

The Clause

Independent and Subordinate Clauses

Diagnostic Preview

A. Identifying Independent and Subordinate Clauses

Identify the italicized clause in each of the following sentences as *independent* or *subordinate*. If the italicized clause is subordinate, tell whether it is used as an *adverb*, an *adjective*, or a *noun*.

EXAMPLE 1. Miguel and Bette, *who were visiting us over the Labor Day weekend*, have returned to their home in Rhode Island.

1. *subordinate; adjective*

1. *Whenever Jorge practices the clarinet*, his neighbor's beagles, Banjo and Randolph, howl.
2. Advertisements encourage people to want products, and *many people cannot distinguish between their passing wants and their essential needs*.
3. In Ms. Weinberg's science class we learned *that chalk is made up mostly of calcium carbonate*.
4. Liliuokalani, *who was the last queen of Hawaii*, wrote "Aloha Oe"; she was an accomplished songwriter.
5. Does each of you know *how you can protect yourself* if a tornado strikes our area?

6. *If there is a tornado warning*, go quickly to the lowest level in your house, cover your head with your hands, and lie flat or crouch low until the danger is past.
7. The American Indians *who inhabited the area of Connecticut around the Naugatuck River* were called the Pequots.
8. *American music has been enriched by Ella Fitzgerald, Leslie Uggams, and Lena Horne*, three well-known African American vocalists.
9. *That the girls' volleyball team was well coached* was demonstrated last night when the team won the state championship.
10. *As you enter the school*, the principal's office is the third room on your right.

B. Classifying Sentences According to Structure

Classify each sentence in the following paragraphs as *simple*, *compound*, *complex*, or *compound-complex*.

EXAMPLE [1] In January 1991, Phoebe Jeter displayed leadership and courage.

1. *simple*

[11] Just who is this Phoebe Jeter from Sharon, South Carolina? [12] Phoebe Jeter, serving as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army, led a platoon during the Persian Gulf Conflict in 1991. [13] Jeter will always remember the tense January night when she heard the words "Scud alert!" [14] On her orders, thirteen Patriot missiles were fired, and at least two Scud missiles were destroyed. [15] When the Persian Gulf Conflict was over, Jeter had the satisfaction of knowing that she had successfully defended U.S. troops.

[16] That 40 percent of the women who served in the Gulf were African Americans may be an underestimate. [17] Figures were not released by the Pentagon, but some say the actual number may have been closer to 50 percent. [18] The Persian Gulf Conflict tested the mettle of all female military personnel involved; throughout the conflict, women shared hazardous assignments, primitive living conditions, and various battle responsibilities with men. [19] The professionalism and courage of the women who served in the Gulf earned them considerable respect. [20] Perhaps now, because of soldiers like Phoebe Jeter, people think differently about the role of women in the United States armed forces.

HELP

A subordinate clause that is capitalized and punctuated as a sentence is a **sentence fragment**.

Reference Note

For information on correcting sentence fragments, see page 489.

SKILLS FOCUS

Use clauses correctly.
Identify and use independent clauses.
Identify and use subordinate clauses.

What Is a Clause?

4a. A clause is a word group that contains a verb and its subject and that is used as a sentence or as part of a sentence.

Every clause has a subject and a verb. Not every clause, however, expresses a complete thought. A clause that expresses a complete thought is called an *independent clause*. A clause that does not express a complete thought is called a *subordinate clause*.

SENTENCE	Lichens are plants that are composed of fungi and algae.
	S V
INDEPENDENT CLAUSE	Lichens are plants [complete thought]
	S V
SUBORDINATE CLAUSE	that are composed of fungi and algae [incomplete thought]

The Independent Clause

4b. An independent (or main) clause expresses a complete thought and can stand by itself as a sentence.

EXAMPLES Ms. Martin explained the binary number system.
[one independent clause]

In the binary system, each number is expressed in

powers of two, and only the digits 0 and 1 are used.
[two independent clauses joined by a comma and *and*]

The binary system is a number system; however, it

is not the only number system. [two independent clauses joined by a semicolon, a conjunctive adverb, and a comma]

The binary number system is important to know

because it is used by computers. [an independent clause combined with a subordinate clause]

NOTE An Independent clause used by itself is generally called a sentence. The term *independent clause* is generally used when such a clause is joined with at least one other clause (either independent or subordinate) to make a sentence.

The Subordinate Clause

4c. A subordinate (or dependent) clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand by itself as a sentence.

Like a word or a phrase, a subordinate clause can be used as an adjective, a noun, or an adverb in a sentence.

EXAMPLES that we had collected
what Hui Su named her pet beagle
when Roberto proofread his essay

The thought expressed by a subordinate clause becomes complete when the clause is combined with an independent clause.

EXAMPLES Mr. Platero took the aluminum cans **that we had collected** to the recycling center. [adjective clause]
Do you know **what Hui Su named her pet beagle?** [noun clause]
When Roberto proofread his essay, he found several typographical errors. [adverb clause]

Exercise 1 Identifying Independent and Subordinate Clauses

Identify each italicized word group in the following paragraph as an *independent clause* or a *subordinate clause*.

EXAMPLE [1] The photographs on this page and the next page show *how eggs are processed in a large processing plant*.
1. subordinate clause

[1] Large plants like the one in the photographs are *where most eggs are processed today*. [2] After an egg is laid, *it gently rolls along the slanted floor of the cage to a narrow conveyor belt*. [3] These narrow conveyor belts converge into one wide belt *that runs directly into the processing plant*. [4] *As soon as the eggs reach the processing*

HELP

Subordinate means "lesser in rank or importance."



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plant, they are automatically sprayed with detergent and water. [5] The eggs then pass through a specially lit inspection area, where defective eggs can be detected and removed. [6] After the eggs are weighed, they are separated by weight into groups. [7] Each group of eggs goes onto a separate conveyor belt, which leads to a forklike lifting device. [8] This device lifts six eggs at a time while the empty egg cartons wait two feet below it. [9] The eggs are gently lowered into the cartons, which are then shipped to grocery stores and supermarkets. [10] What is truly amazing is that no human hands touch the eggs during the entire process.



Think as a Reader/Writer

Although the use of short, simple sentences is effective at times, overusing them will result in choppy writing. One way to avoid choppy sentences is to change some sentences into subordinate clauses. Furthermore, by using subordinate clauses, you can avoid the unnecessary repetition of words, such as *The Amazon River* in the following example.

CHOPPY

The Amazon River is about 6,276 kilometers in length. The Amazon River is the second-longest river in the world.

SMOOTH

The Amazon River, which is about 6,276 kilometers in length, is the second-longest river in the world.

The Adjective Clause

4d. An adjective clause is a subordinate clause that modifies a noun or a pronoun.

An adjective clause follows the word or words that it modifies and tells what kind or which one.

EXAMPLES Dr. Charles Richter devised the Richter scale, **which is used to measure the magnitude of earthquakes.** [The adjective clause modifies the noun *scale*.]

Ferdinand Magellan, **who was the commander of the first expedition around the world,** was killed before the end of the journey. [The adjective clause modifies the noun *Ferdinand Magellan*.]

Didn't John Kieran once say, "I am a part of all **that I have read**?" [The adjective clause modifies the pronoun *all*.]

Relative Pronouns

Usually, an adjective clause begins with a *relative pronoun*—a word that not only relates an adjective clause to the word or words the clause modifies but also serves a function within the clause.

Common Relative Pronouns

that	which	who	whom	whose
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EXAMPLES Grandma Moses, **who began painting at the age of seventy-six**, became famous for her primitive style. [The relative pronoun *who* relates the adjective clause to the noun *Grandma Moses* and also serves as the subject of the verb *began*.]

The treasure **for which they are searching** belonged to the Aztec emperor Montezuma II. [The relative pronoun *which* relates the adjective clause to the noun *treasure* and serves as the object of the preposition *for*.]

I have read nearly every novel **that Shirley Ann Grau has written**. [The relative pronoun *that* relates the adjective clause to the noun *novel* and serves as the direct object of the verb *has written*.]

An adjective clause may begin with *when* or *where*. When used to introduce adjective clauses, these words are called **relative adverbs**.

EXAMPLES Uncle Chlm told Lori and me about the time **when he backpacked across the Island of Luzon**. [The adjective clause modifies the noun *time*.]

Pet birds should be kept in wide cages, **where they have room to fly**. [The adjective clause modifies the noun *cages*.]

Sometimes the relative pronoun or relative adverb is not expressed, but its meaning is understood.

EXAMPLES The documentary **[that]** I watched yesterday was about Harriet Tubman.

We will never forget the wonderful summer **[when]** we stayed with our grandparents in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico.

Depending on how it is used, an adjective clause is either essential or nonessential. An **essential (or restrictive) clause** provides information that is necessary to the meaning of a sentence. A **nonessential (or nonrestrictive) clause** provides additional information that can be omitted without changing the basic meaning of a sentence. Nonessential clauses are set off by commas.

ESSENTIAL Students **who are going to the track meet** can take the bus at 7:45 A.M. [Omitting the adjective clause would change the basic meaning of the sentence.]

NONESSENTIAL Nancy Stevens, **whose father is a pediatrician**, plans to study medicine. [The adjective clause gives extra information. Omitting the clause would not affect the basic meaning of the sentence.]

Reference Note

For information on using **who** and **whom** correctly, see page 183. For information on using **who**, **that**, and **which** correctly, see page 304.

Reference Note

For more about **punctuating nonessential clauses**, see page 352.

SKILLS FOCUS

Identify and use adjective clauses.

Exercise 2 Identifying Adjective Clauses and the Words They Modify

Identify the adjective clause in each of the following sentences, and give the noun or pronoun that it modifies. Then, tell whether the relative pronoun is used as a *subject*, *direct object*, or *object of a preposition* in the adjective clause.

EXAMPLE 1. Theo, who is the editor of the school newspaper, wrote an article about the inhumane treatment of laboratory animals.
1. *who is the editor of the school newspaper; Theo; subject*

1. Some of us have read *Native Son*, which Richard Wright published in 1940.
2. The book to which he referred was ordered yesterday.
3. Everyone in the stands at Wimbledon cheered for the player that had the better serve.
4. The fish that I caught yesterday weighed three pounds, but Sally's fish weighed five pounds.
5. The nominee for the prestigious award was a statesman whom everyone admired.
6. It's not easy to understand someone who mumbles.
7. They finally found my briefcase, which had been missing for two weeks.
8. Please indicate the people to whom we should go for help.
9. The guide advised those who enjoy Native American art to visit the new exhibit of Hopi weaving and pottery.
10. In March many countries have festivals that can be traced back to ancient celebrations of spring.

The Noun Clause

4e. A noun clause is a subordinate clause that is used as a noun.

A noun clause may be used as a *subject*, a *predicate nominative*, a *direct object*, an *indirect object*, or an *object of a preposition*.

SUBJECT **That Jim Hynes is a talented writer** is an understatement.

PREDICATE NOMINATIVE Another course in computers is **what the guidance counselor recommended**.

Reference Note

For more about **subjects**, **predicate nominatives**, **direct objects**, and **indirect objects**, see Chapter 2. For more about **objects of prepositions**, see page 100.

DIRECT OBJECT	The Greek astronomer Ptolemy believed that the sun orbited the earth.
INDIRECT OBJECT	The judges will award whoever has the most original costume a prize.
OBJECT OF A PREPOSITION	Grandmother Gutiérrez has a kind word for whomever she meets.

Common Introductory Words for Noun Clauses

how	whatever	whether	who	whomever
that	when	which	whoever	whose
what	where	whichever	whom	why

The word that introduces a noun clause may or may not have a grammatical function in the clause.

EXAMPLES Do you remember **who painted *Washington Crossing the Delaware***? [The word *who* introduces the noun clause and serves as the subject of the verb *painted*.]

Ms. Eva Picard, an environmentalist, will explain **what the greenhouse effect is**. [The word *what* introduces the noun clause and serves as a predicate nominative completing the meaning of the verb *is*.]

Millicent said **that she would be late**. [The word *that* introduces the noun clause but does not have any grammatical function within the noun clause.]

NOTE Another type of noun clause is the infinitive clause. An **infinitive clause** consists of an infinitive with a subject, along with any modifiers and complements the infinitive has. The entire infinitive clause can function as the direct object of a verb.

EXAMPLE I wanted **her to tell the O'Leary twins the story about Mr. Omar**. [The entire infinitive clause is the direct object of the verb *wanted*. *Her* is the subject of the infinitive *to tell*. The infinitive *to tell* has an indirect object, *twins*, and a direct object, *story*.]

Notice that the subject of an infinitive clause is in the objective case and that the infinitive takes the place of a main verb.

SKILLS FOCUS

Identify and use noun clauses.

Exercise 3 Identifying Noun Clauses

Identify the noun clause in each of the following sentences. Tell whether the noun clause is used as a *subject*, a *predicate nominative*, a *direct object*, an *indirect object*, or an *object of a preposition*.

- EXAMPLES**
1. Please address your letter to whoever manages the store.
1. *whoever manages the store*—object of a preposition
 2. Do you know where the new municipal center is?
2. *where the new municipal center is*—direct object
 3. Would you please tell me what the past tense of the verb *swing* is?
 4. I will listen carefully to whatever you say.
 5. Whatever you decide will be fine with me.
 6. Give whoever wants one a free pass.
 7. That Jill was worried seemed obvious to us all.
 8. Do you know why Eduardo missed the Cinco de Mayo celebration?
 9. You can appoint whomever you like.
 10. In biology class we learned about how hornets build their nests.
 11. A remote desert island was where the pirates buried their treasure.
 12. The teacher would like us to prepare the slides.

Review A Distinguishing Between Adjective Clauses and Noun Clauses

Identify the subordinate clause in each of the following sentences. Tell whether the subordinate clause is used as an *adjective* or a *noun*. Then, give the word that each adjective clause modifies, and state whether each noun clause is used as a *subject*, a *predicate nominative*, a *direct object*, or an *object of a preposition*.

- EXAMPLE**
1. Until recently, scientists believed that the giant sequoias of California were the oldest living trees on earth.
1. *that the giant sequoias of California were the oldest living trees on earth*—noun; direct object
 2. Now, however, that honor is given to the bristlecone pine, which is a small, gnarled tree native to the western part of the United States.
 3. Botanists estimate that some bristlecone pines are more than six thousand years old.
 4. The oldest sequoias are only 2,200 years old, according to those who know.
 5. Whoever respects hardiness has to respect the bristlecone.

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5. The high altitude of the Rocky Mountains, the bristlecone's natural habitat, is what makes the tree grow so slowly.
6. Do you think that the bristlecone pine will win any beauty contests?
7. Judge by what you can see in the photograph on this page.
8. The bristlecone's needles last on the branches for fifteen to thirty years, a length of time that is extraordinary.
9. Botanists tell us that the bristlecone is a member of the foxtail family.
10. Like all members of this family, the bristlecone has needle clusters that resemble a fox's tail.



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GRAMMAR

The Adverb Clause

4f. An adverb clause is a subordinate clause that modifies a verb, an adjective, or an adverb.

An adverb clause tells *how*, *when*, *where*, *why*, *to what extent*, or *under what condition*.

EXAMPLES The pitcher felt **as though all eyes were on him**. [The adverb clause modifies the verb *felt*, telling *how* the pitcher felt.]

Frédéric Chopin made his debut as a concert pianist **when he was eight years old**. [The adverb clause modifies the verb *made*, telling *when* Frédéric Chopin made his debut.]

Ariel takes her new camera **wherever she goes**. [The adverb clause modifies the verb *takes*, telling *where* Ariel takes her new camera.]

Happy **because I had made the team**, I hurried home to tell my parents and older brother the news. [The adverb clause modifies the adjective *Happy*, telling *why* I was happy.]

The water in the lake was much colder **than we had expected**. [The adverb clause modifies the adjective *colder*, telling *to what extent* the water was colder.]

TIPS & TRICKS

Some of the words that introduce adverb clauses may also introduce adjective clauses and noun clauses. To determine what type of clause the introductory word begins, look at how the clause is used in the sentence.

ADJECTIVE CLAUSE

The day **when we got our puppy** was a Friday. [The clause modifies the noun *day*.]

NOUN CLAUSE

Does Jimmy remember **when we got our puppy**? [The clause is the direct object of the verb *remember*.]

ADVERB CLAUSE

Our older dog sulked a little **when we got our puppy**. [The clause modifies the verb *sulked*.]

Reference Note

For more about punctuating **introductory adverb clauses**, see page 356.

Reference Note

The words **after**, **as**, **before**, **since**, and **until** may also be used as **prepositions**. See page 67.

Reference Note

For more information about the correct use of **pronouns in elliptical clauses**, see page 180.

SKILLS FOCUS

Identify and use elliptical clauses.

If we leave now, we will avoid the rush-hour traffic. [The adverb clause modifies the verb *will avoid*, telling under what condition we will avoid the traffic.]

NOTE

Notice in the example above that an adverb clause that begins a sentence is followed by a comma.

Subordinating Conjunctions

An adverb clause is introduced by a *subordinating conjunction*—a word or word group that shows the relationship between the adverb clause and the word or words that the clause modifies.

Common Subordinating Conjunctions

after	as though	provided that	until
although	because	since	when
as	before	so that	whenever
as if	if	than	where
as long as	in order that	though	wherever
as soon as	once	unless	while

The Elliptical Clause

4g. Part of a clause may be left out when its meaning can be clearly understood from the context of the sentence. Such a clause is called an *elliptical clause*.

Most elliptical clauses are adverb clauses. In each of the adverb clauses in the following examples, the part given in brackets may be omitted because its meaning is clearly understood.

EXAMPLES Lellana finished her research sooner **than** Marta [did].

While [he was] painting, Rembrandt concentrated completely on his work.

NOTE

Often the meaning of an elliptical clause depends on the form of the pronoun in the clause.

EXAMPLES Martine asked her more questions **than** I [asked her].
Martine asked her more questions **than** [she asked] me.

Exercise 4 Identifying Adverb Clauses and the Words They Modify

Identify the adverb clause in each of the following sentences, and give the word or words that the clause modifies. Then, state whether the clause tells *how*, *when*, *where*, *why*, *to what extent*, or *under what condition*. If a clause is elliptical, be prepared to supply the omitted word or words.

EXAMPLE 1. Thao is quieter than Catherine.

1. *than Catherine—quieter; to what extent*

- When our school has a fire drill, everyone must go outside.
- I visited the collection of Aztec artifacts because I wanted to see the religious and solar calendars.
- She walked until she was too tired to take another step.
- Because he was late so often, he bought a watch.
- Gazelles need to be able to run fast so that they can easily escape their predators.
- Return this revolutionary, new sonic potato peeler for a full refund if you are not completely satisfied.
- As soon as you're ready, we'll leave.
- You can set the table while I prepare the salad.
- Your trip to New York will not be complete unless you see the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.
- You understand the situation much better than I.

Review B Identifying Independent and Subordinate Clauses

Identify each italicized clause in the following paragraph as *independent* or *subordinate*. If the italicized clause is subordinate, tell whether it is used as an *adverb*, an *adjective*, or a *noun*.

EXAMPLE [1] *When they think of American Indians*, many people immediately picture the Dakota Sioux.

1. *subordinate—adverb*

Do you know [1] *why the Dakota spring to mind*? I think the reason is [2] *that they are known for their impressive eagle-feather headdresses*. Until recently, [3] *if an artist painted or drew Native Americans of any region*, the people were often shown wearing Dakota headdresses, fringed buckskin shirts, and elaborately beaded moccasins. Even paintings of the Pemaquid people meeting the Pilgrims [4] *as they landed on*

HELP



In the example for Exercise 4, the word *is* is omitted from the elliptical clause.

COMPUTER TIP



Because an adverb clause does not have a fixed location in a sentence, you must choose where to put the clause. The best place for it is usually a matter of personal taste and style, but often the placement is determined by the context.

If you use a computer, you can easily experiment with the placement of adverb clauses in sentences. Create different versions of the sentence containing the adverb clause, along with the sentences that immediately precede and follow it. Read each version aloud to see how the placement of the clause affects the flow, rhythm, and overall meaning of the passage.



Photo: Charles Milton Bell (1880). From the collection of Kurt Krogler.



Photo: Carl Moon (1968). From the collection of Kurt Krogler.

Cape Cod sometimes show the Pemaquid dressed in the style of the Dakota, [5] who lived far away in the northern plains region. Artists apparently did not recognize [6] that there are many different American Indian peoples. Each group has its own traditional clothing, and [7] the variety of Native American dress is truly amazing. For example, [8] compare the turbans and bearclaw necklaces of the Fox men above with the headband and turquoise jewelry of this Navajo boy. [9] While these images may not be familiar to you, they are just as authentic as the image of the Dakota. To see other unique styles of dress, you might want to research the clothing worn by native peoples [10] who live in different regions of the United States.