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Because of conjunction

Because is a conjunction. Because of is a preposition. As a conjunction, because is followed by a clause. Because of is followed by a noun/pronoun. Fill in the blanks with because or because of. Answers 1. We cancelled the trip because of the rain. 2. He sat down because he was feeling dizzy. 3. It is because of your mother that we got into this mess. 4. We hurried indoors because it was raining. 5. I was late because of the traffic. 6. We could not reach on time because the traffic was terrible. 7. The exam was easy because he knew all the answers. 8. He can't walk because of his illness. 9. He lost his job because of the recession. 10. Because of the language problem, I couldn't win the argument. Let's go back to middle school English class for a moment. What is a conjunction? Conjunctions are parts of speech that join two words or phrases together. There are three types of conjunctions: coordinating, subordinating, and correlative. Coordinating conjunctions join two grammatically equal words or phrases. They're usually remembered by the acronym FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. Subordinating conjunctions join a dependent clause to an independent clause. They make one phrase supplementary to the other. Correlative conjunctions function in the same way as coordinating conjunctions, but they're always used in pairs (either/or, both/and, etc.). When connecting clauses, a comma is always used before a coordinating conjunction but never before a subordinating conjunction.1 I was washing the dishes, and he was watching a movie. I was washing the dishes while he was watching a movie. The dog was sad, but the cat was happy. The dog was sad that the cat was happy. Coordinating conjunctions give both clauses equal weight, while subordinating conjunctions give more weight to the first clause. Similarly, subordinating conjunctions can be used to start a sentence, but coordinating conjunctions cannot.2 Correct: After I went to bed, the phone rang. Incorrect: And the phone rang. I went to bed. The word because is commonly taught to be a subordinating conjunction. It shows causation, automatically making one statement dependent on the other. He went to bed because he was tired. Because it's cold, I put on a coat. This is true. It is a subordinating conjunction. But it's not just a subordinating conjunction. See, linguistic trends have made it into so much more than that. The word because can also function as a preposition, such as in the phrase "because physics." Some consider because of to be a compound preposition, rather than a conjunction-preposition combo, but we'll come back to that. Because as a preposition came about because the internet. Language and grammar are constantly evolving, and people are constantly introducing new ways to use words. When these catch on, we suddenly have a new rule of grammar.3 That being said, I am proposing another update to the colorful grammatical history of because: as well as a subordinating conjunction and a preposition, because is a coordinating conjunction. While because often relegates one clause to a dependent role, it doesn't always. The boy is sick because he didn't wear a coat. The boy is sick, because the flu is bad this year. The coordinating conjunction for has become largely archaic and has been replaced in modern writing with because. But what's the difference? Here's some boring but necessary background for you: The traditional seven coordinating conjunctions can be split even further into four categories: cumulative, adversative, disjunctive, and illative. Cumulative conjunctions (and), also known as copulative or additive conjunctions, add words or phrases together. Adversative conjunctions (but, yet) express contrast between words or phrases. Disjunctive conjunctions (or, nor) present alternatives. Illative conjunctions (for, so), also known as final conjunctions—also the weird black sheep of the conjunction family—denote a phrase that is inferred from or a result of another phrase. Where cumulative and disjunctive conjunctions place equal emphasis on the clauses they are connecting (this and that, that or this), adversative and illative conjunctions place more emphasis on the secondary clause, as it would either be in direct contrast to the first (adversative) or the grounds for or consequence of the first (illative). Illative conjunctions do not denote cause. Cause places emphasis on the first clause (the phrase that is being caused) using a subordinating conjunction. He put on a coat because he was cold. In this sentence, because functions as the subordinating conjunction everyone knows it to be. The first clause (he put on a coat) is emphasized over the second (he was cold), since the second is simply the cause of the first. He put on a coat, for he was cold. This sentence isn't different, not really. But for is a coordinating conjunction. The distinction is tricky, largely archaic, and frankly a bit arbitrary, but here it is: for does not indicate causation but inferred consequence. The cold is not the cause of the man putting on a coat, but rather, putting on a coat is assumedly the consequence of the man being cold. Absurd, right? But take this example: She is generous, for she helped me. The first clause (she is generous) is an inference based on the second clause (she helped me). The sentence could be rewritten: She is a generous person, which I know because she helped me. If, however, you one-for-one replace the coordinating for with the subordinating because, it changes the meaning of the sentence. She is generous because she helped me. No longer is she assumed to be a generous person with the single instance of her helping generosity being taken as proof, her generosity is relegated to the one instance in which she offered help. I'm splitting hairs, I know. But bear with me. For and because are no longer perfectly interchangeable in this example, as the coordinating conjunction gives equal weight to the clauses and the subordinating conjunction does not. Now take this sentence: She is generous, because she helped me. Most editors and grammarians would tell you that this sentence is incorrect, that you should never put a comma before a subordinating conjunction. And you shouldn't. But the sentence makes sense, does it not? The comma returns the sentence to its former meaning, placing equal emphasis on both clauses. (Or even, like other illative conjunctions, stronger emphasis on the second clause.) Why? Because because has evolved past being a lowly Latin-based, by-the-cause-of subordinating conjunction. It has replaced for in the modern lexicon and functions as not only a subordinating conjunction and a preposition, but also as a coordinating conjunction. So. If you accept my premise that because is both a subordinating and coordinating conjunction, how do you tell the difference between the two? Does your sentence warrant a comma or not? Well, that largely depends on what you want your sentence to say. If you're using because simply to say that this happened because that happened, then you're using a subordinating conjunction. No comma. If you're using because to imply that the first statement is a logical conclusion that can be drawn from the second, you're using a coordinating conjunction. Comma. If you're unsure, you're probably using a subordinating conjunction. Default to the traditional rules of grammar. No comma. Grammar exists to make written language coherent from one person to the next, so if adding or deleting a comma is going to change the meaning of your sentence, go with the structure that says what you want it to. If you don't really see the difference or don't care, go with the default rules you were taught. Whether or not you accept my premise that because is a coordinating conjunction—though there is no denying that's how the word is popularly used—it's important to point out that nobody perfectly agrees on the exact rules of grammar. Remember how some people believe that because of is a compound preposition? They're not wrong, it's just another way of looking at something. It barely changes functionality, if at all. Mostly it just changes how sentences are diagrammed, which can be done many different ways anyway thanks to language ambiguity. Language is constantly evolving, and the rules of grammar are, at their base, a way of making written language decipherable. They change as language changes. And while that doesn't mean you can throw all the rules of grammar out the window because you don't feel like learning them, it means that there's a little bit of wiggle room in the specifics. But either way, for the love of all that's good in this world, don't add a comma just because you take a breath. 1 Commas before subordinating conjunctions are sometimes used for clarity, especially in the case of negated statements or extreme contrast, but as a rule of thumb, putting a comma before one is incorrect. 2While there's great debate whether sentences in formal writing can be started with coordinating conjunctions, it's always done with only one clause, never two as in the example. 3This does not mean that you can excuse your terrible grammar and spelling with "because language evolution." Language still has to have structure, otherwise no one would be able to understand each other, used for showing the reason something happens or the reason why it is described in a particular way! couldn't phone you because I hadn't got your number.It's a really useful book because it explains everything very clearly.The hotel's difficult to find because the road isn't signposted.'Why all this fuss about security?' 'Because it's important.'He's always criticizing me - maybe it's because I'm a woman.because of: Stacey retired in 1987, partly because of ill health.Because of the Asian crisis, the company's profits fell by 15% during 1997. Get Our Basic English Grammar Ebook (pdf) Want to download all the grammar lessons to learn offline? For just \$4.99, you will get instant access to our Basic English Grammar ebook (pdf, 93 pages). It includes 40 basic English grammar lessons covering most of the English grammar tenses and most-used structures. Get Our Grammar EbookP/S: For more English lesson packages, check out Our Resources Page here. Disclaimer: Although Geoff Pullum literally wrote the book on English grammar, his views regarding the word "because" do not necessarily reflect those of @lexiconvalley. Many people were somewhat surprised that the American Dialect Society's "Word of the Year" was because in its use before a noun or noun phrase, as in "Because Science" (to choose a recent Slate headline). It is perhaps unprecedented for a word in a minor part-of-speech category, in this case preposition, to be chosen over an emergent or fashionable word in one of the major categories. Here are some recent winners: 2012 - hashtag (noun) 2011 - occupy (verb) 2010 - app (noun) 2009 - tweet (noun and verb) 2008 - bailout (noun) 2007 - subprime (adjective) 2006 - plutoed (past participle of a verb) 2005 - truthiness (noun) You'll note that I referred to because as a preposition, which warrants some explanation given the remarkable fact that seemingly every dictionary on the market, as far as I can tell, disagrees. For example, the American Heritage Dictionary, whose entry is representative, reports that because is a conjunction, but also that there is a word spelled because of that is a preposition. Both claims are flamingly and demonstrably wrong and here's why. Traditional grammar recognizes that conjunctions come in two varieties: subordinating conjunctions and coordinating conjunctions. But because isn't like either. The classic subordinating conjunction is that (that can also be a pronoun, an adjective, or an adverb, but those are different usages). As a conjunction, that introduces a subordinate clause, as in Ted says that the world is flat—clauses that are nearly always what is called a complement. In other words, they are required or specifically licensed by the foregoing main clause word, in this case says. That is meaningless in its own right, and often omissible: Ted says the world is flat is a grammatical alternative. Also, shifting that and the clause it introduces to the beginning often sounds pretty weird. That the world is flat, Ted says only makes sense in certain special contexts in which different things Ted says are being contrasted with one another. None of this holds for because, as seen in a sentence like Ted is mocked because he holds ridiculous beliefs. Here, because introduces a clause that is never a complement; rather it is always an optional adjunct. Because is not meaningless, but contributes a crucial logical relation of cause or reason. The word can never be omitted without radical change to the meaning and, usually, the grammatical integrity of the sentence: Ted is ridiculed he holds ridiculous beliefs is not grammatical. And shifting it to the front is perfectly natural: Because he holds ridiculous beliefs, Ted is mocked. The classic "coordinating conjunction" is and, as in Roses are red and violets are blue. Switching the positions of the two clauses separated by the and normally gives a grammatical result with the same truth conditions: Violets are blue and roses are red is true if and only if roses are red and violets are blue is true. Preposing the and plus what follows it is not permitted: And violets are blue, roses are red is totally ungrammatical. The opposite of all of this holds for because. The sentence Roses are red because violets are blue may express a strange claim, but it has a completely different meaning from Violets are blue because roses are red (the causal arrow is reversed). Also, Because violets are blue, roses are red is a grammatical, alternative way of expressing the same thing as Roses are red because violets are blue. Why then do all dictionaries make the self-evidently false claim that because is a conjunction, and therefore either like that or like and? In short, they are all followers of a tradition that has needed rethinking for 200 years (some would say it's more like 2,000 years, because it originates in classical times). They are respecting an ancient analysis that doesn't work. It is based on the vague assertion that a conjunction is a word that "joins" two elements together. Very little thought is required to see that if using C to join A together with B means simply forming the sequence "A C B," then almost anything can be called a conjunction; no stricter or more tightly framed definition has been given. Which brings us to the similarly mindless claim that there is a preposition spelled because of. First off, I would never claim that a dictionary should not recognize something as a word if it has a space in it; I think Santa Cruz is best thought of as a word, and there are certainly space-containing words that are not proper nouns. But because of isn't one of them. There is no preposition because of. These are two separate words, with their own functions, capable of being widely separated by other words. Of, naturally, is indeed a preposition. It is the commonest and most stereotypical of all prepositions in English. But what about because? Contrary to what all the dictionaries tell us, it is also a preposition. To explain: 1. Some prepositions can occur with no complement, as in: We went in . 2. Some can occur with a noun phrase (NP), as in: We went through the front door; 3. And some can occur with a clause, as in: My son is waiting for me to pick him up; 4. And some can occur with a preposition phrase (PP) that begins with of, as in: They did it out of ignorance. The change that has caught the eye of the American Dialect Society is simply that because has picked up the extra privilege already possessed by many other prepositions: it now allows a noun phrase (NP) as complement. So, in the following table of prepositions (the rows) and their complement categories (the columns), a single entry has been changed (✓ means "grammatically permitted," * means "grammatically forbidden," and % means "grammatically permitted in some semantically limited contexts"): nothing NP of-PP clause in ✓ ✓ * * out ✓ % % * since ✓ * ✓ of * ✓ * * because * * ✓ / The language has simply added to its stock of grammatical possibilities a single check mark, replacing the second asterisk in the last row. And if you would like the dictionary to cover (as Wiktionary does) the colloquial use of because on its own, as an imperiously uninformative answer to a why question—as in, "Why do I have to eat my vegetables? Because!"—then we can get rid of the first asterisk as well, and the relevant line will look like this: nothing NP of-PP clause because ✓ / ✓ / ✓ / Because is a preposition that is sometimes used with no complement, sometimes (in the new usage that the ADS has just recognized) with an noun phrase complement, sometimes (much more commonly) with an of-PP complement , and sometimes with a clause. That's an accurate classification, which dictionaries ought to adopt because, well ... because syntax. A version of this post originally appeared on Language Log.

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