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Grammar is the set of rules that govern the usage of English language. A strong grasp of English grammar is therefore of the greatest importance. Most non-native English speakers make grammatical mistakes while speaking in English. Improving grammar takes time and effort but it is well worth it. How to Improve your Grammar in English | Infographic Grammar Tips Here are some tips which will help you improve English grammar. # 1. Understand the building blocks of grammar As a first step, it is important to know the different building blocks of grammar like nouns, pronouns, articles, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. The internet is full of resources about these and it is usually a good idea to understand them well. # 2. Pay attention to sentence structures When you read an article or watch a movie, it is important to pay attention to how sentences are constructed. This practice helps in understanding sentence structures and will help you speak and written better. # 3. Practice when you can This tip can never be overemphasized. As an English learner, it is extremely important for you to talk in English at any given opportunity. If you do not have partners to practise with, then try to speak in front of the mirror. # 4. Grammar exercises will help you Try doing different grammar exercises and find out your weaknesses. These exercises are freely available on the internet. It is only after you are able to correctly assess your weaknesses that you will be able to rectify them. # 5. Find a mentor Many learners have improved their grammar working with a mentor. A mentor could even be a friend who has a strong command over English grammar. You must speak only in English with your mentor and ask the mentor to point out your mistakes. This real time feedback is very beneficial in improving grammar. # 6. Join a course Many students find that an English improvement course is the quickest way to improve English grammar. If joining a classroom program is difficult, then an online course is a great option. English Grammar Lessons Nouns A noun is a word used as the name of a person, place or thing. Examples: King, Mohan, Sarita, Mumbai, Table List of different types of nouns in English: Other Noun Lessons: Pronouns A pronoun is a word used instead of a noun. Examples: He, She, It, They List of different types of pronouns in English: Articles The words 'a', 'an' and 'the' are called articles. They are used before nouns. Indefinite Articles: A and An Definite Article - The Verbs A verb is a word that describes an action or occurrence or indicates a state of being. Examples: He talks to Sameer, She sings a song Different types of verbs: Other Verb Lessons: Adjectives An adjective is a word used to describe a noun. Examples: Beautiful house, Tall man List of different types of adjectives: Other Adjective Lessons: Adverbs An adverb is a word which modifies the meaning of a verb, adjective or another adverb. Examples: He runs fast, They fought bravely. List of different types of adverbs: Other Adverb Lessons: Prepositions A preposition is a word which shows the relation between the noun or pronoun and other words in the sentence. Examples: The book is in the room, The book is on the table. List of different types of prepositions: Simple Prepositions Double Prepositions Compound Prepositions Participle Prepositions Phrasal Prepositions Prepositions are categorized into a shared cause or starting point. Take a look at these sentences that use relative conjunctions: We could either hike up the mountain or swim in the lake this afternoon. Whether you bike or drive to work, you'll need to show your parking pass. Not only did my boyfriend buy me a Nintendo Switch, but he also bought me a bunch of games! Before we go deeper into relative conjunctions, let's do a quick refresher on conjunctions as a part of speech. Conjunctions are words that link phrases, clauses, and words together in sentences. Words like and but are conjunctions. When you use a conjunction in a sentence, the words or phrases it links need to have parallel structures. Here's an example of a conjunction at work: She drives slowly and cautiously. "She drives slowly and cautiously" is incorrect, as are "She drives slowly and cautious" and "She drives slow and cautious." In this example, the adverbs "slowly" and "cautiously" both describe the verb "drives," and the conjunction and links them together to give the reader the full picture: The subject ("she") doesn't just drive, but drives at a low speed and in a cautious manner. And can be a correlative conjunction when it's paired with another conjunction like both. Take a look at this example: Both my cat and my dog like bacon-flavored treats. Like socks, correlative conjunctions always come in pairs. That's their defining characteristic: if a conjunction doesn't need a partner for its sentence to make sense, it's not a correlative conjunction. The most common correlative conjunction pairs include: either/or neither/nor such/that whether/or not only/but also both/and as many/as no sooner/than rather/than Let's take a look at a few example sentences: Either you're with me or you're against me. Such is the intensity of the pollen outside that I can't leave the house. My parents went to both Hawaii and Bali last year. She would no sooner cheat on an exam than falsify her credentials. They would rather go to the movies than the mall. What does a correlative conjunction do? Correlative conjunctions create pairs of equal elements. They are used to connect two independent clauses, two independent clauses, two verbs, or two of the same kind of phrase. Here are a few examples of correlative conjunctions in sentences: Because of the bad weather, the class missed both their history and English exams. They not only ate all the donuts but also drank all the coffee. I wasn't sure whether the play was disjointed or avant-garde. Correlative conjunctions are just one type of conjunction. The other types are subordinating conjunctions and coordinating conjunctions. Coordinating conjunctions are words that join two elements of equal grammatical rank and syntactic importance. They can join two verbs, two nouns, two adjectives, two phrases, or two independent clauses. In our example above, the word and acts as a coordinating conjunction. When most people think of conjunctions, they think of coordinating conjunctions. The seven coordinating conjunctions can be remembered by using the acronym FANBOYS: for and nor but yet so Subordinating conjunctions are conjunctions that link independent clauses to dependent clauses. By doing this, the subordinating conjunction demonstrates the relationship between the clauses, which is often a cause-and-effect relationship or a contrast. Here's a quick example: He was late to work because there was traffic. Common subordinating conjunctions include: because since while whereas though although as When should you use correlative conjunctions? Use correlative conjunctions when you have two distinct yet connected concepts in a sentence. If you and your roommate both tend to wake up early, an efficient sentence to communicate this is "Both my roommate and I wake up early." Correlative conjunctions can be helpful in transition sentences. Here's an example of a short paragraph featuring a transition sentence: I wasn't hired at any of the companies I'd applied to. Neither my experience nor my skill set seemed to impress the interviewers. So I'm going to explore opportunities in a completely different field. You can remove the second sentence and the paragraph will still make sense. However, that middle sentence adds detail and context. Here's another example of correlative conjunctions in a transition sentence: My goal is to earn a PhD. Whether I get into my dream school or I get accepted somewhere else, that's my plan. After that, who knows what I'll do? What you're using here are correlative conjunctions, subject-verb agreement is a must. All this means is that the verb in the sentence is conjugated to match the noun or pronoun that is its subject. Take a look at this example: Either Reyna pushes the button or Abed pushes it. November 15, 2019 Conjunctions, Example Sentences English Correlative Conjunctions List and Example Sentences Hardly ... when I had hardly closed my eyes when she came. Such ... that He is such a smart boy that he passes his math exams successfully. Neither ... nor Neither George nor his brother is very tall. Whether ... or He must do it, whether he likes it or not. As ... as He's not singing as loudly as he can. Rather ... than I would rather go out than stay at home today. Scarcely ... when Scarcely had I gone to bed when the doorbell rang. Both ... and Michael can both read and write. Not only ... but also Not only Mary but also Gabriel is from Italy. Either ... or I can have either cola or tea. So ... as Her story isn't so boring as theirs. No sooner ... than We had no sooner gone to bed than the phone rang. The more ... the more The more you can dream, the more you can do. So ... that My mother speaks so quickly that nobody understands what she says. There are three main types of conjunctions: Coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions and correlative conjunctions. In this article, we will tackle correlative conjunctions. Let's roll our ball by starting with the usual quick answer. What are correlative conjunctions? Correlative conjunctions are the conjunctions that come in pairs and are inseparable. They are very useful in blending ideas that are equally important in terms of grammar and meaning. Examples of these include "not only...but also," "either...or," "whether...or," "no sooner...than," and "as...as." Correlative conjunctions: The "inseparables" Correlative conjunctions are inseparable words because one cannot stand alone without the other. Doing so does not achieve the same effect anymore. That is, a pair of correlative
conjunction strictly works together in order to convey our thoughts precisely as well as in a parallel way. These types of conjunctions connect two sentence parts that are of equal value or importance, both in sense and grammar. Like coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions also have different functions in language use. To recall, coordinating conjunctions connect two independent clauses, while subordinating conjunctions link an independent clause to a dependent clause. If you are wondering what exactly "clauses" stand for in grammar, you may read our guide that distinguishes clauses and phrases for clarity. Meanwhile, correlative conjunctions can do way more than just connect clauses together. In fact, they can actually "blend" them. We mainly use correlative conjunctions to add one idea after another, express alternatives, convey conditions, show the order of events, and even introduce comparisons. To understand how correlative conjunctions work in context, let us discuss each of them one by one according to function. Correlative conjunctions for adding ideas Additive correlative conjunctions work together solely for the purpose of adding more value to whatever idea we are trying to express. "Both...and" and "not only...but also" are two of the most commonly used additive correlative conjunctions in English. Using either of them is great for increasing the implied importance of two equally meaningful ideas in one smooth flow. Both...and The word "both" suggests the meaning "one plus another one," while "and" may suggest the meaning "together with" or "besides." A comma comes before "and" when it is used as a coordinating conjunction. However, this comma disappears when "and" is used as a correlative conjunction. That said, the combined meaning of "both...and" utterly becomes more powerful than using either word as single elements. Examples: Shawn can both sing and dance. My son loves both the food and the rides at Dollywood. In both of the examples above, each of the subjects is followed by compound ideas in the predicate part. Interestingly, we may also create compound subjects using the pair "both...and" if we want to, such as in "both Mary and Michelle." Not only...but also The pair "not only...but also" is another great correlative conjunction to use for adding an important idea after another. "Not only...but also" is a coordinating conjunction. Therefore, a comma before "nor" usually comes when it connects the two independent clauses. However, no comma should be used when "neither" and "nor" are deliberately used as a correlative pair of conjunction. Examples: Neither my mother nor my father is Italian. Johnson neither speaks Chinese nor Japanese. Taking things into perspective, "neither...nor" is great for making sure that similarly negative ideas are not repeatedly stated in two separate sentences. Correlative conjunctions for conditional ideas Sometimes, we also need to present conditions. In grammar, conditional statements offer an avenue for guesswork or speculation to occur. One of the most popular correlative conjunction that does this exact function is the pair "whether...or." "Whether...or" is something we often see together with "not" for emphasis. Using "whether" or "not" vs. "whether" is a bit tricky thing to do. But like any other activity out there, mastery can only be attained through constant practice and exposure. For more details on this topic, you may also read our previous post tackling how to use "whether" or "not" in a sentence for clarity. In a nutshell, "whether" suggests the meaning "which or either of the two," whereas "or" acts as a linker to the alternative option we want to convey. Examples: Whether you like it or not, you will do as I say. It doesn't matter whether he accepts my apology or not. In both of the examples above, the "whether...or" pairs are used to convey assertion as well as conviction. This strategy is great for rhetorical purposes. Correlative conjunctions for order of events Equally important as the others listed above, we also have correlative conjunctions that can be used to express the order or sequence of events. Some of the most widely used pairs under this type of conjunction include "no sooner...than," "scarcely...when," and "hardly...when." Notwithstanding the difference among the three conjunctions, all of them suggest pretty much the same meaning. No sooner...than The pair "no sooner...than" is used for expressing an event that occurs shortly or immediately after another event. This pair is great for making two lengthy sentences shorter and even more linguistically pleasing. In both of the examples below, note that both ideas introduced by "no sooner" are the events that occurred before the than-clause. Example: No sooner had Mary finished cleaning than she started cooking. I had no sooner finished reading one book than I started reading another. Scarcely...when Similarly, "scarcely...when" is also used for expressing the idea that one event occurs shortly after another. "Scarcely" suggests the meaning "only just" which could also be interpreted as "a very short time before something else happens." Here's how you may use the pair "scarcely...when": Examples: Scarcely had I left the house when he arrived. Scarcely had mom started her car when she realized she left her bag. Hardly...when Another great pair of correlative conjunctions you may use for conveying an event that occurs right before another is "hardly...when." "Just like" "no sooner...than" and "scarcely...when," "hardly...when" is also a great choice when suggesting the meaning "as soon as something happens." Here are two examples of sentences using "hardly...when": Examples: Hardly had dad arrived when you left for school. I had hardly finished cleaning the floor when my daughter dropped another spoon of ice cream. As has been pointed out, all the correlative conjunctions in this section are effective devices for emphatically and organically expressing when one event occurs right after another. Correlative conjunctions for comparison Whether we like it or not, we tend to compare ideas every now and then. This skill is a gift that we use for practical reasons. Comparing things allows us to logically look into the features or qualities of people, events, and things, which is why this is also a very popular research method. The correlative conjunction "as...as" is something that we can use for this specific purpose. As...as Trick yet really practical at the same time, the conjunctive pair "as...as" is used for the comparison of equally-important ideas. To use this pair correctly, we may simply place either an adverb or an adjective between the two words. When we use the correlative conjunction "as...as," we are suggesting that the first idea is equally powerful and significant as the other. Examples: You just look as lovely and lady-like as your mother. John is as disappointed as his brother. Clearly, we can see how the "as...as" pair works as equalizers of ideas, notwithstanding whether they are positive or negative in connotation. All in all, correlative conjunctions are, therefore, great devices for improving the way we contextualize our ideas as well as making them more cohesive. Using correlative conjunctions more mindfully As you may have observed, using correlative conjunctions is a bit more challenging than coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. This is because correlative conjunctions follow the guiding principles of the first two types mentioned above - at the same time. Moreover, this is also the reason why correlative conjunctions matter in speaking and writing. They express utterly complex ideas in one sitting. As this is the case, the need for subject-verb agreement and parallel structures when expressing sentences using correlative conjunctions is self-explanatory. That is to say, we need to be mindful of whether our subject agrees with our predicate accordingly and whether we are using similar grammatical structures in each part of our sentence. As an example, we need to treat the subject as a singular element when using "either...or" in the construction. This structure apparently needs to make use of the s-form of the verb. Meanwhile, parallel structures are best represented by the "not only...but also" pair, as this is the pair that requires the most attention. For instance, if we are using an adjective in the not only-part, we also need to use an adjective in the but also-part. Example: (parallel) Not only is he handsome but also smart. Following the parallelism argument above as well as the example given, it would be grammatically awkward or awkward to say the following: Example: (incongruent) Not only is he handsome but also has a lot of talents. The incongruity in the example above is brought by the predicate of the but also-clause. It should have been made parallel if the word "talented" were used instead. In a nutshell, we must not only be mindful of our conjunctive pair but also the other words around it. Bearing this in mind will surely make our language use more accurate. By doing so, we can avoid miscommunication. List with Correlative Conjunctions for you to Download [Table id=38 /] Frequently Asked Questions on "Correlative Conjunctions" How do we use correlative conjunctions in a sentence? We use correlative conjunctions to connect two parallel words, phrases, or clauses. In particular, we use correlative conjunctions for combining either subjects or predicates that are of equal weight or importance. Is "just" a correlative conjunction? As a stand-alone word, "just" can be used either as an adverb or adjective and hence not a correlative conjunction. However, the pair "just as...so" is a correlative conjunction. What is the difference between a coordinating and a correlative conjunction? While coordinating conjunctions are used as individual words to "connect" two independent clauses, correlative conjunctions
are meanwhile used in pairs to "blend" two grammatically parallel ideas. Have you ever felt stuck trying to make your sentences flow smoothly? Do you find it tricky to connect ideas without repeating words? Correlative conjunctions might just be the solution you're looking for! These are pairs of words like "both ... and" or "not ... only ... but also," which help you link ideas in a sentence. They make your writing clearer, more engaging, and grammatically correct. In this blog, we will explore correlative conjunctions in detail, including their definition, importance, rules, and common mistakes. Plus, we've got tips, examples, and practice exercises to make learning fun and easy. Let's dive in! What are Correlative Conjunctions? Correlative conjunctions are word pairs that work together to connect equal parts of a sentence. These parts can be words, phrases, or clauses. They ensure balance and parallelism, making sentences more structured and readable. Download: What Are Correlative Conjunctions? Common Correlative Conjunctions Below are some of the most commonly used correlative conjunctions pairs: Download: Common Correlative Conjunctions Chart Each pair works in its own unique way to connect ideas. Mastering them will make your sentences flow effortlessly! Why Are Correlative Conjunctions Important? Correlative conjunctions aren't just about grammar - they help make your writing better in three key ways: Download: Importance of Correlative Conjunctions 1. Grammar Clarity Correlative conjunctions ensure sentences are well-structured and grammatically balanced. For example: "She is both intelligent and loves to work hard." "She is both intelligent and diligent." This parallel structure makes your writing more professional and easier to understand. 2. Adding Emphasis Want to make a point stand out? Correlative conjunctions like "not only ... but also," "both ... and," and "either ... or" can be used to highlight important ideas or actions, making sentences more engaging and impactful. For example: "He is not only a talented musician but also a skilled painter." "He excels at both playing the piano and singing." "You can either drive to the park or take the bus." 3. Enhancing Sentence Variety Using correlative conjunctions adds variety to your sentences, making your writing less monotonous and more compelling. Compare: Basic: "She is intelligent and hardworking." Enhanced: "She is both intelligent and hardworking." Professional writers often use correlative conjunctions to create compelling narratives and clear arguments. For instance, in academic writing, you might see: "Not only does this study highlight key findings, but it also suggests future research areas." Rules for Using Correlative Conjunctions To effectively use correlative conjunctions, you need to understand their grammatical structure, common pitfalls, and best practices. Here are the essential rules to follow, along with detailed explanations and examples to deepen your understanding. 1. Maintain Parallelism The elements connected by correlative conjunctions must be grammatically parallel. This means the elements on either side of the conjunction must be the same type. "She is both intelligent and loves to work hard." (Adjective and verb phrase) "She is both intelligent and hardworking." (Two adjectives) Download: Rules for Correlative Conjunctions Parallelism makes sentences more cohesive and easier to read. A lack of parallelism, on the other hand, can make sentences awkward and confusing. 2. Subject-Verb Agreement When a correlative conjunction connects two subjects, the verb is determined by the second subject (the one closer to the verb). "Either the manager or the employees is responsible for the delay." (Mismatch between "employees" and "is") "Either the manager or the employees are responsible for the delay." (Verb agrees with "employees") Download: Subject-Verb Agreement in Correlative Conjunctions Tip: To avoid confusion, carefully plan sentence structure when using correlative conjunctions with plural and singular subjects. 3. Avoid Double Negatives Using correlative conjunctions like "neither ... nor," it's crucial to avoid pairing them with another negative word, which creates redundancy. "Neither the nor the brother wasn't invited to the party." (Double negatives confuse readers and can make sentences appear ungrammatical or clunky. Keeping your sentences clear and concise ensures effective communication. 4. Ensure Logical Pairing Correlative conjunctions should connect ideas that are logically related. Missing or misplacing conjunctions can lead to unclear or nonsensical sentences. "Not only does he excel in academics, but he also prefers outdoor activities." (Mismatch between ideas) "Not only does he excel in academics, but he also participates in extracurricular activities." Tip: Before finalizing a sentence, ask yourself if the connected elements make sense when paired. 5. Position the Conjunctions Properly The two parts of a correlative conjunction must appear in the same sentence and should not be separated by unrelated words. "She is excited about the competition, both nervous and ready to perform." (Disjointed placement of "both ... and") "She is both excited and nervous about the competition." Practice Exercises Practice makes perfect! To truly understand and master correlative conjunctions, it's essential to apply the rules in real-world scenarios. Below are a variety of exercises designed to test your knowledge, let's start practicing! 1. Identify the Correlative Conjunctions Underline the correlative conjunctions in the sentences below: Both the manager and the employees appreciated the new policy. She will either study late tonight or wake up early tomorrow. Neither the rain nor the cold could stop them from going on the hike. Not only is he an excellent chef but also a talented musician. Whether we go to the beach or stay home, we'll have a great time. Answers: Both ... and Either ... or Neither ... nor Not only ... but also Whether ... or Download: Correlative Conjunctions Worksheet 2. Complete the Sentences Fill in the blanks with the correct correlative conjunctions: She is interested in _____ painting _____ photography. You can choose _____ to eat here _____ take the food to go. I have _____ seen the movie _____ read the book it was based on. He is _____ tall _____ his older brother. I don't know _____ I should laugh _____ cry at the news. _____ the manager _____ the employees were aware of the changes. I would prefer to walk _____ drive in heavy traffic. This cake is _____ delicious _____ easy to make. _____ a beautiful day _____ we decided to go for a picnic. He is _____ hardworking, _____ makes him a great team member. Answers: Both ... and Either ... or Neither ... nor As ... as Whether ... or Neither ... nor Rather than Both ... and Such ... that Not only ... but also Download: Correlative Conjunctions Worksheet 3. Write Your Own Sentences Create sentences using the following correlative conjunction pairs: Both ... and Not only ... but also Either ... or Neither ... nor As ... as Example answers: She is both an excellent leader and a kind mentor. The new smartphone is not only affordable but also packed with features. Either we complete the project today or we risk missing the deadline. Neither the manager nor the employees were happy with the decision. The dessert is as delicious as it looks. Want more practice? Check out our correlative conjunctions worksheets at Worksheetszone. They're packed with fun and easy exercises to help you master these pairs! Frequently Asked Questions 1. Can correlative conjunctions connect more than two elements? While correlative conjunctions primarily connect two elements, you can group multiple items together if they are listed in a grammatically parallel format. Example: "She is not only a great leader but also a mentor, an innovator, and a motivator." 2. Do all correlative conjunctions require a comma? No, correlative conjunctions generally do not require a comma unless the sentence structure or length makes it necessary for clarity. Example: "She is both intelligent and confident, and she always goes above and beyond her duties." 3. Can I combine correlative conjunctions with other conjunctions? Yes, you can combine correlative conjunctions with coordinating or subordinating conjunctions, but do so carefully to avoid confusion. Example: "Not only did she finish the report on time, but also she ensured it met all quality standards, and the client was impressed." 4. How do correlative conjunctions differ from coordinating conjunctions? While both types of conjunctions connect elements in a sentence, their usage differs: Correlative Conjunctions: Always come in pairs (e.g., "either ... or," "both ... and"). Ensure parallel structure and balance between elements. Example: "She is both talented and hardworking." Coordinating Conjunctions: Stand alone to connect elements (e.g., "and," "or," "but"). Example: "She is talented and hardworking." What We've Learned! Correlative conjunctions are your secret weapon for creating clear, balanced, and engaging sentences. They're easy to learn and make a big difference in your writing. To master correlative conjunctions, remember the rules of parallelism and subject-verb agreement. Avoid common mistakes, and most importantly, practice regularly. 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Show Relationships: They indicate relationships between ideas, emphasizing both the similarities and differences. Present Alternatives: They offer choices between two alternatives, highlighting options within a sentence. Express Contrast: They emphasize differences between elements, showcasing opposing qualities or actions. Offer Choices: They present alternatives, helping to express choices or options available in a situation. Indicate Similarity: They compare similar qualities or characteristics, illustrating the "either...or" relationship. What We've Learned! Correlative conjunctions are your secret weapon for creating clear, balanced, and engaging sentences. They're easy to learn and make a big difference in your writing. To master correlative conjunctions, remember the rules of parallelism and subject-verb agreement. Avoid common mistakes, and most importantly, practice regularly. 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