

Speak Fluent English Thanks to Conversational Connectors

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

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’. Use the above-mentioned 7 connectors to complete the following examples:

- *They like English _____ study a lot.*
- *He’s well-qualified, _____ he’s very charismatic.*
- *The house is beautiful. _____, the price is low.*
- *Sport is fun. _____, it’s a great way to socialize.*

- _____ to the new tunnel, the local council is constructing a bridge.
- I play the piano and I _____ play the violin.
- _____ being helpful, Carmen is very practical.

TIME – as, while, as soon as, when

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. Use the above-mentioned 4 connectors to complete the following examples:

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

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

In a similar way to time connectors, sequential connectors enable us to indicate the order of events. Use the above-mentioned 7 connectors to complete the following examples:

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

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

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. Use the above-mentioned 8 connectors to complete the following examples:

- *They like pasta _____ they don't like rice.*
- *It's a nice city and it's fun for a holiday. _____, I wouldn't like to live there.*
- *She studies quite a lot _____ she could do more.*
- *_____ he works hard he hasn't had a promotion for years.*
- *I like this model a lot. _____, I'm not going to buy it yet.*
- *_____ the rain, they went for a walk.*
- *The central area of the country is quite flat, _____ the north is hilly.*
- *I thought the film was terrible, _____ my friends thought it was really good.*

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

When we want to express the idea that something can happen only in certain conditions, we can use conditional connectors. Use the above-mentioned 4 connectors to complete the following examples:

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

REASON – as, because, in order to, so (that), due 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'. Use the above-mentioned 5 connectors to complete the following examples:

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

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

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. Use the above-mentioned 5 connectors to complete the following examples:

- *I'd forgotten my car keys _____ I had to go back into the office to get them.*
- *Last year's results were excellent, _____ you will all receive a bonus.*
- *Crime rates are increasing. _____ the government is going to hire more police officers.*
- *Marco did really well at university and _____ received several job offers.*
- *_____, 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.

TASK: Work with your partner and make a list of 10 aviation-related sentences including 10 of the above-mentioned connectors.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.