

# MPC English & Study Skills Center

## Conjunctions: Subordinating

There are four types of conjunctions: Coordinating, Subordinating, Conjunctive Adverbs, and Correlative Conjunctions. **See also** the individual handouts for each of these types.

**Subordinating conjunctions** join **dependent** clauses to **independent** clauses. They show relationships between ideas rather than just putting words, clauses, or phrases together.

✦ Subordinating conjunctions show the following relationships:

**Time:** after, as soon as, before, once, when, whenever, while

**Reason:** as, because, since, so that, whereas

**Condition:** as, as though, if, provided that, unless, whether

**Contrast or surprise:** although, even though, than, though

**Place:** everywhere, where, wherever

✦ The subordinating conjunction shows the relationship between the dependent and independent clauses, so it does not matter which one comes first.

**Because** Rufus played so hard, he was tired.

Rufus was tired **because** he played so hard.

✦ However, there is a difference in the punctuation when the subordinating clause (the part with the conjunction) comes first. There is a comma after the clause because it becomes an introductory element of the sentence.

**After** I get up in the morning, I drink a cup of coffee.

**Whenever** I watch TV, I get a headache.

**Although** class isn't over, you need to take a nap.

**Wherever** I travel, I take my old suitcase.

✦ When the subordinating (dependent) clause follows the independent clause (the main part of the sentence), there is no comma. [**Note:** In British English, the comma is often used before the conjunction but not in American English.]

I drink a cup of coffee **after** I get up in the morning.

I get a headache **whenever** I watch TV.

You need to take a nap **although** class isn't over.

I take my old suitcase **wherever** I travel.

✦ **Note:** Than is a subordinating conjunction that is used to show contrast, and it is possible to drop part of the clause. However, it is important to use the correct pronoun in the subordinate clause. Than is generally used only between the two clauses.

Sam is taller **than** his sister is tall. =

Sam is taller **than** she is tall. =

Sam is taller **than** she.

While it is theoretically possible to use the subordinating clause as an introductory element, it would be very awkward: **Than** his sister is tall, Sam is taller.