learning target

Aim of this section is to learn how to connect two sentences.

German	English
Sie ist nett **und** sie sieht gut aus.	She is nice **and** she looks pretty.
Ich werde dich anrufen **oder** ich werde dir schreiben.	I'll call you **or** I'll write to you.
Ich weiß, **dass** sie mich mag.	I know **that** she likes me.

rules

We have to distinguish between two types of conjunctions:

- coordinating conjunctions
- subcoordinating conjunctions

coordinating conjunctions

Coordinating conjunctions join two "independent" sentences.
That means both sentences could stand alone without the other sentence and they would make sence alone.

example:

- Ich lernte für die Prüfung, **aber** er ging ins Kino. (I studied for the exam but he went to the cinema.)

Both sentences could stand alone and would make sense:

1. Ich lernte für die Prüfung (I studied for the exam.)
2. Er ging ins Kino. (He went to the cinema.)

The word order remains in both sentences as if they stood alone.

all coordinating conjunctions

und=and

- Ich bin hier **und** sie wartet auf mich im Cafe. (I'm here and she is waiting for me in the cafe.)
- Sei vorsichtig **und** pass auf dich auf! (Be careful and take care!)

oder=or

- Sie spielt gerne Badminton **oder** sie singt mit ihren Freunden. (She likes playing badminton or she sings with her friends.)
- Ich muss jetzt lernen **oder** ich werde die Prüfung nicht bestehen. (I must study now or I won't pass the exam.)

denn=because

- Ich will nicht lernen, **denn** das Wetter ist so schön. (I don't want to study because the weather is so nice.)
- Cathy kommt bald nach Hause, **denn** es geht ihr schon besser. (Cathy is coming home soon because she is doing better already.)

aber=but

- Ich spreche mit dem Mann, **aber** ich kenne seinen Namen nicht. (I talk to the man but I don't know his name.)
- Ich habe keine Zeit, **aber** ich komme trotzdem ins Cafe. (I have no time but I'll come to the cafe, however.)

sondern=but

- Sie spricht kein Tagalog, **sondern** Cebuano. (She doesn't speak Tagalog but Cebuano.)
- Die Kinder spielen nicht draußen, **sondern** sie sehen fern. (The children don't play outside but they watch tv.)

As you can see we have two words in German to say "but" and it's a bit tricky to explain the difference.

Both words are used if the idea of second sentence is in contrast to the idea of the first sentence.
There is, however, a slight difference: "Sondern" is only used if the two ideas come for the same "**category**".
With "category" I mean eg. a profession (doctor / manager) or a game (tennis / badminton) or a temperatur (cold / warm)...

example:

- Es ist nicht kalt, **sondern** sehr warm. (It's not cold but very warm.)
- Es ist nicht kalt, **aber** ich ziehe mir eine dicke Jacke an. (It's not cold but I'll wear a big coat.)

In the first example "cold" and "warm" are both adjectives which describe temperature.
So, they come from one "category".

In the second example the two ideas of the two sentences are in contrast, too
but one sentence describes a temperatur and they other what somebody is going to wear.

last hint:

At last hint which might help you is, that there must be a negation form (nicht or kein) in the first sentence
to use "sondern." If there is no "nicht or kein" in the first sentence you have to use "aber".

subcoordinating conjunctions

Subcoordinating conjunctions join a dependent clause (subordinate clause) to an independent clause (main clause).
The dependent clause (mostly the second sentence) doesn't make sense without the sentence in front.

example:

- Ich weiß, **dass** wir uns wiedersehen. (I know that we will meet again.)

The first sentence could stand alone. The second sentence, however, doesn't make sense alone. In the second sentence you don't know what the "that" is refering to.

1. Ich weiß. (I know.)
2. dass wir uns wiedersehen. (that we'll meet again.)

The word order in the independent clause (main clause) remains as usual.
The word order in the dependent clause (subordinate clause) changes.

I don't want to go into detail here but just this rule: "In dependent clauses the verb goes to the very end of the sentence". Check the topic "*Satzstellung*" (word order) for more details.

10 important subcoordinating conjunctions

dass=that

- Er sagte, **dass** du sehr fleißig bist. (He said that you are very diligent.)
- Ich möchte, **dass** du mich anrufst. (I want you to call me.)

weil=because

- Ich muss jetzt schlafen, **weil** ich morgen früh aufstehe. (I have to sleep now because I'll get up early tomorrow.)
- Wir hatten einen Streit, **weil** er so stur war. (We had an argument because he was so stubborn.)

ob=if / whether

- Ich weiß nicht, **ob** sie heute zur Universität kommt. (I don't know if she'll come to university today.)
- Er fragte mich, **ob** du in Cagayan wohnst. (He asked me if you live in Cagayan.)

seit=since

- Er ist ein neuer Mensch, **seit** er sie kennt. (He is a new man since he've known her.)
- Er ist immer gestresst, **seit** er mit ihr zusammen ist . (He is always stressed since he's been together with her.)

während=while

- Bitte füttere den Hund, **während** ich weg bin. (Please, feet the dog while I'm away.)
- Wir schauten fern, **während** die Kinder draußen spielten . (We've been watching tv while the kids played outside.)

obwohl=although

- Sie fuhr mit mir nach Bohol, **obwohl** ihre Freunde dagegen waren. (She went with me to Bohol although her friends were against it.)
- Sie lernt Deutsch, **obwohl** sie noch nie in Deutschland war. (She is studying German although she hasn't been to Germany before.)

bis=until

- Warte, **bis** ich zurück bin! (Wait, until I'll be back!)
- Wir spielten Volleyball, **bis** es dunkel wurde. (We've played volleyball until it became dark.)

bevor=before

- Bitte hilf mir, **bevor** du gehst! (Please, help me before you go!)
- Ich laß viel über die Philippinen, **bevor** ich sie besuchte. (I read a lot about the Philippines before I visited her.)

als=when

- Ich war überrascht, **als** ich sie das erste mal gesehen habe. (I was surprised when I saw her for the first time.)
- Sie lächelte, **als** sie ihn sah. (She smiled when she saw him.)

damit=so that

- Cathy lernt Deutsch, **damit** sie das Visum bekommt. (Cathy is studying German so that she'll get the visa.)
- Er kauft sich einen Computer, **damit** er mit ihm spielen kann. (He buys a computer so that he can play with it.)

further important subcoordinating conjunctions

German	English	German	English
als ob	as if	seitdem	since
anstatt	instead of	sobald	as soon as
da	because	solange	as long as
daher	therefore, thus	trotz	despite
ehe	before	wenn	when / if
nachdem	after	wann	when

last hint:

Dependent clauses are separated by a comma from the rest.

So, always put a comma in front of the subcoordinating conjunction.

It also makes it easier to read the two sentences which are joined together.