Conjunctions

Conjunctions join words, phrases, or clauses and are typically separated into three classifications: **coordinating conjunctions**, **correlative conjunctions**, and **subordinating conjunctions**.

• **Coordinating Conjunctions**: and, but, or, yet, for, nor, and so.

Coordinating conjunctions join elements serving the same grammatical function within a sentence. These elements can be single words, phrases, or entire clauses.

*In the morning, I drink coffee or tea.*
[The coordinating conjunction or joins coffee and tea, both functioning as direct objects within the sentence.]

*I drink coffee in the morning and in the afternoon.*
[The conjunction and joins in the morning and in the afternoon, both prepositional phrases modifying drink.]

*I drink coffee in the morning, but I take tea in the afternoon.*
[The conjunction but joins two clauses to create a compound sentence.]

• **Correlative Conjunctions**: both . . . and; not only . . . but also; either . . . or; and neither . . . nor.

Correlative conjunctions also join elements serving the same grammatical function within a sentence and are always used in pairs.

*I take neither sugar nor cream in my coffee.*
[The correlative conjunctions neither and nor join sugar and cream, both direct objects.]

*Coffee is not only stimulating in the morning but also very pleasant in the afternoon.*
[The conjunctions not only and but also join the phrases stimulating in the morning and very pleasant in the afternoon.]

• **Subordinating Conjunctions**: after, although, because, before, if, since, so that, though, unless, until, when, where, and while, to name a few.

**Subordinating conjunctions are used to introduce dependent clauses.** A dependent clause is a group of words which function as a noun, adjective, or adverb within the sentence.

*I drink coffee before I go to work.*
[The subordinating conjunction before joins the clauses I drink coffee and I go to work. Notice that it also establishes a particular relationship between the clauses.]

*Unless I have coffee in the morning, it is very difficult to wake up.*
[The conjunction unless joins the clauses I have coffee in the morning and it is very difficult to wake up.]

This handout is adapted from University of Alabama Writing Center Website. Only the format has been changed.