



STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

Subordinating Conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions are a way to bring ideas together to create a smoother sentence.

| Subordinating Conjunctions | Meaning | Example |
|--|---|--|
| After, as, before, since, until, when, whenever, while | To show different time relationships | <i>When</i> her son was diagnosed with autism, Jenny started her research. |
| Although, even though, though, whereas, while | To show a contrast or contradiction | I love rap music <i>even though</i> my parents do not. |
| As though, as if | To show something seems true but is not | He acts <i>as if</i> he owns the place. |
| Because, since, so that | To show a reason, a cause, or an effect | He told the truth <i>because</i> he respects you. |
| Even if, if, unless, whether | To show a condition for something to happen | <i>Even if</i> one has a college degree, good jobs can be hard to find. |

Some sentences with subordinating conjunctions use a comma whereas others do not.

Dependent vs. Independent Clauses

There are two types of clauses: dependent and independent. Independent clauses contain a subject and verb and can stand alone as a sentence. Dependent clauses include a subordinating conjunction and cannot stand alone as sentences

Dependent Clauses & Commas

A dependent clause begins with a subordinating conjunction and is not a sentence on its own. When you read a dependent clause by itself, you will feel that something is missing. Examples: When I get home; After we go swimming; Before we go to the movies.

Because dependent clauses are not sentences, a dependent clause requires a comma if it comes before an independent idea. A comma is **not** needed when it follows an independent idea.

Comma Examples

Because it rained very hard, we had to leave early.

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Because it rained very hard, | we had to leave early. |
| Dependent idea | Independent idea |

This sentence has a comma after the dependent idea because the independent idea follows it.

We had to leave early because it rained very hard.

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| We had to leave early | because it rained very hard. |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|

Independent idea

Dependent idea

This sentence has no comma because the dependent idea follows the independent idea.

Practice Questions

Select the subordinating conjunction that best expresses the relationship between the two ideas **and** uses commas correctly.

1. A) Even though I would love to visit Europe I am too scared to fly.
B) Since I would love to visit Europe, I am too scared to fly.
C) Although I would love to visit Europe, I am too scared to fly.
2. A) Rubi took a graphic design course because she wanted to become a graphic artist.
B) Since she wanted to become a graphic artist Rubi took a graphic design course.
C) Until she wanted to become a graphic artist, Rubi took a graphic design course.
3. A) Classes were cancelled today unless it rained twelve inches last night.
B) Classes were cancelled today because it rained twelve inches last night.
C) After it rained twelve inches last night classes were cancelled today.

Sources:

Fawcett, Susan. *Grassroots with Readings*. Cengage Learning, 2015.

Answers to Practice Questions: 1. C, 2. A, 3. B