There are two kinds of conjunctions – coordinating and subordinating.

Read the following sentences:

God made the country and man made the town.
I have not seen him since he was a boy.

In the first sentence, two independent clauses of equal importance are joined together by and. A conjunction which joins together two clauses of equal rank is called a coordinating conjunction.

In the second sentence since joins two clauses of unequal importance. I have not seen him is the main clause because it makes complete sense and can stand alone. Since he was a boy is a subordinate clause which modifies the verb have not seen in the main clause.

A conjunction that joins together clauses of unequal importance is called a subordinating conjunction.

Coordinating conjunctions

The chief coordinating conjunctions are and, but, or, nor, so, for, either...or, neither...nor. A coordinating conjunction usually connects sentence elements of the same grammatical clause: e.g. nouns with nouns, adverbs with adverbs, phrases with phrases and clauses with clauses.

Jack and Jill went up the hill. (Here the conjunction and joins the nouns Jack and Jill.)
He worked diligently and patiently. (Here the conjunction and joins the adverbs diligently and patiently.)
He is slow but he is steady. (Here the conjunction but joins the clauses ‘he is slow’ and ‘he is steady’.)

Kinds of coordinating conjunctions
Coordinating conjunctions

There are mainly four kinds of coordinating conjunctions:

- Cumulative or copulative
- Adversative
- Alternative
- Illative