

# Conjunctions, linking words and expressions

## Introduction



**Now that** it's summer, we can swim every day.

## Construction

These are usually placed at the beginning of a sentence or in the middle of a sentence to introduce a clause. For example:

**In order to** increase productivity, we're opening a new plant.  
We're opening a new plant **in order to** increase productivity.

**Instead of** employing more people, we should work longer hours for a few weeks.  
We should work longer hours for a few weeks **instead of** employing more people.

Depending on the expression, it can be followed by, for example, a noun or gerund, a bare infinitive or a subject and verb.

Conjunction	Use	Examples
thanks to owing to due to	To mean 'because of'	<p><b>Thanks to</b> all your hard work, we won the contract.</p> <p>All flights have been cancelled, <b>owing to</b> adverse weather conditions.</p> <p><b>Due to</b> the delay with the parts, we can't complete the order.</p>

<b>instead of rather than</b>	<b>To talk about alternatives</b>	<b>Can we have the meeting on Thursday <b>instead of</b> Tuesday?</b>  <b>Instead of</b> waiting until next month as planned, I think we should do it as soon as possible.  I think we should do it as soon as possible <b>rather than</b> wait until next month as planned.
<b>despite in spite of</b>	<b>To mean 'not affected, influenced or prevented by'</b>	I managed to get there on time, <b>despite</b> the traffic.  <b>In spite of</b> all the warnings, he went into the dangerous part of the town.
<b>although</b>	<b>To mean 'but' or 'despite'</b>	<b>Although</b> I had some doubts, I decided to apply for the job.  I've booked a city centre hotel for the conference; <b>although</b> I'm not sure it's the best place.
<b>even though</b>	<b>To mean 'although'</b>  <b>Note that</b> it is a little more emphatic - there is a bigger contrast between two ideas	<b>Even though</b> it was raining, we decided to play tennis.  He's been very successful in the job, <b>even though</b> he didn't have much previous experience.
<b>even if</b>	<b>To indicate that a situation or result is the same - no matter what</b>	<b>Even if</b> my boss offers me more money, I'm still going to look for another job - I really don't want to work for her any more.  I'll never be able to speak Japanese fluently, <b>even if</b> I live to be 100!

<p><b>in order to with a view to so that</b></p> <p><b>Note that</b> 'with a view to' is quite formal</p>	<p>To mean 'with the aim or purpose of doing something'</p>	<p><b>In order to</b> clarify the situation, the manager is going to talk to us all tomorrow.</p> <p>We're taking on more staff <b>with a view to</b> relieving the pressure on existing employees.</p> <p>I've asked Bill to come to the meeting <b>so that</b> he can explain the new strategy.</p>
<p><b>when once as soon as now (that) before/after</b></p>	<p>As time markers</p>	<p><b>When</b> you see her, please ask her to call me.</p> <p>I'll help you <b>once</b> I've finished.</p> <p>Can you send her up <b>as soon as</b> she arrives?</p> <p><b>Now that</b> everyone's here, let's begin.</p> <p>Do we need to finish this <b>before</b> we go home?</p> <p><b>After</b> we've all had lunch, let's look at this again.</p>
<p><b>whenever</b></p>	<p>To mean 'at whatever time - it doesn't matter when' or 'every time'</p>	<p>Call me <b>whenever</b> you want to - I'll be happy to help.</p> <p><b>Whenever</b> we go to Lyon, we always stay in the same hotel.</p>
<p><b>in the event of</b></p>	<p>To mean 'if something happens'</p>	<p><b>In the event of</b> a fire, use the stairs and not the lift.</p> <p>I have to take over <b>in the event of</b> the manager's absence.</p>
<p><b>(just) in case</b></p>	<p>When talking about what we do if something happens</p> <p><b>Note that</b> we sometimes add 'just' when we doubt that something will be required</p>	<p><b>In case</b> you change your mind, here's my phone number.</p> <p>It's sunny now but I'll take an umbrella <b>just in case</b> it rains.</p>

<b>provided (that) providing</b>	<b>To mean 'if' or 'on condition that'</b>	<b>Provided that</b> you fulfil all the criteria, you'll be shortlisted for the job.  We can have the barbecue on Sunday, <b>providing</b> it doesn't rain.
<b>unless</b>	<b>To mean 'if + not'</b>	<b>Unless</b> you hear from me, I'll see you next week as planned. [if you don't hear from me]  We can have the barbecue on Sunday, <b>unless</b> it rains. [if it doesn't rain]

## Thanks to, owing to, due to

**Owing to** and **due to** are more formal and less conversational than 'because of'.

**Thanks to** is used to talk about the reason for a positive result:

I've learned a lot in this job, **thanks to** my colleagues.  
I'm better at speaking English now, **thanks to** spending so much time in London.

It is often used with 'it' + 'be':

It's **thanks to** you and your support that I got this job.

Or in a sarcastic way to blame someone or something:

We missed the train **thanks to** your driving!  
**Thanks to** the weather, we had to postpone the barbecue again!

## 'Once' or 'when'?

Sometimes, **once** is used in the same way as **when**:

I'll help you **once/when** I've finished.  
**Once/when** the contract was signed, we had to employ three more specialists.

But it is not interchangeable with **when** - we only use **once** when there is a suggestion of

**as soon as** or 'from a certain moment'.

I was happy **when** I was young. ✓

I was happy once I was young. ✗

## When

**When** has some other, more specific uses: `<?xml:namespace prefix = "o" ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" />`

Use	Examples
To mean 'just at that moment' - there is a suggestion of suddenness	I was just getting ready to leave the office <b>when</b> the phone rang.
To mean 'considering that'	There's no point writing a letter <b>when</b> it's so much quicker to email.
To mean 'whereas'	I've got to work late tonight to finish this <b>when</b> I had plenty of time to do it last week.

## Word order

The conjunctions **and**, **but**, **or**, **because** and **so** are usually placed in the middle of a sentence but can also be used to begin a sentence, especially in informal writing:

It's very quiet in the office at the moment **because** so many people are on holiday.  
**Because** so many people are on holiday, it's very quiet in the office at the moment.

With **and**, **but**, **or** and **so**, there is a sense of a pause before emphasising something:

We need to find new premises. **And** we need to employ two new managers!  
 It's a serious problem. **But**, don't worry - I think I have a solution.  
 We could invite everyone to the meeting. **Or** maybe we should limit it to team leaders.  
 It's getting nearer to the deadline. **So**, let's work hard to get it finished.

## Examples



The meeting went on for four hours, **thanks to** Julia and all her questions!



**Once** I'd found somewhere to live in the city, I was able to start looking for a job.



My boss wants me to do all these routine tasks **when** I could be doing something much more useful.

## Connectors



The situation is very serious. The client is putting us under pressure to finish sooner than agreed. **Furthermore**, the project is already over budget.

These connectors form a link between ideas in two sentences:

We did extremely well last year. **However**, there is still a lot of work to be done.

They are different from conjunctions which link two parts of one sentence:

We did extremely well last year **but** there's still a lot of work to be done.

They are usually placed at the beginning of a sentence followed by a comma but they can also go in the middle or at the end of the second sentence.

We did extremely well last year. There is, **however**, still a lot of work to be done.  
 We did extremely well last year. There is still a lot of work to be done, **however**.

In this way, the connector is like a **non-defining relative clause** - if we remove it, the sentence still has a clear meaning.

For these reasons, the following structures are incorrect:

We did extremely well last year however there is still a lot of work to be done. ❌  
 We did extremely well last year, however there is still a lot of work to be done. ❌

## Uses

In conversation and written texts, they help us understand a sequence of ideas. Here are some common examples.

**Note that** the expressions which are grouped together are not all synonymous and interchangeable. For exact meanings of these and the following examples, refer to a good dictionary.

Connector	Use	Examples
Therefore	To mean 'so' or 'for that reason'	Both companies are on holiday in August. <b>Therefore</b> , I suggest postponing the meeting until September.
However	To mean 'but' or 'despite this'	We've lost two big clients recently. <b>However</b> , I'm sure that we can replace them.
Nevertheless Nonetheless Even so	To mean 'despite something previously mentioned'	There have been some delays. We intend, <b>nevertheless</b> , to meet the deadline.  I know it's difficult to find the right person for this job. <b>Even so</b> , I think we should keep trying.
Furthermore What is more Moreover	To add similar information, maybe something that is more important	Our profits have increased by 15% this year. <b>Moreover</b> , our plans for expanding into Asia are going well.

<b>Conversely</b> <b>On the other hand</b> <b>In contrast</b>	<b>To introduce an opposite idea</b>	<b>Most Americans are uncomfortable with long periods of silence. <b>Conversely</b>, the Japanese like to think before replying.</b>
<b>Consequently</b>	<b>To mean 'as a result'</b>	<b>It is difficult for young people to get a mortgage nowadays. <b>Consequently</b>, they are living at home with their parents for longer.</b>
<b>Meanwhile</b>	<b>To mean 'until a certain time' or 'while something else is happening'</b>	<b>We will have to wait for the results of the initial investigation. <b>Meanwhile</b>, we need to plan the next stage.</b>  <b>Charles is developing new contacts in Asia. <b>Meanwhile</b>, the rest of the team is focusing on Eastern Europe.</b>

Here are some more examples:

<b>Equally</b> <b>For example</b> <b>For instance</b> <b>As a result</b> <b>Likewise</b> <b>In the same way</b>	<b>Similarly</b> <b>If not</b> <b>If so</b> <b>Otherwise</b> <b>That is (to say)</b> <b>Alternatively</b>	<b>In this case</b> <b>In particular</b> <b>In other words</b> <b>In addition</b> <b>As a result</b>
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The word 'however' is also an adverb with a completely different meaning - 'by whatever means' or 'it doesn't matter to what degree'.

**Note that** this word doesn't use the same construction as the conjunction and so it can be found at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence without commas. For example:

**However you present your argument, I don't think they'll agree with you.**  
**I want to be the manager of this department however long it takes.**  
**He just can't play the piano however hard he tries.**

## Formal and informal

**Many of these words and expressions are used mostly in writing or in very formal**

speaking. There is usually an equivalent word or expression that can be used in conversation. For example:

Our sales figures have increased sharply in the Middle East. **However**, we are failing to meet our targets in Europe. [formal]

We're doing really well in the Middle East at the moment **but** we're not meeting our targets in Europe. [conversational]

Formal	Conversational
therefore	so
furthermore/moreover	as well/also/too
conversely	on the other hand
similarly	in the same way

## Examples



Lille is a lovely city with plenty to do. **What's more**, it's within easy reach of London by Eurostar.



These beers are extremely pleasing to the palate. **In other words**, they're delicious!



I love everything about my new office. The colour scheme, **in particular**, is great.



There are lots of things you can do to improve your English. Watching films, **for example**, is a good way of increasing your vocabulary.



I hope I'm better by Monday. **If not**, I'll miss the presentation.

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