



# A Letter From the Editors

## Choosing the Appropriate Coordinating Conjunction

Remember our dear friends, the FANBOYS? These are your coordinating conjunctions: **for, and nor, but, or, yet, and so**. We're gonna talk about which one you should use when connecting two independent clauses and why that choice matters.

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So why does it matter? Good writing starts with clarity, and clarity often starts with word choice. If your reader doesn't understand the sentence or gets lost, they may stop reading completely. Let's make sure they stay on board.

### Some Examples

**Incorrect:** "I wanted to go to the store, and the store was closed."

**Correct:** "I wanted to go to the store, but the store was closed."

**Incorrect:** "Do you want to watch My Neighbor Totoro, so should we watch Spirited Away?"

**Correct:** "Do you want to watch My Neighbor Totoro, or should we watch Spirited Away?"

These simple examples illustrate how differently these coordinating conjunctions are used, but it can be more nuanced than that. Even when the difference feels slight, by choosing a coordinating conjunction that makes less sense, you'll lessen the clarity of your sentence overall.

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The FANBOYS each have their own meaning, so using one or another will affect the way your sentence reads. Let's talk about the **function of each word** when used as a coordinating conjunction.

**For:** Used similarly to how we use “because.” Also can be seen as shorthand for “for the reason that.”

Example: *Noah settled on P. Terry’s for lunch, **for** he wanted to eat wings but realized he’d already eaten all the leftovers.*

**And:** Used to connect and indicate addition. Can be seen as shorthand for “and so forth,” “further in the same manner,” or “additionally.”

Example: *Jessica bought some new plates, **and** she was excited that they matched her existing bowls.*

**Nor:** Used to negate a clause or phrase.

Example: *Robb refused to eat the baklava, **nor** would he eat the shortbread Tin brought to work.*

**But:** Can mean “on the contrary” or “on the other hand.” Indicates that a clause will contradict the former.

Example: *Ben wanted to go to the saloon, **but** Nort said he preferred the salon.*

**Or:** Used to indicate an alternative.

Example: *Hey, Mallard! Do you want to go to Sephora, **or** should we go to Ulta?*

**Yet:** A bit trickier, “yet” is used similarly to how we use “nevertheless.”

Example: *Rachel says she’s saving money, **yet** she’ll probably buy the new Sims 4 expansion pack once it’s released.*

**So:** Used similarly to how we use “with the result that” or “for that reason.”

Example: *I realized some people were struggling with coordinating conjunctions and word choice, **so** I wrote this letter.*

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Have a question about this letter or another grammar topic? Visit us in the #ask-an-editor Slack channel and give us a shout.

**Quiz**

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