

Subordinating Conjunction: “weil”

In *Einheit 2.6* you learned about the **coordinating conjunctions** *und, oder, aber, sondern, and denn*. They are used to connect two main clauses; the word order in those clauses doesn't change (the verb is in second position in both clauses).

In *Einheit 3*, you have encountered a different conjunction several times: “*weil*” (=because). “*Weil*” is a **subordinating conjunction**, which means it is used to join a main clause to a dependent clause, i.e. it “subordinates” one clause to the other. A dependent clause does not express a complete thought and therefore it cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.

Let's look at some examples:

main clause	dependent clause
<i>Ursula arbeitet in einem Kindergarten,</i>	<i>weil sie Kinder sehr interessant <u>findet</u>.</i>
Ursula works in a kindergarten,	because she finds children very interesting.

main clause	dependent clause
<i>Mia fährt gern mit ihren Großeltern nach Italien,</i>	<i>weil sie dort mit ihrem Opa surfen <u>geht</u>.</i>
Mia likes to go to Italy with her grandparents,	because she goes surfing there with her grandpa.

main clause	dependent clause
<i>Luca fährt mit dem Bus zur Universität,</i>	<i>weil er eine Vorlesung <u>hat</u>.</i>
Luca takes the bus to university,	because he has a lecture.

When the sentence begins with the main clause, the word order in the main clause is regular (i.e. the verb is in second position). **In the dependent clause which is introduced by the conjunction “weil”, the verb moves to the end of the sentence.**

main clause	dependent clause
<i>Ursula arbeitet in einem Kindergarten,</i>	<i>weil sie Kinder sehr interessant <u>findet</u>.</i>
Ursula works in a kindergarten,	because she finds children very interesting.

If you use a **separable prefix verb** in your main clause, the verb goes in second position and the **prefix** goes to the **end of the clause**:

*Luca **macht** den Computer **aus**, weil er müde ist.*

If you use a **separable prefix verb** in the dependent **clause** (with *weil*), the **prefix and the verb stay together** and go to the **end of the sentence**:

Tanja ist traurig, weil ihr Freund sie nicht anruft.

If you turn around the order of the clauses, they look like this:

*Weil Ursula Kinder sehr interessant **findet**, arbeitet sie in einem Kindergarten.*

*Weil Luca eine Vorlesung **hat**, fährt er mit dem Bus zur Universität.*

When the sentence begins with the dependent clause, the dependent clause (starting with the conjunction and ending with the verb) is considered to occupy position I, so that the verb of the main clause starts off the main clause and comes right after the comma, followed by the subject.

position I	position II: verb	position III: subject	position IV: complements
<i>Weil Luca eine Vorlesung hat,</i>	<i>fährt</i>	<i>er</i>	<i>mit dem Bus zur Universität.</i>

It is more common, though, to start a sentence that includes “*weil*” with the main clause, followed by the subordinating conjunction and the dependent clause.

“*weil*” is used to give a reason, to answer the question “*warum*” (why):

Warum arbeitet Ursula in einem Kindergarten?

- Weil sie Kinder sehr interessant findet.

Warum fährt Mia gern mit ihren Großeltern nach Italien?

- Weil sie dort mit ihrem Opa surfen geht.

Warum fährt Luca mit dem Bus zur Universität?

- Weil er eine Vorlesung hat.

ACHTUNG In a sentence with a **subordinating conjunction**, the subordinating conjunction “kicks” the **verb to the end**.