

Correct use of conjunctions - Part III

Scarcely...when

It is wrong to use than instead of when in these sentences:

Scarcely had I reached the station than the train steamed out. (Incorrect)

Scarcely had I reached the station when the train steamed out. (Correct)

If scarcely begins the sentence it should be immediately followed by had.

Scarcely I had reached the station when the train steamed out. (Incorrect)

Scarcely had I reached the station when the train steamed out. (Correct)

I had scarcely reached the station when the train steamed out. (Correct)

Correlatives

The correlatives either...or, neither...nor, both...and, not only...but also must be placed immediately before the words they relate to.

Neither he would eat nor allow us to eat. (Incorrect)

He would neither eat nor allow us to eat. (Correct)

Neither I shall follow your instructions nor resign. (Incorrect)

I shall neither follow your instructions nor resign. (Correct)

He not only visited France but also Germany.

He visited not only France but also Germany.

Exercise

Fill in the blanks with appropriate conjunctions

1. I would rather be an engineer ————— a doctor.

2. I cannot excuse you ————— you apologize.

3. Neither a lender ————— a borrower be.

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4. Work hard ————— you should fail.

5. Clever ————— he was, he could not solve the problem.

Answers

1. than

2. unless

3. nor

4. lest

5. as