

# Conjunctions, linking words and expressions

## 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 and expressions have different meanings and uses but they can all be used as conjunctions.

## 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.

## Uses

Here are some examples:

Conjunction	Use	Examples
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<b>as, since, for</b>	<b>To mean 'because'</b>	<p>We decided to work late <b>as</b> we're so busy at the moment.</p> <p>I'll go to the seminar as well <b>since</b> you're going.</p> <p>She was very excited, <b>for</b> this was the first day of her holiday. [see note below]</p>
<b>yet</b>	<b>To mean 'but' - often to emphasise something that's surprising</b>	<p>I was really tired, <b>yet</b> I managed to stay awake until the end of the film.</p>
<b>nor, neither</b>	<b>To connect two negative ideas</b>	<p>I'm not happy about it and <b>neither/nor</b> is Sébastien.</p>
<b>so</b>	<b>To connect two positive ideas [See 'so' in <b>and, but, or, so, because</b> rule]</b>	<p>I'm very happy about it and <b>so</b> is Sébastien.</p>
<b>thanks to owing to due to</b>	<b>To mean 'because of'</b>	<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>	<p>Can we have the meeting on Thursday <b>instead of</b> Tuesday?</p> <p><b>Instead of</b> waiting until next month as planned, I think we should do it as soon as possible.</p> <p>I think we should do it as soon as possible <b>rather than</b> wait until next month as planned.</p>

<p><b>despite in spite of</b></p>	<p>To mean 'not affected, influenced or prevented by'</p>	<p>I managed to get there on time, <b>despite</b> the traffic.</p> <p><b>In spite of</b> all the warnings, he went into the dangerous part of the town.</p>
<p><b>although</b></p>	<p>To mean 'but' or 'despite'</p>	<p><b>Although</b> I had some doubts, I decided to apply for the job.</p> <p>I've booked a city centre hotel for the conference, <b>although</b> I'm not sure it's the best place.</p>
<p><b>even though</b></p>	<p>To mean 'although'</p> <p><b>Note that</b> it is a little more emphatic - there is a bigger contrast between two ideas</p>	<p><b>Even though</b> it was raining, we decided to play tennis.</p> <p>He's been very successful in the job, <b>even though</b> he didn't have much previous experience.</p>
<p><b>even if</b></p>	<p>To indicate that a situation or result is the same - no matter what</p>	<p><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.</p> <p>I'll never be able to speak Japanese fluently, <b>even if</b> I live to be 100!</p>
<p><b>albeit</b></p>	<p>To mean 'although'</p>	<p>He's a good person to work for, <b>albeit</b> a bit strict.</p> <p>We're making some progress, <b>albeit</b> rather slowly.<b>evening</b> was very <b>pleasant</b>, <b>albeit</b> a little <b>quiet</b>.</p> <p>He <b>tried</b>, <b>albeit</b> without <b>success</b>.</p> <p>The <b>evening</b> was very <b>pleasant</b>, <b>albeit</b> a little <b>quiet</b>.</p> <p>He <b>tried</b>, <b>albeit</b> without <b>success</b>.</p>
<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's 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>when once as soon as now (that) before/after</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>whenever</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>in the event of</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>(just) in case</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>
<p>lest</p>	<p>Related to the possibility of something negative happening</p> <p><b>Note that</b> this is a formal word.</p>	<p>They decided not to make a complaint, <b>lest</b> they lose the contract.</p> <p>I'm worried about how to tell them, <b>lest</b> they misunderstand.</p>

provided (that) providing	To mean 'if' or 'on condition that'	<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.
assuming	To indicate a premise on which a statement can be made	<b>Assuming</b> we continue to be successful in Asia, how many new people do you think we'll need to recruit?
unless	To mean 'if + not'	<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]

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

## 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.

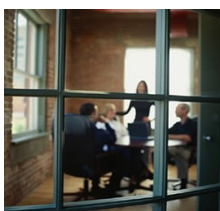
I was happy **once** I was young.

## When

'When' has some other, more specific uses:

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.

## 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.



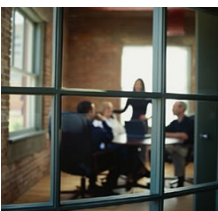
He was nervous **yet** excited.



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.



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. ❌



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