

Subordinating Conjunctions

(Time)

What is a subordinating conjunction?

A subordinating conjunction is a word or phrase that links a dependent clause to an independent clause. This word or phrase indicates that a clause has informative value to add to the sentence's main idea, signalling a **cause-and-effect** relationship or a shift in **time** and **place** between the two clauses.

When, after, before, until, since, while, once, as and **as soon as** are subordinating conjunctions which can be used to connect an action or an event to a point in time.

- *She was in a bad car accident **when** she was young.*
- *We can't play loud music **after** everyone has gone to bed.*
- *Brush your teeth **before** you go to bed!*
- *I'll wait with you **until** the bus comes.*
- *I've been very busy **since** I started my new job.*
- *No one left the cinema **while** the movie was on.*
- *I'll call you **once** I arrive.*
- *We always have an ice cream **as soon as** we get to the beach.*
- *I bumped into her **as** I came out of the bank.*

➤ Many of these time conjunctions can be followed by *-ing* or *-ed* forms instead of subject + verb.

Warning:

We don't use **will** after conjunctions referring to future time:

- ***When** people **walk** into the room, they will feel something special.*

Not: ~~***When** people **will walk** into the room...*~~

- *I will call you **as soon as** I **get** to the office.*

Not: ... as soon as I will get to the office.



TITLE:

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IELTS

i. **When, once, as soon as**

We can use **when**, **once**, **as** and **as soon as** to talk about a specific point in time when something happened or will happen:

- **When** we were in Greece, we went to as many islands as possible.
- They always close their curtains **once** they get home in the evening.
- **As soon as** we hear any news, we'll call you.

ii. **Before, after and until**

We use **before** and **after** to talk about the order of events in the past or future. With **before** and **after**, either the main clause or the subordinate clause can come first:

- She'll pick you up **before** she comes here.
- **After** she comes here, she'll pick you up.

Until as a time conjunction means up to a time in the past or future. In the case of **until**, the main clause usually comes first:

- I'm going to wait **until** the January sales start to buy a new jacket.
- **Until** he mentioned his name was Doug, I thought he was called Damien! (less common order)

➤ We spell **until** with one l. (Not: **untill**)

iii. **While**

We use **while** to show that actions or events happen at the same time in the past, present or future:

- Can you wait in the car **while** I run into the shop?
- They were talking **while** the teacher was explaining the activity.

Comma placement and subordinating conjunctions

Subordinating conjunctions that fall in the middle of a sentence are generally not preceded by a comma. This is the opposite of what is done with coordinating conjunctions, or words that join two independent clauses (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and sometimes so).

When a subordinate clause begins a sentence, however, the whole clause (but not the subordinating conjunction itself) is followed by a comma:

incorrect Whenever, Batman was away, Robin drove the Batmobile.

correct Whenever Batman was away, Robin drove the Batmobile.

incorrect Robin drove the Batmobile, whenever Batman was away.

correct Robin drove the Batmobile whenever Batman was away.

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