

## SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

They join a dependent sentence to an independent sentence.



Take a look at this example:



main or independent clause	subordinate or dependent clause	
Sarah went swimming	<b>although</b>	it was raining
	subordinating conjunction	

A subordinate or dependent clause "depends" on a main or independent clause. It cannot exist alone. Imagine that somebody says to you: "Hello! Although it was raining." What do you understand? Nothing! But a main or independent clause can exist alone. You will understand very well if somebody says to you: "Hello! Sarah went swimming."

An **independent clause** is a group of words that make up a sentence. For example: "Sarah went swimming."

A **dependent clause** is a group of words that don't make up a sentence on their own. For example: "it was raining."

A subordinating conjunction always comes at the beginning of a subordinate clause. It "introduces" a subordinate clause. However, a subordinate clause can come after or before a main clause. So, those two structures are possible

 +  Sarah went swimming **although** it was raining.

 +  **Although** it was raining, Sarah went swimming.

## Although

When to use it: "Although" means "even though," or despite / in spite of something.

Example sentence:

*"Although she is a great creative writer, she has trouble writing academic papers."*

## Though

When to use it: "Though" can often be used the same way as "although." However, it's more likely to be found in the middle of a sentence than "although."

Example sentences:

*"Though I don't drink milk, I do pour milk in my coffee."*

*"I don't drink milk, though I do pour milk in my coffee."*

## While

When to use it: "While" refers to the moment something is/was happening.

Example sentences:

*"The mailman delivered a package while you were at school."*

*"While you were at school, the mailman delivered a package."*

## If

When to use it: “If” introduces what to do in the event that something happens.

Example sentences:

*“You can eat an apple if you get hungry before dinner.”*

*“If you get hungry before dinner, you can eat an apple.”*

## Until

When to use it: This conjunction means “up to the point that something happens.”

Example sentences:

*“I can stay until 12:00 today, but then I have to go to work.”*

*“I am on vacation until January 5th.”*

## Whether

When to use it: Use “whether” when expressing a choice between two options. In many cases, “whether” is used along with the conjunction “or.”

You can also use “whether” to express an investigation. In this case, you probably won’t use “or.”

Example sentences:

*“I can’t decide whether I want rice or pasta.”*

*Below is an investigative situation in which you don’t use “or.”*

*John [on the phone]: “Hello, Mrs. Smith. Is Mary home?”*

*Mrs. Smith: “I’m not sure. Let me check whether she’s in her room.”*

## After

When to use it: Use “after” to talk about what happens in the period of time following something else.

Example sentences:

*“I went to church after my hair appointment.”*

*“After my hair appointment, I went to church.”*

## Before

When to use it: “Before” is the opposite of “after.” Use “before” to talk about what happens in the period of time preceding something else.

Example sentences:

*“I had a hair appointment before I went to church.”*

*“Before I went to church, I had a hair appointment.”*

## Because

When to use it: “Because” explains the reason for something.

Example sentence:

*“I’m staying home tonight because Sarah canceled our plans.”*

## Since

When to use it: The primary use of “since” is to talk about the amount of time that something has been happening.

You can also use “since” as a synonym for “because.”

Example sentences:

*“She has been wearing makeup since she was 16 years old.”*

*“He has been afraid of driving since the car crash last year.”*

*“I’m staying home tonight since Sarah canceled our plans.”*

## When

When to use it: This conjunction refers to the time that something was happening.

Example sentences:

*“I loved ice cream when I was a kid.”*

*“When I was a kid, I loved ice cream.”*

## Where

When to use it: You may know “where” as a word to talk about a place. It’s a little different when you use it as a conjunction.

The English conjunction “where” can be used to mean “whereas.”

Example sentence:

*“Where some people don’t care about politics, others consider it one of the most important things in their lives.”*

## How

When to use it: “How” describes the way that something is or happens.

Example sentence:

*“Tell me the story of how you and mom fell in love.”*

## Than

When to use it: When you’re comparing two things, “than” can be used to introduce the second thing.

Example sentences:

*“He’s much nicer than his sister.”*

*“I’d rather eat at a restaurant than at home.”*

## As

This conjunction has several different meanings. We use as when one event happens while another is in progress (‘during the time that’). In this case the verb after is often in the continuous form:

*They arrived **as** we were leaving. (time conjunction meaning ‘while’ or ‘when’)*

We use as to connect a result with a cause:

*I went to bed at 9 pm **as** I had a plane to catch at 6 am.  
reason and result meaning ‘because’)*

We also use as to mean ‘in the way that’:

***As** the forecast predicted, the weather was dreadful for the rest of the week*

*She arrived early, **as** I expected.*

We can use as to make a comment or to add information about what you have just said

*As you know, Julia is leaving soon.*

*She's very tall, as is her mother*

It's used to say that although something is true, what follows is also true.

*She is a really beautiful girl, as you can imagine.*

It can also be used as a synonym for though  
*Happy as they were, there was something missing.*

*Try as he might (= however hard he tried), he couldn't open the door..*

## Once

We use once as a conjunction meaning 'as soon as' or 'after':

**Once** I've picked Megan up, I'll call you.  
My boss is a nice man **once** you get to know him.

We don't use *shall* or *will* in the clause with *once*:

**Once** I pass all my exams, I'll be fully qualified.

Not: ~~Once I will pass...~~

## As if / as though

We use *as if* and *as though* to talk about an imaginary situation or a **situation that may not be true** but that is likely or possible. *As if* is more common than *as though*. It is a more formal way of saying **like**, and is used in the same way as **as though**. In all of the following sentences and examples, **as if** can be replaced with **as though** and **like** (in informal conversation)

*The floods were rising and it was as if it was the end of the world.  
It looks as if they've had a shock.  
You look **as if** you've seen a ghost!*

You can see from the above sentences that **as if** is often used to describe someone's behavior, or the way someone is acting.

As if and as though commonly follow the verbs feel and look:

She felt as if all her worries had gone.

They felt as though they had been given the wrong information.

**As if** can also be used to compare things, but in a way that says the comparison is **not true**. If you want to emphasize that something is not true, it's possible to use a **past tense** after **as if**. In American English it's common to use **were**:

She's behaving as if she **were** the Queen of England!  
(She is not the Queen of England, but she is acting as if she is very important)

They stared at me as if I **were** crazy.  
(I'm not crazy, but people looked at me like I was crazy.)

*'As if' is also used in this common English idiom. If something is "out of style," it is unpopular or unfashionable. If something is "going out of style," it will soon be gone, unavailable or you won't want it anymore because it will be unpopular. So, whatever is "going out of style," you have to do it quickly before it goes out of style.*

*This idiom means that someone is doing something in a hurry, faster than people normally do and much more than necessary.*

*The U.S. is consuming oil **as if** it is going out of style.*

*She's been eating chocolate **as if** it were going out of style.  
He's been working on his car **as if** it were going out of style.*

This is American slang, made popular by the 1995 movie Clueless! It's a spoken exclamation, and the shortened form of **as if I would (do that)** or **as if (that would happen)**. It means that something is unlikely or impossible, or that you don't really care.

*A: "I heard that you're going out with Alex!"*

*B: "**As if!**" (= As if I would go out with him, as if that would happen)*

*My boss expects everyone to work late in order to finish the project. **As if!***

*Mary is obsessed with him. She thinks he's going to marry her.  
**As if!***

**'As if I care!'**

= I don't care!

*My parents are worried about the amount of time I spend playing computer games. As if I care (what they think)!*

**'As if' can also be used to exclaim how horrible or difficult a situation is:**

*My boss wants me to help my co-workers with their project. **As if** I don't have enough work to do right now! (= I do have a lot of work right now, and this request from my boss is making it worse.)*

*My boyfriend wants to take a break from our relationship. **As if** I don't have enough problems to deal with right now! (= I have a lot of problems right now, and this new problem is making my life worse!)*



Someone called her fat today. **As if** her self-esteem isn't low enough. (Her self-esteem is really low; calling her fat will lower her self-esteem even more)

### **As much as**

Used in things equal in degree or amount

*You eat as much cake as I did*

### **Regardless of**

It means without taking into account

***I'll do that regardless of the consequences***

### **As soon as**

As soon as has a time reference, and it means "immediately after".

*Call your mother as soon as you get home.*

*As soon as you get home, call your mother.*

### **As long as/So long as**

Both are offering a condition, and they mean "providing that", "provided that", or "on condition that". So long as is more informal.

*I'll go to the party as long as you give me a ride.*

*I'll go to the party so long as you give me a ride.*

### **By the time**

"By the time" shows that an event or action will be finished when the second event starts. It has a similar meaning to "at the time" or "when".

We make these sentences the same way as "until". "By the time" often is used with the present and past perfect.

We will have finished **by the time** she comes.  
(=When she comes, we will have already finished.)

I had lived in 5 cities **by the time** I was 12 years old.  
(=When I turned 12 years old, I had already lived in 5 cities.)

## Even if

**Even if** means **whether or not** and has to do with the conditions that may apply.

**Even if** I had two hours to spare for shopping, I wouldn't go out and buy a suit.

In this example, it describes an **unreal situation** where we could substitute 'just supposing' for **even if** and say: **just supposing** I had two hours to spare for shopping, I still wouldn't go out and buy a suit.

***Even if** I clean and polish it, it still won't look new.*

## Even though

**Even though** means despite the fact that and is a more emphatic version of though and although.

**Even though** I had two hours to spare for shopping, I couldn't find the suit I wanted.

As you can see, this sentence describes a **real situation** where the shopper spent two hours looking for a particular kind of suit, but couldn't find it. When we attach **even** to **though** in this way, we are in effect saying: **you may find this surprising but...!**

Note that **even** cannot be used as a **conjunction** like **even if** and even though when it stands alone.

We cannot say:

Even I've polished and cleaned it, it still doesn't look new.

When **even** stands alone, it functions as an **adverb** and means **this is more than or less than expected**. Again, you are registering something that may be **surprising** when you use it.

### **In case / in the event that**

We use both when we want to be cautious and we want to prevent something from happening. Even when it's talking about a future action, we do not use WILL after them. "In the event that" is more formal, so it's more commonly found in written English.

*I'll draw a map for you in case you can't find our house.*

*I'll draw a map for you in the event that you can't find our house.*

*I will take an umbrella in the event that it rains.*

### **Lest**

It's used negatively to introduce an expression denoting an action or occurrence requiring caution, fear or apprehension: "for fear that", "so that (one) should not".

*I obeyed her lest she should be angry.*

### **Now that**

You use now that to give an explanation of a **new situation**:

Now that I live only a few blocks from work, I walk to work and enjoy it.

"Now that" is commonly replaced by "since", and it **is used when the subject is current**, but "since" is used in variable time, and could refer to completed or incomplete.

For example: He rode his bicycle to work every day since he started at the factory.

## Only

Only is a versatile word, functioning as an adverb, an adjective and a conjunction. As **a conjunction** it can replace but, as in: Fiction is like real life, only better; Her car is like mine, only it has four doors.

a. with the restriction that: "BUT"

*You can come, only make sure you're on time.*

b. and yet: "HOWEVER"

*They look very nice, only we can't use them.*

c. were it not that: "EXCEPT"

*I'd introduce you to her, only you'd win her*

— Jack London

## Only if

This term often implies that the condition is not only necessary, but also sufficient.

*The company can succeed only if it has sufficient backing.*

## Provided that

If you say that something will happen provided or provided that something else happens, you mean **that the first thing will happen only if the second thing also happens**. It's interchangeable with "as long as" and "so long as".

*It should all work nicely, provided that nobody loses faith in the idea.*

## Supposing (that)

It's used to ask someone to pretend that something is true or to imagine that something will happen.

*Supposing (that) you are wrong, what will you do then?*

## In order to / in order that / so that

We use *in order to* with an infinitive form of a verb to express the purpose of something. It is more common in writing than in speaking:

*Mrs Weaver had to work full-time **in order to** earn a living for herself and her family of five children.*

*We all need stress **in order to** achieve and do our best work.*

The negative of *in order to* is *in order not to*:

*They never parked the big van in front of the house **in order not to** upset the neighbors.*

After *in order that* and *so that*, we generally include a modal (like *can*, *could*, *may*, *might*, *will* or *would*).

***In order that** you can sign the form, please print it out and mail it to this address.*

We often leave out *that* after *so* in informal situations:

*I've made some sandwiches so (that) we can have a snack on the way.*

When referring to the future, we can use the present simple or *will*/*'ll* after *so that*. We usually use the present simple after *in order that* to talk about the future:

*I'll post the CD today so that you get it by the weekend. (or "so that you will get it"...)*

*We will send you a reminder in order that you arrive on time for your appointment. (or "so that you arrive on time", or "so that you'll arrive on time")*

*So that* (but not *in order that*) can also mean 'with the result that':

*The birds return every year around March, so that April is a good time to see them.*

## Unless

We use the conjunction *unless* to mean "except if".

*Unless it rains, we'll go for a picnic by the river tomorrow.*

*We'll go for a picnic by the river tomorrow unless it rains.*

## Whenever

It means "**every time that**" or "**any time that**". We often use *whenever* with the present simple.

*Our dog barks whenever someone walks by our house. (= every time someone walks by)*

*He gets depressed whenever it's cold and dark.*

## Wherever

As a conjunction, it is **used to connect two clauses with the meaning "everywhere or anywhere someone does something" or "where a particular situation exists"**.

*Wherever he went, he took his dog with him.*

*Garlic is a plant that grows wherever there is a warm climate.*

## That

"That" has a few different functions in English. This can lead to confusion because some instances of "that" are more optional than others in academic writing.

One important use of "that" is for inserting a certain type of dependent clause into an independent clause. Frequently, such "that" clauses serve as the direct object of a reporting verb (such as *found*, *reported*, *posited*, *argued*, *claimed*, *maintained*, and *hypothesized*) to introduce a paraphrase, summary, or quotation.

*Smith (2015) reported that more research was necessary.*

*The authors hypothesized that there would be significant results.*

*Jones (2014) asserted that confidentiality was maintained throughout the study.*

In formal written English, for clarity, most academic writers choose to keep "that" when it introduces a noun clause (Caplan, 2012). Leaving out "that" can cause the reader to misread (at first anyway) the subject of the dependent clause as being the object of the reporting verb (Jamieson, 2012).

For example, if readers see the sentence, "Smith (2015) reported more research was necessary (without 'that')," they may understand "more research" as the thing Smith reported and then have to backtrack and reread upon seeing "was necessary."

Any structure that leads to misinterpretation, even temporarily, can be an unwanted distraction from the writer's message.

In spoken English, however, "that" may be dropped in such sentences. Intonation patterns such as rising and falling pitch, give the listener clues that may not be present in writing.