

Common correlative conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions are usually coordinating in nature because the sentence fragments they connect tend to be of equal rank. As you know, a coordinating conjunction connects two independent clauses. A subordinating conjunction, on the other hand, connects a dependent clause to an independent clause.

Some correlative conjunctions and their uses are explained below.

Such ... that

It was such a hot afternoon that we decided to stay indoors. (Here the correlative connects the two clauses: It was a hot afternoon and We decided to stay indoors.)

She was such a bad tempered woman that nobody liked her. (Here the correlative connects the two clauses: She was a bad tempered woman and Nobody liked her.)

Scarcely ...when

I had scarcely closed my eyes when someone knocked on the door.

OR Scarcely had I closed my eyes when someone knocked on the door.

As (many/much) ... as

There are as many saucers as there are cups.

You are not as clever as you think you are.

His wife is as tall as he is.

No sooner ... than

She no sooner completed one project than she started working on the next.

OR No sooner did she complete one project than she started working on the next.

Students sometimes wrongly use when in this structure. Remember that sooner is a comparative word and hence it should be followed by than, not when.

Rather ... than

I would rather read a book than watch TV.

They would rather starve than surrender.

She would rather dance than sing.

The expression rather than is normally used in parallel structures. For example, with two adjectives, two adverbs, nouns, infinitives etc.

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I would prefer to visit Switzerland rather than Australia.

I would prefer to walk rather than drive.