

Speak Fluent English Thanks to Conversational Connectors: The Complete List

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When you start learning a language, you begin by creating short phrases, for example “I like coffee”. The next step in the learning process is to link this phrase to another one, for example, “I like coffee and I like tea”. The word ‘and’ is what we call a connector, and it is one of the first connectors you learn. There are many more connectors, all of which can significantly enrich your conversational English. So what the other connectors are there and how do we use them? Read on to find out.

What can connectors do?

Connectors enable us to connect words or phrases. There are a wide range of connectors and each of them has a different function.

Connectors can express:

- addition
- time
- sequence
- contrast
- condition
- reason
- result

Let's look at each of these functions.

ADDITION – *and, plus, furthermore, moreover, in addition, also, as well as*

We can use addition connectors when we want to add one phrase to another or to give extra information. Obviously the most common of these is 'and', while the other addition connectors give a little more emphasis and are also more common in written English, especially 'moreover' and 'furthermore'. Here are some examples:

- *They like English **and** study a lot.*
- *He's well-qualified, **plus** he's very charismatic.*
- *The house is beautiful. **Furthermore**, the price is low.*
- *Sport is fun. **Moreover**, it's a great way to socialize.*
- ***In addition** to the new tunnel, the local council is constructing a bridge.*
- *I play the piano and I **also** play the violin.*
- ***As well as** being helpful, Carmen is very practical.*

TIME – *when, while, as, as soon as*

We can use time connectors to link actions that happened at the same moment. The connectors 'when' and 'as' are very similar in meaning. We generally use 'while' for a longer action, especially with a continuous form. For example:

- ***When** we arrived we sat down at our desks.*
- *I watched television **while** I was ironing.*
- *It started to rain just **as** I went out.*
- *We'll start **as soon as** everyone gets here.*

SEQUENCE – *then, after, afterwards, next, firstly, secondly, finally*

In a similar way to time connectors, sequential connectors enable us to indicate the order of events. Here are some examples:

- *She talked about the agenda **then** she began her presentation.*
- *He's coming here **after** lunch.*
- *He's having lunch and is coming here **afterwards**.*
- *Turn on the oven. **Next**, mix all the ingredients.*
- ***Firstly**, I'd like to thank you all for coming.*
- ***Secondly**, I want to give you a brief overview of the new products.*
- ***Finally**, I will invite our president to speak.*

CONTRAST – *but, however, though, although, nevertheless, despite, whereas, while*

These connectors can link two contrasting ideas. 'But' and 'however' are very

similar, though 'however' gives more emphasis to the contrast and is more common at the start of a sentence. The connectors 'though' and 'although' are also very similar with the only difference being their position. 'Though' can be at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence, while 'although' cannot be used at the end of a sentence. Here are some examples:

- *They like pasta **but** they don't like rice.*
- *It's a nice city and it's fun for a holiday. **However**, I wouldn't like to live there.*
- *She studies quite a lot **though** she could do more.*
- ***Although** he works hard he hasn't had a promotion for years.*
- *I like this model a lot. **Nevertheless**, I'm not going to buy it yet.*
- ***Despite** the rain, they went for a walk.*
- *The central area of the country is quite flat, **whereas** the north is hilly.*

- *I thought the film was terrible, **while** my friends thought it was really good.*

CONDITION – as long as, provided that, unless, otherwise

When we want to express the idea that something can happen only in certain conditions, we can use conditional connectors. For example:

- *You can play video games **as long as** you tidy your room first.*
- *We'll keep the goods for you **provided that** we receive the payment soon.*
- ***Unless** the economy improves, interest rates will go down again.*
- *We need to hurry up, **otherwise** we'll miss the flight.*

REASON – because, as, due to, so (that), in order to

When we want to explain the reason for something we need to use this groups of connectors, the most common of which is 'because'. For example:

- *Many people study English **because** it's important for their jobs.*
- ***As** you didn't do a very good job with this essay, I'd like you to do it again.*
- ***Due to** heavy traffic we arrived half an hour late.*
- *We left early **so** we could have a coffee before starting.*
- *They are having a conference call **in order to** finalize the contract details.*

RESULT – *so, therefore, as a result, consequently, subsequently*

When you want to express the consequence of an action, use result connectors. They all have a similar meaning though 'so' is more common in spoken English and is more informal. The others are more appropriate in a formal, written context. Here are some examples:

- *I'd forgotten my car keys **so** I had to go back into the office to get them.*
- *Last year's results were excellent, **therefore** you will all receive a bonus.*
- *Crime rates are increasing. **As a result** the government is going to hire more police officers.*
- *Marco did really well at university and **consequently** received several job offers.*
- *Subsequently, new guidelines were issued to all pilots flying for Emirates.*

As you can see, connectors are useful in many situations and can transform your level of fluency in conversation. So start to practice now by using them yourself when you speak and write, and pay attention to connectors when you read and listen.