

word class explanation: conjuncts

- Conjuncts are used to emphasize the connections between the meaning of sentences or clauses. For example,

*The new director of the program is well qualified for his job because he has spent many years studying the virus in his laboratory. **Moreover**, he has travelled widely in tropical countries in order to examine victims of the disease.*

- It is important to distinguish between conjuncts and conjunctions: Like conjuncts, conjunctions clarify and emphasize connections between the meaning of clauses.

However, conjunctions *also* create *grammatical* connections between clauses: They are used to combine clauses within a single sentence. For example, the conjunction ‘when’ can be used to show the contrast between the two simple sentences “He came,” and “It rained” *and* — at the same time — to join them into one complex sentence:

***Although** it rained hard all day, we all had a good time.”*

Exactly the same contrast can be shown with the conjunct, ‘however’, but, because ‘however’ is a conjunct, not a conjunction, in this case, the simple sentences cannot be combined. They must remain separate:

*“It rained hard all day. We all had a good time, **however**.”*

- The word ‘moreover’ at the beginning of the second sentence in the first example above emphasizes the connection between the *meaning* of the two sentences: the ‘because’-clause in the first sentence gives one reason why the new director is well qualified, and the second sentence gives *another* reason.
- Conjuncts can be used to indicate or emphasize various types of ‘meaning connection’:
- ‘Furthermore’ and ‘in addition’ for example, can, like ‘moreover’ be used to emphasize that more information is being *added*.
- The conjuncts ‘however’, ‘nevertheless’ and ‘on the other hand’ can be used to indicate a *contrast* in the meaning of two sentences. For example, in

*Many scientists believe that the warming trend of the last few decades will continue indefinitely. Others, **however**, think that, because of changes in the direction of ocean currents, many parts of the world will soon start to get colder.*

- Here, the word ‘however’ in the second sentence emphasizes the fact that information in the second sentence *contrasts* with the information in the first sentence.

- ‘Consequently’ and ‘as a result’ can be used to emphasize that the situation described in one sentence or clause is **caused** by the situation described in the previous sentence or clause.
- ‘Afterward’ and ‘later’ can be used to emphasize that the situation described in one sentence or clause happens sometime after the situation described in the previous sentence or clause.
- ‘Then’ can be used to emphasize the fact that the event described in one sentence happens **immediately** after the event described in the previous sentence.

WARNING: CONJUNCTS MUST BE USED WITH CARE

- The fact that several conjuncts can be used to indicate, for example, a contrast between the meaning of sentences does not mean that conjuncts in the same group can be used interchangeably. There are many slight differences of meaning between conjuncts. And beyond that, the grammatical structure of sentences can affect which conjuncts can be used. The ability to use a wide range of conjuncts accurately is something that comes only as the result of a lot of reading and writing.
- Some ESL texts give the impression that it is possible to improve writing by using conjuncts generously. This is not a good idea. They should be used sparingly and with great care. The difficulty in learning the exact meaning of conjuncts is one reason for being careful. But there is another even more important reason: The purpose of conjuncts is to **emphasize** and **clarify** the connections between sentences. But the most important way to make those connections clear is by writing clear sentences and organizing them in a logical way. If sentences are not clearly written or logically organized, the use of conjuncts will only create confusion.