

CLAUSES

MAIN CLAUSES

A main clause is a complete sentence.

Main clauses contain a:

1. Subject
2. Verb
3. Sense of completion (that is, the clause expresses one complete thought).

Example:

Mark runs.

Notice how MARK is the subject. RUNS is the verb. There is a sense of completion to the clause, which lets the reader know that the clause is complete (or that the sentence is complete).

SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

A subordinate clause is not a complete sentence but is more or less "subordinate" to (or "dependent" on) a complete sentence for meaning.

Subordinate clauses contain a

1. Subject
2. Verb
3. Subordinator, which limits the clause from being a main (or independent clause) and does not allow for a sense of completion.

Example:

When Mark runs....

The same subject and verb found in the main clause may also be found in this subordinate clause. However, the inclusion of the word WHEN (a subordinator) keeps the clause from sounding like a complete thought.

Oftentimes, with a subordinate clause, a reader will ask "Then what happened?" If you find yourself asking this question, then you should realize that you are possibly reading a subordinate clause.

4. Subordinate Clauses often rely on Subordinators to exist.

Subordinators include the following words:

after

although

as

because

before

even though

even if
how
if
in order that
once
since
so that
that
until
what
whatever
when
whenever
where
wherever
whether
which
whichever
while
who
whoever
whose

Example:

When it is raining, Mark runs.

The word WHEN (a subordinator) allows the clause IT IS RAINING to be connected to the other main clause, MARK RUNS, to show more details.

MANAGERS AND SUBORDINATES

Trying to remember the difference between a main clause (or independent clause) and a subordinate (or dependent clause) can be tedious.

Think of the Main Clause as a manager.

Think of the Subordinate Clauses as workers.

The Subordinates cannot do the work without the Manager's approval (otherwise, chaos ensues).

Thus, any subordinate clause always needs a main clause to manage them.

Example:

When Diego is single, he likes to date different girls.

Main

When Diego is single, he likes to date different girls

Subordinate

You could write the sentence with multiple Subordinate Clauses surrounding the Main Clause (again, think of the Main Clause as the manager of the Subordinate Clauses):

When he is single, Diego likes to date different girls, although he settles.
Subordinate Main Subordinate

Remember: When you combine Subordinate Clauses with Main Clauses, the larger sentence becomes one large independent clause.

NOUN CLAUSES

Noun Clauses (also called Nominal Clauses) are a type of subordinate/dependent clause which act like nouns. These clauses can be used to form or act as one of the following:

The Subject

Example:

What he saw flew across the night sky.

What he saw was strange.

The Object*

Example:

John believed that it was an Unidentified Flying Object (or UFO).

John believes that the UFO was flying.

The Subject Complement

Example:

This is what he believed to be a UFO.

The Object Complement

Example:

It was that he saw the UFO.

*Noun Clauses can also be the object of the preposition (in a prepositional phrase).

Example:

John saw it around what he thought was a star.

Like other subordinate/dependent clauses, these clauses contain a noun, a verb, and a subordinator (which prevents the clause from having a sense of completion).

THREE TYPES OF NOUN CLAUSES

THAT CLAUSES

THAT Clauses begin with the word THAT. THAT is a subordinator.

1. Appear after the main/independent clause's verb

Example:

John hopes that he can prove the UFO's existence.

2. Appear after certain adjectives, particularly those which describe emotion.

Example:

John was astonished that the UFO suddenly disappeared.

3. Appear after certain nouns, such as claim, belief, hypothesis, theory, assertion, opinion, statement, etc. Typically, these situations involve indirect quotations or indirect speech.

Example:

Dr. Fairchild, an expert on UFOs, believes that John might have seen a UFO.

4. Appear at the beginning of a sentence

Example:

That John might have seen a UFO is the subject of a media frenzy.

IF/WHETHER CLAUSES

IF/WHETHER Clauses begin with the the word IF or WHETHER. IF and WHETHER are subordinators.

Example:

John wanted to know whether the UFO was an alien ship or just a flash of light.

John wants to know if the UFO might have been real or a hoax by pranksters.

QUESTION CLAUSES

QUESTION Clauses begin with the any interrogative subordinators:

What

Who

When

Why

How

How Many

How Much

How Long

Where

Example:

What John saw is the subject of a huge debate in the scientific community.

People are interested in knowing what John saw was real.

ADJECTIVE CLAUSES (OR RELATIVE CLAUSES)

DEFINITION

Adjective Clauses, more often referred to as Relative Clauses, are clauses which perform the same function as adjectives (modifying nouns and noun phrases).

RELATIVE PRONOUNS

Adjective Clauses/Relative Clauses are often introduced by relative pronouns.

Examples:

Which
Who
Whose
But
Whom
That

Example:

It's a breakthrough that works to alleviate stress.

DEFINING AND NON-DEFINING

Defining (also called Restrictive) Relative Clauses are essential to the meaning of the sentence. Without them, the sentence does not convey the same message.

Example:

The dog, who bit my hand, will be taken to the dog pound.

Vs.

The dog will be taken to the dog pound. (notice that context or the reason is lost)

Non-Defining (also called Non-Restrictive) Relative Clauses are non-essential to the meaning of the sentence.

Example:

Blue whales, who are large and blue, eat mainly krill and smaller invertebrates.

ADVERB CLAUSES

Adverbial Clauses (sometimes called Adverb Clauses) are a type of subordinate/dependent clause, which act like adverbs. Adverbial Clauses typically provide information about when, where, how, how often, how long, how far, for what purpose, etc.

Time (tells WHEN)

Example:

When the bell rings, the students want to go home.

Place (tells WHERE)

Example:

The school, where the students attend, is new.

Result (tells FOR WHAT PURPOSE, EFFECT, or CONSEQUENCE)

Example:

If the teacher likes you, home work is not necessary.

Concession (shows AN UNEXPECTED RESULT)

Example:

Although you do not have homework, you still have to learn.

Condition (tells UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCE)

Example:

I love to go to school while my parents are at work.

Cause/Purpose/Reason (tells FOR WHAT INTENTION/WHY)

Example:

I go to school so that I may learn and spend time with friends.

Manner/Distance/Frequency (tells HOW, HOW LONG, or HOW FREQUENTLY)

Example:

In school, I write as often as I can.

Opposition (shows CONTRAST)

Example:

I go to school, whereas my parents go to work.

SUBORDINATORS AND ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

Adverbial clauses make use of different types of subordinators to achieve their desired effect. Below are examples of different subordinators used for specific purposes.

TIME CLAUSES

After

As

As Soon As

Before

Later

Until

When

Whenever

While

PLACE CLAUSES

Anywhere

Everywhere

Where

Wherever

RESULT CLAUSES

So + Adjective/Adverb + So

Such a(n) + Noun + That
So Much/Many + Noun + That
So Little/Few + Noun + That

CONCESSION CLAUSES

Although
Even Though
Though

CONDITION CLAUSES

If
Unless

CAUSE/PURPOSE/REASON CLAUSES

As
Since
Because
So That
In Order That

MANNER/DISTANCE/FREQUENCY CLAUSES

As (manner)
As + Adverb + As (frequency)
As + Adverb + As (manner)
As If (manner)
As Though (manner)

OPPOSITION CLAUSES

Whereas
While