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Conjunctions

The story connections





Grammar at a glance

When you want to...	Form to use	Worked example
Add or offer a choice	A and B / A or B	Pack pens and paper. Choose red or blue.
Signal contrast	first fact + but + contrast	The bag is small but heavy.
Connect cause and result	result because cause / cause, so result	We waited because it rained.
Finish a reason clause	because clause + main clause	Because it rained, we waited inside.

SELECT A ROW TO OPEN ITS LESSON

CONJUNCTIONS

And adds; or offers alternatives

Lily can see a pot and flowers. She wants to include both facts. Then the team needs to choose who will fetch a brush.

And adds information. Or offers alternatives. Choose the link that gives the listener the right instruction.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Add both facts	Sam carries a pot, and flowers grow in it.	And adds a second fact. Both are included in this report.
Offer a choice	Sam or Lily can fetch a brush.	Or presents alternatives. The team can decide which person will do the job.
Another example	Pack pens and paper. Choose red or blue.	Add or offer a choice. Pattern: A and B / A or B.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Choose one drink: water or juice. The instruction makes this a one-option choice.

Does or always forbid choosing both?

No. “Add raisins or nuts, or both” allows both. “Choose exactly one: raisins or nuts” does not. Read the whole instruction; the word or alone does not settle every choice.

YOUR TURN

Both are needed: “Pack pencils ___ paper.”

or / and

> Answer • and
> And includes both.

CONJUNCTIONS

Use but to highlight a contrast

The pot tilts, but Sam is still holding it. Lily can simply list these details or highlight the contrast. Neither connector changes the visible facts; it changes the relationship she emphasises.

But signals that the second idea contrasts with what the first might lead us to expect.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Just add	The pot is tilted, and Sam still holds it.	And adds the two facts.
Highlight the contrast	The pot is tilted, but Sam still holds it.	But highlights the contrast between the unstable position and his continued grip.
Another example	The bag is small but heavy.	Signal contrast. Pattern: first fact + but + contrast.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

The basket is small and light. The basket is small but heavy.

Does but cancel the words before it?

No. In “Lily was nervous, but she spoke clearly”, she was nervous and she spoke clearly. But highlights the contrast; it does not make either statement false.

YOUR TURN

Highlight the contrast: “The room was crowded, ___ we found seats.”
but / or

> **Answer • but**
> But highlights the unexpected availability of seats.

CONJUNCTIONS

Because gives a reason; so leads to a result

In this scene, soil falls because the pot is tilted. The tilt is the cause and the spill is the result. Keep those roles clear when changing the connector.

Because introduces a reason. So can introduce its result. Check which event explains the other.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Result, then reason	Soil spills because the pot is tilted.	Because introduces the reason: the tilted pot.
Cause, then result	The pot is tilted, so soil spills.	So introduces the result: the spilling soil.
Check the direction	The tilt causes the spill.	Changing the sentence order must not reverse the cause and result.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

The hall was full, so we waited outside. We waited outside because the hall was full.

Does the first event always belong after because?

No. Locate the reason by meaning, not by its position on the page. “Because the gate was locked, we waited” and “We waited because the gate was locked” give the same reason.

YOUR TURN

“The plant wilted ___ it had no water.” Give the reason.

so / because

> **Answer • because**
> The lack of water is the stated reason.

CONJUNCTIONS

Complete ideas and preserve the meaning

The report contains a dangling “because” sentence and an unnecessary double connector. Repair the writing without changing the facts.

A clause beginning with because usually needs a main clause to make a complete statement in a report.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
An unfinished reason	Because soil spilled.	As a standalone sentence in this report, the reason leaves us waiting to hear what happened as a result.
A complete sentence	Because soil spilled, Lily fetched a brush.	The main clause completes the thought. Starting with because is allowed.
A contrast	Although the pot tilted, Sam held it.	Although introduces a contrast. Standard writing does not need but as well in this construction.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Because the box was heavy, we used a trolley. We used a trolley because the box was heavy.

Is “Because it rained” always useless?

As an answer to “Why was the match cancelled?”, it can work in conversation. In this formal report, write a complete sentence: “Because it rained, the match was cancelled.” Audience and purpose matter.

YOUR TURN

Choose the complete report sentence.

Because the bus was late, we walked. / Because the bus was late.

> Answer • Because the bus was late, we walked.
> We walked supplies the main clause.

ONE LAST CHALLENGE

Which way does the cause run?

The rain made the path slippery. Write one sentence with because and another with so.



A POSSIBLE ANSWER

The path was slippery because it rained. It rained, so the path was slippery.

Because leads into the reason. So leads into the result.

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