

Clauses

Clauses are groups of words that contain a subject and a verb. There are two main types of clauses: **independent** and **dependent**.

1. Independent Clauses (IC)

An independent clause contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought. Since this type of clause is *independent*, it can stand on its own as a complete sentence.

Example A: *Dan extinguished the fire.*

In this example, Dan is the subject, extinguished is the verb, and a complete thought is expressed. Therefore, this is both a complete sentence and an independent clause.

2. Dependent Clauses (DC)

A dependent clause also has a subject and a verb, but it does not express a complete thought. Since it is *dependent*, it cannot be a sentence on its own.

Example B: *Because Dan extinguished the fire...*

In this example, Dan is once again the subject and extinguished the verb. However, it does not express a complete thought. Therefore, this is a dependent clause.

This concept of a complete thought can be confusing. Both sentences seem to have the same message. However, the second example is not complete. To distinguish a dependent clause from an independent clause, there is a list of *Dependent Marker Words*. When one of these words is placed before an independent clause, that clause becomes dependent. In our examples, the two clauses are almost identical, except for the **because** at the beginning of the dependent clause in Example B. **Because** is a Dependent Marker Word. Below is a table of common Dependent Marker Words to guide you in creating your own dependent clauses.

Other Dependent Marker Words				
when	whenever	where	how	who
whoever	whom	whomever	what	whatever
which	whichever	that	why	while
whose	if	as if	as	as long as
as soon as	even if	unless	because	before
after	though	as though	even though	since
whether	whereas	until	so that	in order that
provided that	although			

Exercise 1:

Identify each underlined clause as either independent (IC) or dependent (DC). Use the table of Dependent Marker Words provided earlier to help you.

1. When the cowboys rode on their wild horses into the quiet town.
2. They staggered into the nearby pub.
3. Whether she wants to be saved or not.
4. If he reserves a spot in the top box at the Super Bowl.

How To Connect Clauses

Clauses can be connected through **subordination** and **coordination**.

1. Subordination

Since a dependent clause cannot stand on its own as a sentence, it must be connected to an independent clause to make a complete sentence. With a mother/child relationship, the child relies on his or her mother for completeness. The same is true of a dependent clause. The dependent clause relies on and is subordinate to the independent clause. This is called a subordinate relationship.

The dependent clause can come either before or after the independent clause in a sentence.

Example A: When the polar bear crossed the road, *it was hit by a transport truck*.
DC IC

Example B: *The polar bear was hit by a transport truck* when it crossed the road.
IC DC

Note:

When the dependent clause comes first, place a comma between the two clauses, as in Example A.
DC, IC

When the dependent clause comes after the independent clause, like in Example B, use no punctuation between the two clauses.
IC DC

Example B: *The blanket shielded the baby from the harsh winter wind, yet the baby got the flu anyway.*
The blanket shielded the baby from the harsh winter wind; however, the baby got the flu anyway.

Example C: *The computer crashed, and keyboard broke.*
The computer crashed; moreover, the keyboard broke.

Note: Conjunctive adverbs don't have to be at the beginning of a sentence. They can sometimes be placed in the middle or end of an independent clause, although this form is less common. When the adverb is in the middle of the sentence, commas must be used around the adverb. At the end of the sentence, the adverb must be preceded by a comma.

- (a) The chef lost a nail in the soup. **Consequently**, one of the customers choked.
- (b) The chef lost a nail in the soup. One of the customers, **consequently**, choked.
- (c) The chef lost a nail in the soup. One of the customers choked, **consequently**.

Exercise 3:

Connect the two independent clauses in each question by using either a FANBOY or a conjunctive adverb. The first question has been done for you.

1. The family photo album had been stolen. All their mementos were gone.
The family photo album had been stolen, so all their mementos were gone.

OR

The family photo album had been stolen; therefore, all their mementos were gone.

2. Lyle received top grades in his linguistics classes. He was a dedicated student.
3. The graduates wanted to celebrate their success. They went to Aruba to enjoy the hot tropical sun.
4. The tutor seized the opportunity to teach. She was unable to reach all of her students.