

FOUNDATIONAL GRAMMAR

LESSON NINE: CONJUNCTIONS (Subordinating)

Last week we learned about the first two kinds of conjunctions: words that join other words or groups of words together. We learned about Coordinating and Correlative conjunctions. These two kinds, while they look different, do the same job: joining words or groups of words of equal rank. Now, it is time to look at the kind of conjunction that joins groups of words that are of UNEQUAL rank! We refer, of course, to dependent clauses that we want to join to independent clauses. We saw in the last class that you use one of the Coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS) to join independent clauses together, because they are of equal rank (they're both independent.)

Subordinating Conjunctions join independent clauses to dependent or subordinate clauses. A clause is a part of a sentence: a group of words with a subject and a verb. An independent clause is a part that makes sense on its own. A dependent clause does not make sense on its own: it is a cliffhanger. Subordinating conjunctions are used to begin the subordinate/dependent clause: they are what make the clause a cliffhanger. When we call the clause a cliffhanger, we do not mean it is vague or indefinite: "He is" is an incredibly vague thought, but a complete thought it remains nevertheless! The only time we can call a clause a "cliffhanger" in the sense that it is dependent is when it begins with one of these specific cliffhanger words: the Subordinating Conjunctions. Examples of these "cliffhanger" or dependent clauses:

SINCE it is raining.....

ALTHOUGH you seem lovely....

WHENEVER I see a black cat.....

AFTER the sun went down....

IF you slam that door....

It is the word at the beginning of the clause that makes the rest of the thought "dependent". "It is raining" is not incomplete. "SINCE it is raining..." demands to be filled out. We need closure! It needs a strong brave *independent* clause to hang onto, and resolve the suspense of the cliffhanger!

A subordinate clause has a subject and a verb usually, but does not make sense on its own logically.

Commonly used Subordinating conjunctions:

After	Before	Provided	Unless	If	Although
How	Since	Until	As	Than	When
As much as	Inasmuch as	That	Where	Because	In order that
Though	While	Even though	Whereas	However	Whether
Which	Whenever	So that			

Note: some of these words may be used as prepositions: *after, before, since, until*; others may be used as adverbs: *how, when, where*. *That* is often used as a pronoun. If we remember the definition of the preposition, and the definition of the adverb, then this need not trouble us at all. Prepositions, you will recall, join **JUST** a noun or pronoun to the sentence. Adverbs do not join at all, but simply **DESCRIBE** the action!

“After” in a sentence **MUST** be a preposition if it’s followed by **JUST** a noun or pronoun.

“I will walk (AFTER dinner.)

“After” in a sentence **MUST** be an adverb if it is joining nothing at all, but simply sitting there, saying **WHEN** the action is happening.

“I will walk after!”

“After” in a sentence **MUST** be a conjunction if it is joining (i.e., is followed by) a whole clause with a subject and verb.

“I will walk after *I eat my dinner!*”

Why would you use them?

Cause / Effect:	because, since, so that
Comparison / Contrast:	although, even though, though, whereas, while
Place & Manner:	how, however, where, wherever
Possibility / Conditions:	if, whether, unless
Relation:	that, which, who
Time:	after, as, before, since, when, whenever, while, until

In the following sentences, the subordinate clauses are italicized, and the subordinating conjunctions are in bold.

Eg:

I want you to come with me, **even though** *you drive me insane*.

This computer is even better **than** *we had anticipated*.

The sun had already set **when** *we reached Banff National Park*.

Sometimes the subordinating conjunction does not always come **between** the sentence parts that it joins. If the subordinated clause comes first in a sentence, the subordinating conjunction may come at the beginning of the sentence.

Eg:

Because *she had a headache*, she didn't go to the ball.

If *the price is right*, I will buy your bicycle.

Since *you can't help me*, I will do it myself.

Provided *you are on time*, you can come with me to the store.

Give some examples of subordinating conjunctions used in the middle of the sentence.

Give some examples of subordinating conjunctions used at the beginning of the sentence.