



# Chapter 16

## Coordinating Conjunctions

### CHAPTER SUMMARY

**OBJECTIVE:** This chapter gives students more choices for expressing related ideas. They will learn how English connects pieces of information that are in a relationship of equality.

**APPROACH:** Essentially, the chapter deals with the concept of parallelism. Two or more similar pieces of information should be expressed in similar grammatical forms, according to the preferred style of written English. The chapter introduces the use of coordinating conjunctions and related rules for punctuation.

**TERMINOLOGY:** A “conjunction” is a function word that serves as a connector or a linking word to join words, phrases, or clauses. This chapter deals with coordinating conjunctions, words that are used to create compound structures (e.g., compound subjects, compound verbs, compound sentences). In this text, correlative conjunctions (for example, *both . . . and*) are called “paired conjunctions.” Subordinating conjunctions (e.g., *when, because, if*) are used to create complex sentences and are dealt with in the following chapter.

**CHART 16-1.** Parallel Structure. Page 352  
Time: 15–25 minutes

Using parallel structure is an economical way to include several pieces of information in a single phrase or clause. The ability to use parallel structure is highly valued in spoken and written English because conciseness is a cultural value in English-speaking countries. Other cultures may have other values with regard to the expression of ideas in speaking and writing.

Problems with parallel structure are common in student writing.

To understand parallel structure, learners need to understand the idea of ellipsis: that certain words have been omitted from a sentence. The sentence can be understood without them because the omitted words are repetitive. English rhetoric does not value repetitiveness.

Wordy and repetitive: *Steve is coming to dinner and his friend is coming to dinner.*

In ellipsis, the repeated words (*be + coming to dinner*) are omitted and the verb is made to agree with the compound subject: *Steve and his friend are coming to dinner.*

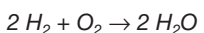
- Write the chart title on the board.
- Introduce the concept of parallel structure by explaining that the English language has a stylistic preference for concise expression whenever possible.
- Next, write some intentionally repetitive sentences on the board, such as:

*The man is wearing a hat and the man is wearing a coat.  
The woman is wearing her hat and the woman is holding her coat.*

- Ask a volunteer to go to the board and cross out any words that can be omitted without changing the meaning of the sentence. The improved sentences should look like this:

*The man is wearing a hat and ~~the man is wearing~~ a coat.  
The woman is wearing her hat and ~~the woman is holding~~ her coat.*

- Explain to students that this concise approach is the grammatical source of the parallel structure they will now learn.
- A similar process that many students learned in school is balancing the equations that describe chemical reactions. Even if you can't remember how to balance an equation yourself, your students are likely to be familiar with the concept. It may help to write the following visual on the board:



- Explain that the task of creating parallel structure is similar to balancing an equation. Students using parallel structure need to account for each necessary word on either side of the conjunction.
- Write the following example on the board, and ask students to identify what seems unbalanced. You may need to read the sentence aloud so students can hear the error.

*Michael likes to eat pizza and drinking.*

- Students should be able to identify that *and drinking* sounds unbalanced and doesn't match *eat pizza*.

*Michael likes to eat pizza and ~~drinking~~.*

- Rewrite the above sentence in parallel structure by identifying the elements of parallel structure, as in the example below:

*infinitive + object                  infinitive + object  
Michael likes to eat    pizza and (to) drink    soda.*

- Go over the chart with students.

**EXERCISE 2.** Looking at grammar.  
Page 352  
Time: 10 minutes

At this early stage in recognition and production of the target material, it helps to be explicit when correcting students. For example, in item 1, if a student had chosen *C. kindness* as a possible answer, you should say:

*Answer C. isn't possible because "friendly" is an adjective, and so we need another adjective, not a noun.*

You may even want to write some simple equations on the board, such as:

*noun + conjunction + noun*

*adjective + conjunction + adjective*

*verb + conjunction + verb*

- Remind students that their answers need to be the same part of speech as the word(s) to the left of the conjunction.
- Allow students time to complete the items on their own, and then review as a class.

**CHART 16-2.** Parallel Structure: Using Commas. Page 354  
Time: 10 minutes

In a series, the last item is preceded by a conjunction (usually *and* or *or*). Many people place a comma before that conjunction (e.g., *an apple, a banana, and a pear*), but the last comma is a matter of choice. This final comma is sometimes called an "Oxford comma," or "serial comma," and grammar books and style guides do not agree on whether that comma is required. This text uses the final comma so that students can see more clearly each element of a serial parallel structure. In addition, spoken English patterns usually have a pause before the conjunction in this instance, and the comma reflects the pause.

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Explain to students that certain uses of commas are grammatically required and that other uses are stylistic choices.
- Using your students' names and experiences, write a sentence on the board that uses *and* to connect two parts of a parallel structure. For example:  
*Miguel and Kwong Min were late for class.*
- Explain that if you add a third student, you would clearly separate all three by using commas.  
*Miguel, Kwong Min, and Viktor were late for class.*
- Tell students that the second comma in the example is not required, but it does reflect the necessary pause in the sentence. Say the sentence again, and exaggerate the pause so that students can hear it.

**EXERCISE 5.** Listening and punctuation.  
Page 354  
Time: 5–10 minutes

It is helpful to repeatedly remind students that grammatical and stylistic conventions (such as the use of the Oxford comma) are meaningful rather than arbitrary. The Oxford comma appropriately expresses the pause a speaker naturally includes before the final item in a series. Many students believe English punctuation practices are arbitrary, and thus it is up to teachers to emphasize the ways in which appropriate punctuation both clarifies and conveys meaning.

- Explain to students that they need to develop the ability to hear where commas and other punctuation marks belong, and that this exercise will help them do so.
- Play the audio through while students add commas as needed.
- To practice the pacing and appropriate pauses when listing elements of a series, ask students to take turns reading the items aloud.
- Ask students to paraphrase what is meant in item 10. They may want to discuss it briefly, and they may need you to expand on the irony of Twain's words.

**Optional Vocabulary**

snapped                      bigotry  
suspense                     narrow-mindedness  
prejudice

**EXERCISE 6.** Looking at grammar.  
Page 354  
Time: 10–15 minutes

- Ask students to explain the grammatical functions of the parallel words. For example, in item 1 the parallel words are both nouns.
- The class discussion may lead to a review of basic terminology of parts of speech (noun, verb, adjective, preposition, etc.) and how to recognize the various forms.
- Ask individual students to write their parallel sentences on the board for review. The class can then see whether all unnecessary words have been removed and check for correct punctuation and conjunction use.

**Optional Vocabulary**

generous  
trustworthy

**EXERCISE 7.** Looking at grammar.  
Page 355  
Time: 10 minutes

- Have students work in pairs for this exercise, and encourage them to be as creative as possible.
- Review answers for each item by asking several pairs to read their versions aloud.

**Optional Vocabulary**

effectively  
reputation  
integrity

**EXERCISE 9.** Let's talk. Page 356

Time: 10–15 minutes

- Explain to students that as a group, they will need to discuss and reach agreement about possible answers.
- Tell students to first identify which part of speech is needed in each item.
- Assign each group an item to write on the board.
- Review as a class, and comment on content and meaning as well as parallel form.

**CHART 16-3.** Paired Conjunctions: *Both . . . And; Not Only . . . But Also; Either . . . Or; Neither . . . Nor*. Page 358

Time: 10–15 minutes

There are two important grammar points here: (1) subject-verb agreement and (2) parallel structure. Both are practiced in the exercises following the chart.

Some native speakers of English have trouble using these structures correctly (according to formal English preferences); learners can expect to be confused sometimes too. In actual usage of *neither . . . nor*, native speakers often use a plural verb with two singular subjects (e.g., *Neither my mother nor my sister are here. Neither my brother nor I were interested*). This usage is not presented in the text because it seems unnecessarily confusing for learners. You may wish to mention it, though, perhaps with the caveat "When in doubt, use formal English."

Another point not mentioned in the text is that when there are two independent clauses connected by *not only . . . but also*, the first independent clause usually (but not always) has inverted subject-verb word order. (When a sentence begins with a negative, the subject and verb are often inverted.) Example: *Not only does John go to school full-time, but he also has a full-time job*. You may or may not wish to introduce this point to your students.

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Write the following sets of paired conjunctions on the board.  
*not only . . . but also*  
*both . . . and*  
*neither . . . nor*  
*either . . . or*
- Ask students whether they are already familiar with *either . . . or* and *neither . . . nor*. Many may already know how to use these and if so, you can ask them for sample sentences to write on the board.

*Pablo says he likes neither chocolate nor vanilla ice cream.*

*Mei-lin has been to neither France nor Italy.*

*Bernadette will either go to New York or stay at home this weekend.*

*Xiao-Ping is happy with either Italian or Vietnamese food, but she does not want to have Mexican food tonight.*

- After you have written student-generated sample sentences similar to the ones above on the board, underline the phrases following each paired conjunction and note that the parts of speech are the same.
- Explain that these expressions always occur as paired conjunctions. When students see the first part of one (for example, *not only*), they should expect to see the completion (*but also*). For simplicity's sake, stress that these conjunctions always occur in pairs and that the second part must follow the first.
- Write some simple sentences on the board incorporating various paired conjunctions, such as:  
*Not only the students but also \_\_\_ enjoy a day off from school.*  
*Both my mother and \_\_\_ love apple pie.*
- Have students complete these sentences with similar nouns to establish the pattern.
- Explain that when there are two subjects introduced by paired conjunctions, the subject closer to the verb determines whether the verb is singular or plural.

**EXERCISE 13.** Looking at grammar. Page 358

Time: 10–15 minutes

For an advanced class, you can conduct this as a teacher-led exercise with books closed.

Group or pairwork is also possible, followed by a quick quiz using one item from each section.

*Both . . . and* is used more frequently than *not only . . . but also*.

*Not only . . . but also* tends to mean that something is especially interesting or surprising.

Note that Yes is the required answer in the first three groups of items, but No is the answer with *neither . . . nor*.

- Write the first example on the board, and underline both the paired conjunctions and parts of speech that follow each conjunction.
- After students have completed each part, ask individual students to write their answers on the board.
- As a class, highlight both the paired conjunctions and the parts of speech in each sentence.

### □ EXERCISE 15. Looking at grammar.

Page 360

Time: 10 minutes

- Give students time to go through the items individually.
- Have students read their combinations aloud, using paired conjunctions.
- If there is a question about whether a certain structure is correct, write it on the board and evaluate it as a class.

#### Optional Vocabulary

deny  
irreplaceable

### □ EXERCISE 16. Listening. Page 360

Time: 10 minutes

#### Part I

- To engage students in the topic, ask them for adjectives or nouns that they associate with bats, and write them on the board.
- Other possible questions to further the discussion:
  - Why do some people seem to fear bats?*
  - What other animals do people fear and why?*
- Before moving on to Part II, have students orally paraphrase the lecture, and write their simple restatements on the board.

#### Part II

- Remind students that in each word choice, they are creating parallel structure.
- Review answers by having students take turns reading aloud.

#### Optional Vocabulary

unreasoned	pollinating
tangle	overripe
carriers	flourish

### CHART 16-4. Separating Independent Clauses with Periods; Connecting Them with *And* and *But*. Page 361

Time: 10–15 minutes

Another term for a “run-on sentence” is a “comma splice” when a comma is used in place of (and when there should be) a period. Run-on sentences are a common problem in student writing (native and non-native alike).

Advanced students may be interested to know that it is possible to use commas between independent clauses in a series: *Janet washed the windows, Bob swept the floor, and I dusted the furniture.* INCORRECT: *Janet washed the windows, Bob swept the floor.*

- Write the chart title on the board.
- Ask students to define *independent clause*, and write

the best parts of their definition on the board. For example:

*independent clause = S + V;  
can stand alone as a sentence*

- Explain that two independent clauses cannot be separated by only a comma.
  - Write an incorrect example of this on the board, and then exaggerate crossing it out.
- INCORRECT: ~~*Juan played tennis, Marco preferred golf.*~~
- Now explain that the independent clauses can either 1) be separated by a period or 2) be joined by a conjunction (in this case, either *but* or *and* would work, depending on meaning).

CORRECT: *Juan played tennis. Marco preferred golf.*

CORRECT: *Juan played tennis, and Marco preferred golf.*

CORRECT: *Juan played tennis, but Marco preferred golf.*

- Review the rest of the chart.

### EXERCISE 18. Looking at grammar.

Page 361

Time: 5–10 minutes

- This exercise should be done quickly, so give students a time limit of five minutes to complete it individually.
- Assign an item to five different students and have them write their completed sentences on the board.
- Review the sentences and discuss the target structures.

### □ EXERCISE 20. Looking at grammar.

Page 362

Time: 10 minutes

#### Optional Vocabulary

intention	offspring
devastating	extended
crumbled	

**Expansion:** Prepare three or four sets of 21 index cards. Each set should have cards with the following:

9 index cards with 9 different independent clauses (These can be about any topic, but students do love to see their own names in print, so you may want to write simple clauses using your students as subjects.)

3 index cards with periods (only) on them

3 index cards with commas (only) on them

3 index cards with the conjunction *but* on them

3 index cards with the conjunction *and* on them

Put students into small groups, giving one set of cards to each group. Have them use the cards to come up with as many combinations of correctly punctuated sentences containing more than one clause as they can. Circulate and assist as needed. At the end, students can write some of their sentences on the board for the class to review and correct.

## □ EXERCISE 21. Listening and grammar.

Page 363

Time: 10–15 minutes

### Part I

- To illustrate just how meaningful and grammatically necessary proper punctuation is, have students take turns attempting to read sentences from the passage (as it is written) aloud.
- You may want to ask students to predict where and what punctuation marks are needed.

### Part II

- Play the audio and have students punctuate accordingly.
- Give students ample time to review what they have done before playing the audio a final time.

### Part III

- Play the audio a final time, and ask students to correct their punctuation according to what they can hear.
- Be prepared to stop and clarify as needed.

## □ EXERCISE 22. Let's read and talk.

Page 363

Time: 10–15 minutes

### Part I

- Have students read the introduction to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, speech aloud.
- Ask students what they already know about Dr. King and what they know about the civil rights movement in the U.S. Write the information they give on the board.
- Ask them to compare Dr. King to anyone who has played a similar role in either their country or the world at large.
- Discuss Part I optional vocabulary.

### Optional Vocabulary (Part I)

segregation  
discrimination  
assassinated  
inspiring

### Part II

- Put students into small groups.
- Read the direction line in the text aloud, and make sure that students can see how the instructions have been carried out in item 1.
- Discuss Part II optional vocabulary with students. Ask them to use their knowledge of parallel structure (and thus, their familiarity with parts of speech) to help them paraphrase unknown words.

### Optional Vocabulary (Part II)

disciplined	oppression
nonconformists	retaliation
controversy	aggression
crucial	method

**Expansion:** Choose 5–10 famous quotes that exemplify parallel structure. Prepare index cards with one-half of a famous quote on each one. Put students into small groups and hand out a few incomplete quotes to each group. Using what they know about parallel structure, students can either complete the famous quote with their own words and see how close they can come to the real thing. Or, if that task is too difficult, you can give each group two halves of the quotation, and they simply have to match them up.

While engaging in this exercise, students can also discover who said the quote, what the context was, and what the quote means. Possible quotations:

“You can fool some of the people all of the time, all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time.” —*Abraham Lincoln*

“Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.” —*John F. Kennedy*

“It is easier to love humanity as a whole than to love one's neighbor.” —*Eric Hoffer*

“The danger of the past was that men became slaves. The danger of the future is that men may become robots.” —*Erich Fromm*

“The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd rather not.” —*Mark Twain*

“Money may be the husk of many things, but not the kernel. It brings you food, but not appetite; medicine, but not health; acquaintance, but not friends; servants, but not loyalty; days of joy, but not peace or happiness.” —*Henrik Ibsen*

“The love of liberty is the love of others; the love of power is the love of ourselves.” —*William Hazlitt*

## □ EXERCISE 23. Let's write. Page 364

Time: 10–15 minutes

- If possible, have students write the first draft quickly in class. You may even want to give students a time limit of 10–15 minutes.
- Have students take their first draft home, tighten it up, and then return both the first and second drafts to you.
- Reproduce some of the more successful attempts at tightening writing style through good use of parallelism; discuss them with the class.
- Some students may not want to produce two versions of the same paragraph, but assure them that most people — even very experienced and skilled authors — use this method of improving their writing. Tell students that revision with an eye toward conciseness is an essential process in producing good writing in English.