

# Conjunctions and paired conjunctions

## Introduction



**As** I have a lot of work to do before the summer holidays, I don't have time to attend the seminar and **neither** do my colleagues.

## Definition

These words have different meanings and uses but they can all be used as **conjunctions**.

## Uses

| Conjunction    | Use  | Examples  |
|----------------|--|---|
| as, since, for | To mean 'because'  | We decided to work late <b>as</b> we're so busy at the moment.<br><br>I'll go to the seminar as well <b>since</b> you're going.<br><br>She was very excited, <b>for</b> this was the first day of her holiday. [see note below] |
| yet            | To mean 'but' - often to emphasise something that's surprising | I was really tired, <b>yet</b> I managed to stay awake until the end of the film.   |
| nor, neither   | To connect two negative ideas                                  | I'm not happy about it and <b>neither/nor</b> is Sébastien.   |

|    |  |   |
|----|--|---|
| so | To connect two positive ideas<br>[See 'so' in <b>and</b> , <b>but</b> , <b>or</b> , <b>so</b> , <b>because</b> rule] | I'm very happy about it and <b>so</b> is Sébastien. |
|----|--|---|

## Since, as, for

### Note that

1. **Since** and **as** have the same meaning as **because** but they are used in slightly different ways. **Because** is used when a reason is a more important or necessary part of a sentence in order to answer the question 'why?' The 'because' clause usually comes second:

I chose to live in the south of England **because** I wanted to be near my parents.

With **since** and **as**, the reason is more evident, less important or already known. The **since** or **as** clause is more likely to be placed at the beginning of a sentence:

**As** we're so busy at the moment, we've decided to work late this week.

**Since** it's such a nice day, shall we go out?

2. **For** is much less common in conversation - it is considered old-fashioned - but we find it in literature:

He felt ashamed, **for** he knew it was all his fault.

## Yet

### Note that

1. In everyday conversation, we are more likely to use common words and expressions with a similar meaning such as '**but**'.
2. We sometimes use **yet** in short phrases with two adjectives:

This device is simple **yet** effective.

Our boss is strict **yet** fair.

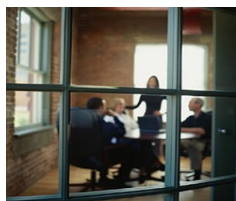
## Neither, nor, so

**Note that** these are also often used as responses to say that a situation is the same as that of another person. Here are some examples:

| 'to be'  | Auxiliary verbs  | Other verbs   |
|--|--|---|
| "I'm hungry."<br>"So am I." ["Me too."]  | "Carine should be on the team."<br>"So should Armelle."                            | "I love chocolate."<br>"So do I." ["Me too."]                               |
| "Philippe was late."<br>"So was Bertrand."   | "I've read this book."<br>"So have I." ["Me too."]                                 | "David went to the exhibition."<br>"So did Keira."                          |
| "I'm not sure."<br>"Neither/nor am I."<br>["Me neither."/"Nor me."]                                | "I can't help her with that."<br>"Neither/nor can I."<br>["Me neither."/"Nor me."] | "He doesn't want to go out to lunch."<br>"Neither/nor do we."               |
| "I wasn't working on that project last year."<br>"Neither/nor was I."<br>["Me neither."/"Nor me."] | "This computer mustn't be used today."<br>"Neither/nor must this one."             | "I don't understand this."<br>"Neither/nor do I." ["Me neither."/"Nor me."] |

**Note that** we can say "Me too" when agreeing with a positive statement. We can also say "Me neither" or "Nor me" when agreeing with a negative statement.

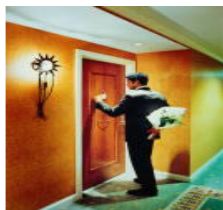
## Examples



**As** we all have other work to do, let's stop now and carry on tomorrow.



**Since** I live in a city, I'm used to a lot of traffic and noise.



He was nervous **yet** excited.



I'm afraid there's no more pork. **Neither** do we have fish on the menu today.



Arnaud made a speech at the wedding and **so** did his father.

## Paired conjunctions



This meal is **not only** tasty **but also** nutritious.

We use them to connect two ideas including nouns, verbs, adjectives or phrases.  
Examples:

|                   |                |           |            |                |                           |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------|------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| I invited         | <b>both</b>    | Brenda    | <b>and</b> | Angela         | to the seminar.           |
|                   | <b>Both</b>    | Brenda    | <b>and</b> | Angela         | are going to the seminar. |
| It's available in | <b>either</b>  | red       | <b>or</b>  | blue.          |                           |
| I don't know      | <b>whether</b> | to fix it | <b>or</b>  | buy a new one. |                           |

| Conjunctions      | Use                                    | Examples  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| <b>both...and</b> | To emphasise that there are two things | <p><b>Both</b> a knowledge of languages <b>and</b> IT skills are necessary for this job.</p> <p>I like <b>both</b> red <b>and</b> white wine - I don't have a preference.</p> |

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| <b>either...or</b>         | <p>To talk about a possible consequence</p> <p>To talk about two alternatives or possibilities.</p>   | <p><b>Either</b> we make a decision today <b>or</b> we risk losing the contract.</p> <p>We can have the meeting <b>either</b> tomorrow <b>or</b> Friday.</p>                                   |
| <b>neither...nor</b>       | To emphasise two things in a negative sentence  | <p>I like <b>neither</b> tea <b>nor</b> coffee - I prefer cold drinks.</p> <p><b>Neither</b> my brother <b>nor</b> my sister live in England - they both moved to the US after university.</p> |
| <b>not...but</b>           | <p>To emphasise a contrast between two things - sometimes in order to make a correction</p> <p><b>Note that</b> this structure is most often used with the verb 'to be'</p> | <p>It wasn't Anne who wanted to speak to you <b>but</b> Jodi.</p> <p>It <b>isn't</b> blue pens that we need <b>but</b> red.</p>  |
| <b>not only...but also</b> | To emphasise that there are two things - it can express surprise or annoyance   | <p><b>Not only</b> is he good-looking <b>but</b> he can <b>also</b> cook!</p> <p>It's <b>not only</b> cheap <b>but also</b> practical.</p>   |
| <b>whether...or</b>        | <p>To talk about two alternatives</p> <p><b>Note that</b> these two words can be placed separately or together</p>  | <p>He isn't sure <b>whether</b> it's better to fly <b>or</b> go by train.</p> <p><b>Whether</b> <b>or</b> not you agree, we're going to sign the contract.</p>                                 |

### Subject-verb agreement

With **either...or** and **neither...nor**, the choice of verb depends on whether the first or second person or thing mentioned is singular or plural.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| When the second noun is singular, a singular verb is preferred but plural verbs are acceptable in conversation. | <b>Either</b> the sales manager <b>or</b> the director <u>is</u> going to attend the conference. |
|---|--|

|  |   |
|--|---|
| When the second noun is plural, use a plural verb.   | <b>Neither</b> the director <b>nor</b> the sales managers <u>are</u> going to attend the conference.  |
| When the second noun is singular but the first is plural, you can use a singular or plural verb. | <b>Either</b> the sales managers <b>or</b> the director <u>is/are</u> going to attend the conference. |

**Note that** when **either** is not at the beginning of a sentence or clause, we can omit it:

It's available in (**either**) red **or** blue.

We can have the meeting (**either**) tomorrow **or** Friday.

**Not only...but also**

**Note that**

1. We can separate **but** and **also** - they don't have to be together in the sentence:

She's **not only** creative **but also** good at solving problems.

Or

She's not only creative **but** she's **also** good at solving problems.

2. We often invert the **not only** clause:

**Not only** is she creative **but** she's **also** good at solving problems.

3. We can use 'too' or 'as well' instead of **also**. These are placed at the end of a sentence:

She's **not only** creative **but** good at solving problems too/as well.

'Whether' has a similar meaning to 'if' and can sometimes be used as an alternative to 'if' when we talk about two possibilities:

I'm wondering if/**whether** we should tell him (**or** not).

It depends if/**whether** he'll be unhappy about it (**or** not).

I don't know if/**whether** recruiting more staff is a good idea **or** not.

He can't remember if/**whether** Aurélie **or** Olivier is in charge of the account.

**Whether** is preferred to 'if':

- a) before an infinitive:

I don't know **whether to do** this now **or** later. ✓

I don't know if to do this now or later. ✗

Have you decided **whether or not to apply** for the job? ✓

Have you decided if to apply for this job? ✗

b) after prepositions such as 'about' or expressions with a similar meaning:

There was a lot of disagreement **about whether** we should re-locate **or** not.

It was **a question of whether (or not)** to choose the cheapest contractor.

c) at the beginning of a sentence:

**Whether** we eat in **or** go to a restaurant doesn't matter to me - you can choose.

d) directly before 'or not':

Have you decided **whether or not** you're coming with us?

Have you decided **if/whether** you're coming with us **or not**?

## Examples



We've got **both** meat **and** veggie burgers - which would you like?



We can **either** carry on for an hour **or** stop now and have lunch.



This job is **neither** challenging **nor** fun.



**Not** just one **but** all four of the children raised their hands.



We're **not only** going to the mountains **but also** the sea.



I don't know **whether** to have chocolate **or** vanilla.



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