

Conjunctions

A **conjunction** is a word that **connects** words or groups of words.

Spot the conjunctions in the following sentences.

1. Bob **and** Dan are friends. (The conjunction "**and**" connects two nouns.)
2. He will drive **or** fly. ("**Or**" connects two verbs.)
3. It is early **but** we can go. ("**But**" connects two groups of words.)

Types of conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions connect two equal parts of a sentence. The most common ones are: **and, or, but, and so**.

Subordinating conjunctions connect two parts of a sentence that are not equal. Some of the more common subordinating conjunctions are: **after, before, unless, although, if, until, as, since, when, because, than, while** etc.

Correlative conjunctions are **pairs** of conjunctions that work together. In the sentence **Both Jan and Meg are good swimmers**, "**both**" and "**and**" are correlative conjunctions. The most common correlative conjunctions are: **both ... and, either ... or, neither ... nor, not only ... but also** etc.

Pairs only

Some conjunctions are used in pairs only.

Their use is correct only in pairs, not otherwise. The more popular pairs are: **Either ... or, neither ... nor, both ... and, though ... yet, although ... yet, whether ... or, not only ... but also, lest ... should, no sooner ... than, scarcely ... when, hardly ... when, as much ... as**, etc.

Let us use these conjunction pairs in sentences.

1. I shall **either** read **or** write a story.
2. He is **neither** strong **nor** courageous.
3. **Both** Mohan **and** Ram have passed.
4. **Though** he is poor **yet** he is honest.
5. I will go **whether** he comes **or** not.
6. He will **not only** encourage you **but also** help you.
7. Work hard **lest** you **should** fail.
8. **No sooner** had he reached the station **than** the train started.
9. It was **hardly** ten o'clock **when** I called on him.
10. He is **as much** greedy **as** miserable.

Rules of use

"Either ... or" and "neither ... nor" can be used as conjunctions linking two or more than two elements.

In other words, as **correlative conjunctions** they can be used for **two** or more than two persons or things. But as **pronouns and adverbs** they can be used for only **two** persons or things.

1. **Neither** Ram **nor** his father, **nor** even his friend could be of any help to me.
2. **Neither** power **nor** wealth, **nor** position can hold back the march of law.
3. **Either** my father **or** my brother **or** my uncle will help me in my hour of need.
4. **Either** Kanpur **or** Lucknow **or** Agra will be good enough to settle down after retirement.
5. I shall **either** walk **or** jog to office.

After “not either” we should use “or” (not “nor”)

1. Your friend is **not either** reasonable **or** fair. (“**nor fair**” is wrong.)
2. This book is **not either** exhaustive **or** up-to-date. (“**nor up-to-date**” is wrong.)



If a clause comes after “no”, “not” or “never”, the clause would be connected by the conjunction “or”, not “nor”

1. He has **no** relation **or** friend who can support him. (not “**nor**”)
2. He has **not** a relation **or** a friend who can support him. (not “**nor**”)
3. He **does not** have a relation **or** a friend who can support him. (not “**nor**”)
4. **I never** lived there **or** even went there before. (not “**nor**”)

No “not” with “until” and “unless”

We should not add “**not**” with these, as these are already negative.

1. I shall wait until you come. (Not “until you do not come”)
2. I shall fail unless you help me. (Not “unless you do not help me”)

Use “or not” after “whether” and “if”

1. I do not know **whether** (or **if**) he has gone **or not**.
2. I doubt **whether** he will help me **or not**.
3. **Whether** he will help me **or not** is doubtful.



WATCH OUT!			
	Common errors	The correct form	Why? (The theory)
1	I doubt as to whether he will help me or not.	I doubt whether he will help me or not.	Do not use “as to” before “whether”.
2	I do not know as to whether he is honest or not	I do not know whether he is honest or not	
3	I do not doubt whether he will help me or not.	I do not doubt that he will help me.	If a negative or an interrogative sentence has to be made with “doubt” or “doubtful”, we should use the conjunction “that” in place of “whether ... or not”.
4	Is it not doubtful whether he will help you or not?	Is it not doubtful that he will help you?	
5	The reason why he failed is because he did not study seriously.	The reason why he failed is that he did not study seriously.	When sentences begin with “The reason is” or “The reason why” the clause coming after should be connected with the conjunction “that” and not with “because”, “due to” or “owing to”.
6	The sun will set before you will reach .	The sun will set before you reach .	When “before” is used as a conjunction, it points to some future event or statement, but future tense is <i>not</i> used with it, even if its principal clause is in the future tense.
7	He will retire before a month will have passed .	He will retire before a month has passed .	
8	He will return after the train leaves .	He will return after the train has left .	The clause following “after” is usually in the present perfect tense (not in simple present).
9	He behaved as if he is the king.	He behaved as if he were the king.	“As if” and “as though” are imaginary or conditional expressions. These use past conditional tense after them, not present or future tense.
10	He danced with joy as though he will win the first prize.	He danced with joy as though he had won the first prize.	

Because vs. in order that

We use "because" to show **reason** and "in order that" to show **purpose**.

1. He failed **because** he did not work hard.
2. He worked hard **in order that** he may secure first division.

Since then and ever since

When "since" is used as a conjunction, the verb before it should be in the **present perfect tense** and the verb after it in **past indefinite tense**.

1. Many new developments **have taken place since I left home**.
2. **I have never seen** him **since** his father **died**.

Because, for or since

All these three words show **cause** or **reason**. The difference is in the force — "because" has the greatest force in it, "for" has the least and "since" falls between the two.

1. I must go **because** my mother is ill.
2. He could not catch up **since** he was lazy.
3. He cannot be trusted **for** he takes everything casually.

This is about "that"

Only in indirect narration

As a conjunction "that" is used only in indirect narration, not in direct narration.

Incorrect: He said **that** "I am ill."

Correct: He said **that** he was ill.

Restricted use

"That" as conjunction is **not used** in interrogative, imperative, optative or exclamatory clauses, whether the whole sentence is in the direct or indirect narration.

1. **Incorrect:** He asked me **that** why I was late.
2. **Incorrect:** He asked me **that** "Why are you late?"
3. **Incorrect:** He said to the servant **that** "Bring me a glass of water."
4. **Incorrect:** He said **that** how beautiful was the scene!
5. **Incorrect:** He said **that** may God bless you!

Not with interrogative pronouns and adverbs

"That" as a conjunction is not used in clauses beginning with interrogative pronouns (which, who, what, etc.) or interrogative adverbs (where, why, when, how, etc.).

1. **Incorrect:** He asked **that what** the time was?
2. **Incorrect:** He asked **that who** he was?
3. **Incorrect:** I do not know **that when** he will come?
4. **Incorrect:** He does not know **that where** he is?

Note: But if the **principal clause** comes after the clauses beginning with **interrogative pronouns** or **interrogative adverbs**, the conjunction "that" will be used.

1. I promise **that when I** come next I will bring your book.
*In this sentence the use of **that** before **when** is correct because the principal clause "I will bring your book" comes after the clause beginning with **when**.*
2. I know **that what** he says is not true.



Hidden "that"

There are some verbs (believe, think, hope, presume, suppose, and be afraid) after which "that" is concealed or understood. In the following sentences, ? indicates where "that" is hidden or understood.

1. I believe ? he is right.
2. I hope ? he is now well.
3. I am afraid ? he is wrong.

Conditional or supposition sentences

Simple future tense

1. If you start early, you will reach in time. [**present simple + future simple**]
2. If you are honest, you will be respected. [**present simple + future simple**]

Simple past tense

1. If he **built** two houses, he **would give** you one. (past simple + would)
2. If **I secured** first position, he **would give** me a golden watch. (past simple + would)
3. If you **discovered** the treasure, you **would get** your share. (past simple + would)



Past perfect tense

1. If **I had built** two houses, **I would have given** you one. (**had + would have**)
2. If **I had secured** first position, he **would have given** me a golden watch. (**had + would have**)
3. If you **had discovered** the treasure, you **would have got** your share. (**had + would have**)

Note—These sentences can also begin with "Had" in place of "If".

"Such ... as" vs. "such ... that"

"Such ... as" is used to denote a category whereas "such ... that" emphasises the degree of something by mentioning its consequence.

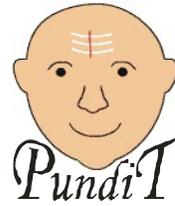
1. **Incorrect:** Each member of the alliance agrees to take **such** action **that** it deems necessary.
Here "it deems necessary" is not a consequence of "such action". The sentence wants to imply that the action belongs to the category: "as it deems necessary". In other words, what kind of action? Such action as it deems necessary.
Correct: Each member of the alliance agrees to take **such** action **as** it deems necessary.
2. **Incorrect:** She looked at him in **such** distress **as** he had to look away.
Here, "he had to look away" is a consequence of "she looked at him in such distress." In other words, the degree of the distress of looking at him was such (so great) that he had to look away.
Correct: She looked at him in **such** distress **that** he had to look away.

"But" after "nothing else"

"Nothing else" should be followed by "but" and not by "than".

1. **Incorrect:** Mr Bureaucrat! This is nothing else **than** red-tapism.
Correct: Mr Bureaucrat! This is nothing else **but** red-tapism.

Conjunctions revisited



Incorrect	Correct
Scarcely had he arrived than he had to leave again.	Scarcely had he arrived when he had to leave again.
No sooner had we reached the station when the train left.	No sooner had we reached the station than the train left.
The national network seldom or ever telecasts good programmes.	The national network seldom or never telecasts good programmes. OR The national network seldom, if ever , telecasts good programmes.
He neither agreed to my proposal nor to his.	He agreed neither to my proposal nor to his.
The phone neither went dead or worked properly.	The phone neither went dead nor worked properly.
He said that , "It is none of my business."	He said, "It is none of my business."
He asked me that where I stayed.	He asked me where I stayed.
Although Manohar is hardworking, but he does not get a job.	Although Manohar is hardworking, yet he does not get a job.
Not only the students but also the teacher were responsible for what happened in the class.	Not only the students but also the teacher was responsible for what happened in the class.

Exercise

Correct the following sentences.

1. It is nothing else than a trick being played upon you.
2. He has no other business but to play with computers.
3. India seldom or ever wins a medal at the Olympics.
4. I don't know whether Ramakant is equally good as Vijay.
5. I have not only looked after my children but also my sister's.
6. Both he and as well as I footed the bill.
7. He has no choice than to start his own business.
8. It is nothing else than a wicked desire.
9. She asked me that I could answer her question.
10. He does not interfere without he is compelled.
11. It is difficult to know whether you have been selected.
12. I am interested in such books which are interesting.
13. Such was his pronunciation, as I could not understand him.
14. Most of the girls are doing their post-graduation because they may get good husbands.
15. He treats us as slaves.
16. Although they listen to me, but their actions prove otherwise.

Solutions

1. ~~It is nothing else~~ **but** a trick being played upon you.
2. He has no other business **than playing** with computers.
3. India seldom or **never** wins a medal at the Olympics.
4. I don't know whether Ramakant is **as** good as Vijay.
5. I have looked after **not only** my children **but also** my sister's.
6. Both he **and** I footed the bill.
7. He has no choice **but** to start his own business.
8. It is nothing else **but** a wicked desire.
9. She asked me **whether** I could answer her question.
10. He does not interfere without **being** compelled.
Also correct: He does not interfere **unless** he is compelled.
11. **The sentence is correct.**
Whether itself means if *or not*. So, you need not add the words *or not* at the end of the sentence. However, for the sake of emphasis, *or not is* sometimes added.
12. I am interested in such books **as** are interesting.
13. Such was his pronunciation **that** I could not understand him.
14. Most of the girls are doing their post-graduation **so that** they may get good husbands.
15. He treats us **like** slaves.
16. Although they listen to me, **yet** their actions prove otherwise.