

CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions connect various elements in a sentence. They can be as simple as:

Pedro y Carlos - Peter and Charles
libros y revistas - books and magazines

or a little bit more difficult such as:

Ni Juan ni su padre lo superion hasta ayer - Neither John nor his father found out until yesterday.
O me dices la verdad o vas a sentirlo. - Either you tell me the truth or you're going to regret it.

There are three types of conjunctions in Spanish: coordinate, subordinate and correlative.

Coordinate

Coordinate conjunctions connect words, phrases or clauses of the same kind. The most common are:

o - or
ni - nor
y - and
pero - but
sino - but

peras y fresas - pears and strawberries
en la cocina o en el comedor - in the kitchen or in the dining room
listo pero perezoso - cleaver but lazy

NOTE

Both "o" and "u" mean "or". You normally would use "o" to mean "or". However, when a word ends in "o" and the word that would follow "or" begins with an "o", or "ho" use "u".

muchachos u septiembre u
hombres - boys or men octubre - september or october

The conjunction "o" when used with numbers becomes "ó".

2 ó 4 - two or four

Both "y" and "e" mean "and". You would normally use "y" to mean "and". However, when a word that would follow "and" begins with "i" or "hi" use "e".

bonita e inteligente	-	pretty and intelligent	madre e hijo	-	mother and daughter
aguja e hilo	-	needle and thread	padre e hijo	-	father and son

However, when a word that follows "and" begins with "hie" use "y".

flores y hierba	-	flowers and grass	nieve y hielo	-	snow and ice
Aquí se encuentran cobre y hierro. - Copper and iron are found here.					

Fortunately there are not a lot of words in Spanish that begin "hie", but the list does include:

hielo	-	ice
hiena	-	hyena
hierro	-	iron
hierbabuena	-	mint

Pero usually follows an affirmative expression, but may follow a negative statement if the verb of the first clause is repeated or if another verb follows.

El es inteligente pero perezoso.	-	He is intelligent but lazy.
Bebe leche pero no bebe café.	-	He drinks milk but he does not drink coffee.
Juan no bebe café pero bebe leche.	-	John does not drink coffee, but he drinks milk.

Sino is used only after a negative in a contrasting statement when the verb of the first clause is understood but not repeated.

Juan no bebe café sino leche.	-	Juan does not drink coffee, but milk.
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Subordinate

Subordinating conjunctions join subordinate (dependent) clauses to main clauses. A subordinate clause is a group of words containing a subject and verb that is dependent on a main clause.

Commonly used subordinate conjunctions are:

a condición de que	-	on the condition that	de suerte que	-	so that, in such a manner as
a fin de que	-	so that, in order that	desde que	-	since
a menos que	-	unless	después (de) que	-	after
a pesar de que	-	in spite of	donde	-	where
antes (de) que	-	before	e	-	and
así como	-	both and	empero	-	yet, however, notwithstanding
aun cuando	-	even if	en caso (de) que	-	in case
aun	-	even, still	en cuanto	-	as soon as
aunque	-	although, even though	hasta que	-	until

caso que	- in case that	luego que	- as soon as, after
como	- as, since	mas	- but
como que	- it seems that, apparently	mas que	- even if, however much
como quiera que	- although, since	mientras	- while
como si	- as if	mientras que	- while, so long as, as long as
con la condición que	- on condition that	ni	- neither, nor
con tal (de) que	- provided that	ni siquiera	- not even
cuando	- when	para que	- so that, in order that
dado caso que	- supposing that	porque	- because
dado que	- supposing that	puesto que	- since
de condición que	- so as to	que	- that
de manera que	- so that	si	- if, whether
de modo que	- so that, in such a way that	sin que	- without

Less Common Conjunctions

ni sólo ... (sino) también	not only ... but also	ya que	- since, seeing that
para que	- in order that, so that	en razón de que	- for the reason that
pero	- but	entretanto que	- meanwhile, while
por cuanto	- inasmuch as	más bien que	- rather than
pues que	- since	no bien ... cuando	- no sooner ... than
sin embargo	- nevertheless	por más que	- no matter how
sino	- but, rather	por razón que	- for the reason that
sino que	- but that, but rather that	salvo que	- unless
siquiera	- though, although	siempre que	- whenever, provided that
tan pronto como	- as soon as	tan luego como	- therefore
u	- or	tanto ... como	- as much ... as

NOTE

In Spanish only a conjunction or a relative pronoun can introduce a subordinate clause. As such you must be careful to use a conjunction in Spanish, although in English the word may function as an adverb, preposition and a conjunction. A conjunction must be used when a subject and verb follow the main clause.

English	Adverb before	Preposition before	Conjunction before
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Spanish	antes	antes de	antes (de) que
Incorrect	Ellos llegaron antes saliésemos.		
Correct	Ellos llegaron antes que saliésemos. They arrived before we left.		
Incorrect	Suele salir sin nosotros lo oigamos.		
Correct	Suele salir sin que nosotros lo oigamos He usually leaves without our hearing him.		
Incorrect	Nos réimos después nos dio las buenas noticias.		
Correct	Nos réimos después que nos dio las buenas noticias. We laughed after he gave us the news.		

Correlative

Correlative conjunctions are used in pairs with intervening words.

o ... o - either ... or apenas cuando - scarcely when
o sea o sea.... - either ... or

Apenas nos saludó, cuando tuvimos que salir. - He'd scarcely greeted us when we had to leave.
Ni Juan ni su padre lo supieron hasta ayer. - Neither John nor his father found it out until yesterday.
O me dices la verdad o vas a sentirlo. - Either you tell me the truth or you're going to regret it.

CONJUNCTIONS - ENGLISH TO SPANISH

after	-	después (de) que, luego que	neither ... nor	-	ni ... ni
although, even though	-	aunque	neither, nor	-	ni
although, since	-	como quiera que	not even	-	ni siquiera
and	-	e	on condition that	-	con la condición que
apparently, it seems that	-	como que	on the condition that	-	a condición de que
as if	-	como si	provided that	-	con tal (de) que
as long as, so long as, while	-	mientras que	scarcely ... when, hardly	-	apenas ... cuando
as soon as	-	en cuanto	since	-	desde que, puesto que
as, since	-	como	so as to	-	de condición que
because	-	porque	so long as, as long as, while	-	mientras que

before	-	antes (de) que	so that	-	de manera que
both ... and	-	así ... como	so that, in order that	-	a fin de que, para que
even if	-	aun cuando	supposing that	-	dado caso que
even if, however much	-	mas que	supposing that	-	dado que
even, still	-	aun	that	-	que
hardly, scarcely ... when	-	apenas ... cuando	unless	-	a menos que
however much, even if	-	mas que	until	-	hasta que
however, yet	-	empero	when	-	cuando
if, whether	-	si	where	-	donde
in case	-	en caso (de) que	whether, if	-	si
in case that	-	caso que	while	-	mientras
in order that, so that	-	a fin de que, para que	while, so long as, as long as	-	mientras que
			as		
in spite of	-	a pesar de que	without	-	sin que
in such a way that	-	de modo que	yet, however,	-	empero
it seems that, apparently	-	como que			