

Dependent Clauses

A **dependent** clause, sometimes called a **subordinate** clause, is a group of words in a sentence that cannot stand alone as a complete statement. The clause has a subject and a verb and usually begins with a subordinating word, such as **WHAT, THAT, WHO, WHICH, BECAUSE, WHEN, SINCE, BEFORE, AFTER, or IF**. Dependent clauses, like phrases, function as grammatical units in a sentence replacing nouns, adjectives, and adverbs.

Independent Clauses (complete sentences):

I went to school.
Much time had elapsed.

Dependent or Subordinate Clauses:

When I went to school, I studied my lessons.
Since much time has elapsed, she remained at home.

In the last two sentences, **I STUDIED MY LESSONS** and **SHE REMAINED AT HOME** are complete statements. Since the clauses **WHEN I WENT TO SCHOOL** and **SINCE MUCH TIME HAD ELAPSED** do not express complete thoughts, they are dependent clauses. Each depends upon the independent statement in the individual sentence to complete its meaning. Both of these dependent clauses function as adverbs.

Noun Clauses - Definition and examples:

THAT, WHAT, WHEN, WHY, WHETHER, WHO, WHICH, OR HOW usually are used to introduce dependent noun clauses. A noun clause can replace the subject, direct object, predicate nominative, or object of the preposition. When the noun clause is removed, the remainder of the sentence is often an incomplete thought or a confusing statement.

Subject:

Your **plan** is interesting.
What you intend to do is interesting.

Direct object:

Tell me your **plan**.
Tell me **what you intend to do**.

Predicate nominative:

This is your **plan**.
This is **what you intend to do**.

Object of the preposition:

I am interested in your **plan**.
I am interested in **what you intend to do**.

Adjective Clauses - Definition and examples:

An **adjective clause** is a **dependent** clause that modifies a noun or pronoun. The common connective words used to introduce adjective clauses are **WHO, WHOSE, WHICH, THAT, WHERE, AND WHEN**. Adjective clauses can either be essential (restrictive) or nonessential (non-restrictive). An **ESSENTIAL CLAUSE**, as its name implies, is necessary in the sentence, for it adds important information about a certain person or thing; a **NONESSENTIAL CLAUSE** adds information about the word it modifies, but it is not essential to the complete meaning of the sentence. To determine whether an adjective clause is essential, apply this test: Read the sentence leaving out the adjective clause. If omission of the clause does not change the meaning of the sentence, then it is nonessential. Nonessential adjective clauses are set off from the rest of the sentence by commas.

The **bold** clauses in the following sentences are all adjective clauses:

He is a man **who is respected by everyone**.

Mr. Jones, **whose son attends the university**, is our friend.

He saw the place **where he was born**.

It was a time **when money did not count**.

Essential (Restrictive) Clauses Examples:

A person **who loves to read** will never be lonely.

(The bold information is essential in describing a particular person.)

The girl **who sat next to him in class** is an honor student.

(The bold clause refers to a specific girl.)

Nonessential (non restrictive) Clauses Examples:

Thomas Jefferson, **who was born on the frontier**, became President. (The name **Thomas Jefferson** identifies who became president, so the bold clause is not essential.)

My father, **who was a country boy**, has made a success of his life. (Since the bold clause has no relationship to the fact that the father is a success, it is nonessential.)

Adverbial Clauses – Definition and Examples

An **adverbial clause** is a **dependent** clause that modifies a verb, an adjective, or an adverb.

An adverbial clause is used to show time, place, cause, purpose, result, condition, concession, manner, or comparison and is introduced by a subordinating conjunction. Commas set off introductory adverbial clauses.

Common Coordinating Conjunctions and their Uses:

1. Time – **when, before, since, as, until, while, after, whenever**
2. Place -- **where, wherever**
3. Cause – **because, since, as, why**
4. Purpose – **in order that, so that, that**
5. Result – **so . . . that, such . . . that**
6. Condition – **if, unless, whether**
7. Concession – **though, although, except**
8. Manner – **as, as if, as though**
9. Comparison – **as, than**

Adverbial Clause Examples:

This car is more expensive **than the kind I usually buy**.

She plays tennis **whenever she has a spare hour**.

Introductory Adverbial Clause Examples:

Since I have studied harder, I have made better grades.

If I want to make better grades, I must study harder.

The Elliptical (Incomplete) Clause:

Sometimes in writing or speaking, words are left out.

I am taller **than you** [are]. She is smarter **than I** [am].

While [I was] **waiting for the bus**, I was mugged.

The words in brackets are not stated but are understood.