SO VS. SO THAT

"*So*" acts as a **coordinating conjunction** and indicates a response or counter action. "*So that*" introduces a **subordinate clause**. It shows an action producing an intended result or a cause producing an effect.

We often shorten phrases in American English, using "so" when we mean "so that." Punctuate your sentences to indicate whether you are using "so" as a conjunction or as a shortened form of "so that."

HOW TO USE "SO" AND "SO THAT"

1. **Separate two complete sentences with a comma and "so"**– The first sentence conveys action, so the second sentence expresses a response/counter action.
2. **Separate two complete sentences with "so that"** – The first sentence communicates an action/cause so that the second sentence can address the result/effect.
3. **Introduce a subject-verb clause with "so that" and a comma** – The first subject-verb clause states the intended result/effect, and the second reveals the action/cause.

EXAMPLES

Separate two complete sentences with a comma and "so."

- Jake bought the marshmallows (action), *so* Tina bought the chocolate and graham crackers (response).
    - "So" indicates Tina's response to Jake's action.

Separate two complete sentences with "so that."

- Pavlov rang the bell (action) *so that* the dog would salivate (intended result).
    - "So that" emphasizes that ringing the bell causes the dog to salivate.

Introduce a subject-verb clause with "so that" and a comma.

- *So that* she would not be late for class (intended result), Elizabeth set her alarm (action).
    - "So that" indicates the intended result of Elizabeth setting her alarm.

PRACTICE NOW