

Coordinating Conjunctions

Intermediate English, Week 8, Winter 2021

Conjunctions

- A *conjunction* is a word that connects two or more words or clauses (sentence parts)
- *Coordinating conjunctions* connect words or phrases of the same importance or type (for example, two nouns, two adjectives, etc.)
- There are seven coordinating conjunctions in English: *and*, *but*, *or*, *for*, *nor*, *yet*, and *so*
- Today, we will talk about the four most common: *and*, *but*, *or*, and *so*

And

- We use *and* to connect two or more similar words, clauses, or ideas
 - My favorite animals are turtles **and** horses.
 - Her boyfriend is tall, handsome, **and** rich.
- It can connect nouns, adjectives, verbs, clauses, and more
 - We ate chicken **and** vegetables for dinner last night.
 - My sister plays tennis every day, **and** she is very good at it.
 - The man stopped, looked around, **and** ran away.

But

- *But* is for things that are contrasting or different
- We can use it with adjectives or clauses
 - He is smart **but** ugly.
 - My father's car is old **but** fast.
 - I like playing basketball, **but** I am bad at it.
 - She called me this morning, **but** I was in a meeting.

Or

- Use *or* when there is a choice or option
 - We can go to the beach, **or** we can go to the park.
- We often use *or* with questions
 - Do you want the blue car **or** the red car?
- *Or* is also used in the negative with nouns or adjectives
 - My dog is not dirty **or** mean.
- With clauses, we also use it to talk about a possible consequence or result of something in the future (“if you don’t do this...”)
 - The students need to study every day, **or** they will fail this class.
 - Wash your hands often, **or** you will get sick.

So

- Use *so* to talk about a result or effect
 - I was tired, *so* I went home early.
 - She is really busy today, *so* she can't come to the party.
- We don't use this conjunction with nouns or adjectives, only with clauses and phrases
- The result comes after *so* in the sentence
 - I broke my leg, *so* I can't play basketball tomorrow.
 - NOT ~~I can't play basketball tomorrow, so I broke my leg.~~

Using commas

- When a conjunction connects two nouns/adjectives, don't use a comma
 - The house is big **and** old.
- You need commas when there are three or more nouns/adjectives
 - Do you want tea, coffee, **or** juice?
- Use a comma when there are two clauses (two subjects and two verbs).
The comma goes **before** the conjunction
 - It was raining, **so** we didn't go to the park.
 - They are brothers, **but** they look completely different.

Let's practice! Combine the sentences

1. It was really cold last week. I didn't want to go outside.
It was really cold last week, **so** I didn't want to go outside.
2. My car is only one year old. It already has a lot of problems.
My car is only one year old, **but** it already has a lot of problems.
3. Don't quit your job. You won't have any money.
Don't quit your job, **or** you won't have any money.
4. I tried to do laundry yesterday. The washer was broken.
I tried to do laundry yesterday, **but** the washer was broken.
5. He calls his sister every week. They talk on the phone for hours.
He calls his sister every week, **and** they talk on the phone for hours.

More practice! Fix the mistakes

1. Her cat is cute ~~but~~ ^{and} beautiful.
2. He wanted to make a cake, ~~or~~ ^{but} he didn't have any eggs.
3. I want to play soccer, ~~and~~ go shopping today.
4. It snowed last night, ~~but~~ ^{so} you should be careful when you drive.
5. You need a pen, ~~and~~ a pencil, and a notebook for class.