

Coordinating Conjunctions

A conjunction is the glue that holds words, phrases and clauses (both dependent and independent) together. A coordinating conjunction is a conjunction that connects words, phrases, and clauses that are coordinate, or equal to each other. There are seven coordinating conjunctions: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. They can be remembered using the acronym FANBOYS. Below is a chart explaining the differences between the usages of these conjunctions.

COORDINATING CONJUNCTION (FANBOYS)	PURPOSE	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
For	To show reason	<i>She bought a mango, for she was hungry.</i>
And	To add information	<i>Desiree lives in Alaska, and she is a park ranger at the National Forest there.</i>
Nor	To add negative information	<i>He does not enjoy eating vegetables, nor does he enjoy eating fruit.</i>
But	To show contrast	<i>The class was difficult, but everyone ended up receiving a passing grade.</i>
Or	To give a choice	<i>We can see a horror movie, or we can see an action movie.</i>
Yet	To show concession or to contrast	<i>The test was difficult, yet everyone received higher than a "C" grade.</i>
So	To show result	<i>I was broke all week, so I had to eat Top Ramen for every meal.</i>

FOR – The Fancy Way to Say “Because”

"For" is like that quiet kid in class who doesn't say much but has important things to add when given the chance. It explains **why** something happened, just like "because." The only difference? It sounds a little more formal.

Example:

- I didn't eat dessert, **for** I was already full.
- She grabbed an umbrella, **for** the sky was turning dark.

AND – The Classic Connector

This typical coordinating conjunction is easy—it adds things together. But be careful! Some students treat "and" like it's the only conjunction in existence, creating never-ending sentences that should have been two (or three). This is one of the most common mistakes that you'll see once you start to encourage your students to join their independent clauses together, but once they have a better understanding of the specific purpose of all the FANBOYS conjunctions, you'll start to see a lot more variety in your students' sentences.

Example:

- We went to the zoo, **and** we saw the lions.
- She loves reading, **and** she writes her own stories.

NOR – The Drama Queen of the Group

"Nor" is fancy, dramatic and always paired with a negative statement. It's usually best friends with "neither" and is great for making your students sound extra sophisticated (or like they're in a Victorian novel).

Example:

- He neither called **nor** texted me back.
- She didn't like spinach, **nor** did she enjoy broccoli.

BUT – The Great Contradictor

"But" is where the fun begins. It signals contrast, disagreement or a twist in the sentence. It's the equivalent of someone saying, "Hold up, there's more to the story."

Example:

- I wanted to go outside, **but** it started raining.
- She is very talented, **but** she lacks confidence.

OR – The Decision Maker

"Or" is the conjunction of choices. It's the one you use when you're debating between pizza or tacos (the eternal struggle). It helps students express decisions and alternatives.

Example:

- Do you want to watch a movie, **or** would you rather play a game?
- We can go to the beach, **or** we can stay home and relax.

YET – The Unexpected Twist

"Yet" is a lot like "but," but with a little extra surprise. It signals that something **unexpected** happened, as in "you'd think it would be one way, but it's actually another."

Example:

- The cake looked awful, **yet** it tasted amazing.
- He was tired, **yet** he kept running.

SO – The Cause-and-Effect Expert

"So" is all about results. One thing happens, which **so** something else happens. It's the reason kids say things like, "I forgot my homework, **so** my teacher got mad."

Example:

- It was raining, **so** we stayed inside.
- She studied hard, **so** she passed the test.

EXERCISE : Choose the best answer to complete each sentence.

1. Would you rather have cheese _____ bologna on your sandwich?

1. For
2. Nor
3. Or
4. So

Answer: 3. Would you rather have cheese *or* bologna on your sandwich?

2. His two favorite sports are football _____ tennis.

1. Or
2. And
3. Nor
4. For

Answer: 2. His two favorite sports are football *and* tennis.

3. I wanted to go to the beach, _____ Mary refused.

1. But
2. Or
3. So
4. For

Answer: 1. I wanted to go to the beach, *but* Mary refused.

4. I am allergic to cats, _____ I have three of them.

1. Or
2. For
3. Yet
4. So

Answer: 3. I am allergic to cats, *yet* I have three of them.

5. I am a vegetarian, _____ I don't eat any meat.

1. So
2. Yet
3. Nor
4. But

Answer: 1. I am a vegetarian, *so* I don't eat any meat.