

## Sentence Parts: Phrases and Clauses

### Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions, or **subordinators**, link ideas together in a sentence. Here are some common subordinators grouped by how they connect ideas:

Category	Subordinators
<b>Time</b>	After, as, as long as, as soon as, before, just as, now that, once, since, till, until, when, whenever, while
<b>Concession</b>	Although, even though, if, though, whereas, while
<b>Condition</b>	As long as, if, in case, inasmuch as, on the condition that, provided that, unless
<b>Cause</b>	As, as long as, because, inasmuch as, since
<b>Purpose</b>	In order that, lest, so, so that, that
<b>Comparison</b>	As, as if, as...as, just as, so... as, than
<b>Manner</b>	As, as if, as though
<b>Place</b>	Where, wherever

1. A clause is a subject and a verb with grammatical tense. **Subordinators** are used at the beginning of *subordinate clauses* (which are also called *dependent clauses*) to connect to the independent clause of a sentence. The subordinate clause always depends on the rest of the sentence; it cannot make sense alone. When the subordinate clause is at the beginning of a sentence, it typically will need a comma between the two clauses.

**If** our team wins this game, will we qualify for the playoffs?

**Because** I studied for only an hour, I did not pass the test.

2. If the subordinate clause is after the independent clause, you do not need a comma.

I went to the store **because** I needed to buy carrots.

I didn't call **since** I was only five minutes away.

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## Coordinating Conjunctions

1. **Coordinating conjunctions** are words that connect *two equal clauses, ideas, or objects*. Unlike subordinators, coordinating conjunctions do not make one part of the sentence depend on another part of the sentence. You can remember the seven coordinating conjunctions by using the acronym **FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so**.
2. When a coordinating conjunction connects two independent clauses, place a comma before the conjunction.

*I went to the store, **and** I bought carrots.*

*The carrots were tasty, **so** I decided to buy carrots again.*

3. When presenting a list—whether of individual words or of phrases—a comma and a coordinating conjunction are used before the last item in the list.

*I couldn't decide whether to buy *carrots, edamame, **or** a smoothie* for lunch.*

*I went to the store, bought carrots and celery, **and** ate them on the way home.*

*I did not remember that I had already bought carrots, that I cooked them in a soup, **and** that I still had some left.*

4. When the coordinating conjunction connects *only two* actions, objects, or clauses, you do not use a comma.

*I went to the store **and** bought carrots.*

*I bought *carrots **and** celery*.*

*I did not remember *that I had already bought carrots **and** that I still had some left*.*

## Relative Clauses

1. **Relative pronouns** are words that also introduce relative clauses (a type of subordinate clause). Unlike subordinators, which are followed by a subject and a verb, relative pronouns are followed directly by a verb. The most common relative pronouns are **that, which, and who**.
2. When a relative clause talks about extra, unnecessary information, you need to use a comma before and after the relative clause.

The Olympic National Park, **which** is very beautiful, is in Washington State.

3. When a relative clause identifies or provides necessary information about a person, place, or thing, do not use commas.

The woman **who** ran over our dog wants to apologize now.

## Prepositions and Prepositional Phrases

1. **Prepositions** are words that show relationships between nouns.

The pen is **on** the table.

My car is **in** the garage.

You should drive **around** the mountain.

2. A **prepositional phrase** is a group of words that **begin with a preposition** and **end with the nearest noun** after the preposition. No subjects can be in a prepositional phrase. If you place parentheses around a prepositional phrase, it can help isolate the most important parts of a sentence, the subject and verb.

A big troll lives (under the bridge).

(In my house) (on my table) (near the window) sits my plant.

3. When a prepositional phrase begins a sentence, place a comma after the end of the prepositional phrase.

*On the table,* you will find a pen.

4. However, if a prepositional phrase is anywhere else in the sentence, you do not need a comma.

You will find a pen *on the table*.