

## SUBORDINATING IDEAS

Subordinating an idea indicates that you consider it less important than another idea. A sentence that contains a primary idea and subordinate idea(s) can act as a good thesis statement because it can suggest a focus for a paper and provide some of the reasoning behind your views. Subordinating ideas also helps you make smooth transitions between sentences and paragraphs.

Suppose you want to combine these ideas:

*Fewer and fewer oysters are left in the Chesapeake Bay.*

*Increasing numbers of fishermen tong for oysters during the bleak winter months.*

You can combine the statements to emphasize the increasing number of fishermen (which becomes your primary idea):

*Increasing numbers of fishermen tong for oysters during the bleak winter months so that fewer and fewer oysters are left in the Chesapeake Bay.*

You could also write the sentence to have your primary idea be the fact that fewer oysters are left:

*Fewer and fewer oysters are left in the Chesapeake Bay because increasing numbers of fishermen tong for oysters during the bleak winter months.*

In both examples, the primary idea could stand alone as a complete sentence, whereas the subordinate ideas begin with subordinating conjunctions *so that* and *because*. These words indicate that what follows receives less weight in the sentence.

Some subordinating conjunctions are listed below and are grouped according to the relationships they signal.

Contrast: *although, even though, while*

Degree: *inasmuch as, insofar as, to the extent that*

Cause: *because, since, as*

Time: *when, whenever, while, once, before, after, since, until, as long as, as soon as*

Condition: *if, when, provided that, in case, assuming that, as long as*

Place: *where, wherever*

Negative Condition: *unless*

Alternative Condition: *whether or not*