Yuba College Writing & Language Development Center

# Coordination and Subordination

## Differences between Coordination & Subordination

To add variety to your sentence length and show relationships between ideas, you can combine sentences using coordination or subordination. Coordination joins two independent clauses (clauses that can stand alone); however, subordination joins an independent clause to a dependent clause (a clause that cannot stand alone). Coordination links independent ideas of equal importance, and subordination links a main idea to a supporting or subordinate (less important) idea.

## Coordination

Coordination is joining two independent clauses (complete sentences) using coordinating conjunctions. The conjunctions used for coordination are as follows:

- For
- And
- Nor
- But
- Or
- Yet
- So

They are easy to remember through the acronym **FANBOYS**.

### Formula:

Use a comma after the first independent clause and before the coordinating conjunction when joining two independent clauses.

Independent Clause 1 + [comma] + Coordinating Conjunction + Independent Clause 2

### Examples:

| Coordinating Conjunction | Sentences before Coordinating Conjunction | Sentence after Coordinating Conjunction |
|---|---|---|
| For | I drove to work carefully.<br>The road was wet from the rain. | I drove to work carefully**, for** the road was wet from the rain. |
| And | She joined the STEM club.<br>She plans to apply for an internship soon. | She joined the STEM club**, and** she plans to apply for an internship soon. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Nor | Students are not permitted to use their phones during the exam. They may not look at their textbooks. | Students are not permitted to use their phones during the exam**, nor** may they look at their textbooks. |
| But | He wanted to check out a textbook. The library did not have it. | He wanted to check out a textbook**, but** the library did not have it. |
| Or | You can register for the morning class. You can take the evening class. | You can register for the morning class**, or** you can take the evening class. |
| Yet | I studied hard for the quiz. I missed the extra credit question. | I studied hard for the quiz**, yet** I missed the extra credit question. |
| So | Our professor is ill. We do not have class today. | Our professor is ill**, so** we do not have class today. |

## Subordination

Subordination is joining an independent and dependent clause using subordinating conjunctions to create a complex sentence. The following subordinating conjunctions are commonly used:

- After
- Although
- As
- As if
- As though
- As soon as
- Because
- Before
- Even if
- Even though
- How
- If
- In order that
- In order to
- Provided that
- Since
- So that
- Than
- Though
- Unless
- Until
- What
- When
- Whenever
- Where
- Wherever
- Whereas
- Whether
- Which
- While
- Who
- Whoever
- Whom
- Whomever
- Whose

### Formula:

Use a comma after a subordinate clause if it comes at the beginning of a sentence. Do not use a comma if a subordinate clause follows the independent clause.

Independent clause + Subordinating Conjunction + Subordinate Clause

Or

Subordinate Clause + [comma] + Subordinating Conjunction + Independent Clause

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**Examples:**

| Subordinating Conjunction | Sentences before Subordinating Conjunction | Subordinate Clause *after* the Independent Clause |
|---|---|---|
| Until | I will wait inside the learning center.<br>You get here. | I will wait inside the learning center **until** you get here. |
| Since | He is currently in his master's program.<br>He graduated from UC Davis. | He is currently in his master's program **since** he graduated from UC Davis. |
| If | You will not receive credit.<br>You turn the assignment in past the grace period. | You will not receive credit **if** you turn the assignment in past the grace period. |
| Although | She registered for chemistry.<br>Science is not her strongest subject. | She registered for chemistry **although** science is not her strongest subject. |
| Because | He received a C on his paper.<br>He did not read the guidelines carefully. | He received a C on his paper **because** he did not read the guidelines carefully. |

**Examples:**

| Subordinating Conjunction | Sentences before Subordinating Conjunction | Subordinate Clause *before* the Independent Clause |
|---|---|---|
| Until | I will wait inside the learning center.<br>You get here. | **Until** you get here, I will wait inside the learning center. |
| Since | He is currently in his master's program.<br>He graduated from UC Davis. | **Since** he graduated from UC Davis, he is currently in his master's program. |
| If | You will not receive credit.<br>You turn the assignment in past the grace period. | **If** you turn the assignment in past the grace period, you will not receive credit. |
| Although | She registered for chemistry.<br>Science is not her strongest subject. | **Although** science is not her strongest subject, she registered for chemistry. |
| Because | He received a C on his paper.<br>He did not read the guidelines carefully. | **Because** he did not read the guidelines carefully, he received a C on his paper. |

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