i>
And	To add information	<i>Desiree lives in Alaska, and she is a park ranger at the National Forest there.</i>
Nor	To add negative information	<i>He does not enjoy eating vegetables, nor does he enjoy eating fruit.</i>
But	To show contrast	<i>The class was difficult, but everyone ended up receiving a passing grade.</i>
Or	To give a choice	<i>We can see a horror movie, or we can see an action movie.</i>
Yet	To show concession or to contrast	<i>The test was difficult, yet everyone received higher than a "C" grade.</i>
So	To show result	<i>I was broke all week, so I had to eat Top Ramen for every meal.</i>

Coordinating conjunctions are the glue that binds together the pieces of a sentence. As their name implies, they *conjoin* elements—words, phrases, or clauses—that share a syntactic function.

English has seven coordinating conjunctions—for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so—which you can remember using the mnemonic FANBOYS:

- **For** indicates causation: “We left a day early, for the weather was not as clement as we had anticipated.”
- **And** juxtaposes two or more items without specifying a relationship between them: “neorealism, neoclassical realism, and realist constructivism”; “Mearsheimer subscribes to one approach, and Waltz argues for another.”
- **Nor** supplements a previously stated negation: “neither fish nor fowl”; “The results did not confirm the hypothesis, nor did they suggest any particular alternative explanation.”
- **But** signals a contradiction, caveat, or other tension: “this oft-cited but inaccurate account”; “There was no precedent for such an approach, but the team forged ahead.”
- **Or** indicates alternatives: “Give me liberty or give me death.”
- **Yet**, like “but,” means “nevertheless” or “in spite of” something: “There was no precedent for such an approach, yet the team forged ahead.”
- **So**, like “for,” indicates reasoning or causation; while “for” indicates the cause, “so” introduces the effect: “The weather was not as clement as we had anticipated, so we left a day early.”

## Coordinating Conjunctions at the Clausal Level

Coordinating conjunctions link independent clauses. Which conjunction you use can significantly alter the meaning of the sentence. Take this example:

The workers had a few more weeks of renovations to complete, \_\_\_\_\_ the landlord said we could move in now.

Which conjunction would you choose?

- Depending on the context, “but” or “yet” could suggest that you think the landlord is doing you a favor: you get to move in despite the construction. Alternatively, “but” or “yet” could suggest that you disagree with the soundness of this idea.
- Choosing “so” will suggest that the landlord thinks a few weeks of living with construction is reasonable—that the work is far enough along to invite you to move in.
- “For” would make sense if the invitation to move in somehow *caused* an additional few weeks of renovations.
- “And” doesn't give us much information beyond the fact that these two events happened—the renovation and the invitation.
- The first clause isn't a negative form, so “nor” would not apply here.
- Likewise, these two statements are not alternatives—both are happening—so “or” would also be unsuitable.

When writing a sentence that uses coordinating conjunctions, think carefully about the order of the clauses. Try plugging conjunctions into this version of the sentence and observe the different meanings and effects the new order creates:

The landlord said we could move in now, \_\_\_\_\_ the workers had a few more weeks of renovations to complete.

Finally, note that, whichever word best fits your meaning, joining independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction calls for a comma; see the FANBOYS commas page for more details.

## **Conjunctions that connect two clauses**

Coordinating conjunctions, a.k.a. the FANBOYS, can connect two independent clauses. Independent clauses are so called because each of them can stand on its own as a sentence. We connect them with FANBOYS, however, so that we don't spit out all our sentences like robots.

I love candy bars.

I know they are not good for me.

My brother has told me this.

I don't want to listen.

Coordinating conjunctions make these ideas sound more fluent.

I love candy bars, yet I know they are not good for me. My brother has told me this, but I don't want to listen.

When joining two independent clauses with a coordinating conjunction, always place a comma before the conjunction.

I don't want to throw away my candy bars, nor do I wish to listen to my brother.

I adore candy factories, and I want to own one someday.

## Examples of Coordinating Conjunction:

- Alex stood first **and** got a prize.
- Robin **and** Russel went the beach.
- Sleep now **or** you will miss the class tomorrow.
- Robin did not try hard **so** he did not succeed.
- He is sad **but** not broken.
- Rita, as well as Shaun, came here yesterday.
- Shaun played well **still** he lost.
- Play up to your potential **otherwise**, you will be left out of the team.
- Watson **and** Warner are in good form.
- Alex is in good form **but** Robin is not.
- Life is full of troubles **yet** none wants to die.
- She **and** I broke up at least a year ago.
- Sean, as well as Nikita, will go with us.
- She is quick **and** she reads clearly.
- She is clever **but** her boyfriend is cleverer.
- I went to bed **for** I was feeling exhausted.
- I was sleeping **and** you made a lot of noises.
- I told you **but** you did not listen.
- You must listen to me **or** you must leave.
- I will not say anything **otherwise** you might misunderstand me.