

Grammar Review: Independent and Dependent (Subordinate) Clauses

A **clause** is simply a group of words containing a subject and its verb. There are two categories of clauses--**independent clauses** and **dependent (subordinate) clauses**.

An **independent** clause is a clause that can function alone if it is removed from the sentence. Independent clauses are joined by **coordinating conjunctions** (and, but, or, for, yet, so)

Example: Everyone liked the music, but no one enjoyed the video.

Notice that each of the underlined clauses above could be taken away from the sentence and made into a sentence of its own. The coordinating conjunction is not considered part of either clause, but simply serves to connect them.

A **dependent clause** is a clause that cannot function as a sentence by itself. It is dependent on the main clause in the sentence.

Example: Everyone liked the music because it was good for dancing.

The group of words underlined above is a clause because it contains its own subject (it) and verb (was). It is a **dependent** clause because it cannot stand alone as a sentence.

PRACTICE: For each of the following sentences, locate the clauses and determine whether each clause is dependent or independent.

Since the team played Waldron away last year, the Waldron team will travel to Heavener this year.

Football is an exciting sport because of all the contact and movement.

Whenever the team makes a touchdown, everyone stands and screams.

You did not make a good grade on the test, but your homework average will help.

He acted as if he didn't know me when he saw me in the mall.

Review: Adverb Clauses

Dependent clauses can be classified into 3 types: adjective, adverb, and noun clauses.

An **adverb clause** is a dependent clause that functions as an adverb, meaning it modifies a verb, adjective, or other adverb.

Adverb clauses **begin with subordinating conjunctions** (see a list of subordinating conjunctions in Quick Reference 14.7 on p. 294)

From the top of the mountain I can see for miles when the day is clear.

After the sun goes down, the city view is spectacular.

I'd like to take a snapshot while the sun is setting.

PRACTICE: Review the following sets of sentences. Combine each set so that the resulting sentence has at least one adverb clause. For assistance, refer to the list of subordinating conjunctions on p. 294.

The oven was hot. We put the cake inside.

Charles comes for a visit now a then. He brings his guitar.

Carol wrote her composition too hastily. As a result, she made several mechanical errors.

The rain had soaked the field. The umpires canceled the game.

Citizens will oppose building the nuclear plant. They are concerned about safety.

Charles Dickens traveled through America. He kept a journal during that time.

You do not believe me. I will try to prove I am right.

Review: Adjective Clauses

An adjective clause is a dependent clause that functions to describe a noun or pronoun. An adjective clause is introduced by a relative pronoun (who, whose, whom, which, that)

The team objected to the penalty that cost them the game.

That paint color, which happens to be the same as I used for the living room, is an excellent choice.

The person who sells the most tickets will win a reserved parking space for the entire school year.

PRACTICE: Combine each set of sentences so that the resulting sentence contains an adjective clause.

The students deserved the warning.
The students received the warning from the principal.

Commander Elkins was awarded a medal for his bravery.
Elkins fought in three of our country's wars.

The community center was paid for by Mrs. Briggs.
Mrs. Briggs also donated her art collection to the local museum.

I want you to meet Ryan.
Ryan is the captain of the debate team.

The answer was really quite simple.
No one could guess the answer.

Edgar Allan Poe was a famous American author.
Edgar Allan Poe was fascinated with death.