

CHAPTER - VII

Noun Clauses and Relative Clauses

A clause is a group of words that form a part of a longer sentence and has a subject and predicate of its own. Single-clause sentences are simple sentences. Multi-clause sentences can be complex or compound sentences (see page 21). Now, let us see what the clauses are. Let's look at the following sentences:

1a. *Everybody in the family went to the cinema but Mohan stayed at home.*

This sentence means Everybody in the family went to the cinema.

But Mohan stayed at home.

These two-part sentences of 1a are called clauses of that sentence. Here both the clauses are independent and can stay alone. So, the first one is the **main clause** and the second one is a **coordinate main clause** because it is joined to the main clause with the help of a coordinating conjunction: 'but'. The same 1a can be rewritten as

1b. *Mohan stayed at home but everybody else in the family went to the cinema.*

Here the main clause is Mohan stayed at home.

The coordinate clause is But everybody else in the family went to the cinema.

Let's study another form of the same sentence:

1c. *Mohan stayed at home when everyone else was at the cinema.*

In this sentence the main clause is also Mohan stayed at home.

But the other clause '*when everyone else was at the cinema*' is not an independent clause. It cannot stay alone. It is a **subordinate clause**.

Subordinate clauses can be of three types. They are

- **Noun clauses**
- **Relative or Adjective clauses**
- **Adverb clauses**

Let's consider another sentence:

2a. *He sealed and posted the letter.*

This sentence has got two verbs: *sealed* and *posted*. So it has two clauses as given below.

The main clause is – *He sealed (the letter)*.

The coordinate clause is – *And (he) posted the letter*.

Both the clauses are independent. Neither of them depends on the other, even though we cannot change the order of the verbs. Otherwise, we would get

2b. **He posted and sealed the letter.*

This sentence is grammatically correct but the meaning is absurd.

If we change the sentence in the following manner, what do we get?

3a. *After sealing the letter, he posted it.*

3b. *He posted the letter after sealing it.*

3c. *He posted the letter after he had sealed it.*

Now, the sequence of events is fixed. *Sealing the letter* and *posting the letter* continued one after the other, in that order. There are two clauses in each sentence because there are two verbs. Do you find any difference between 2a and 3a? In 2a we get two independent clauses: one main clause and the other coordinate main clause. But in 3a, the main clause is 'He posted the letter.' What about the other?

In 3a and 3b *after sealing the letter* has a nonfinite verb *sealing*. So, it is a *nonfinite clause*. But in 3c, *had* carries the past tense and therefore it is a finite verb. So, *after he had sealed it* is a *finite clause*. In 3a-c the clauses beginning with *after*, whether finite or nonfinite, are **subordinate clauses** as they cannot remain alone. But the other clause *he posted the letter* is independent and can stay alone. Therefore it is the **main clause**.

Activity - 1:

Mention whether the following expressions are phrases(P), clauses(C) or sentences(S).

Where have you been?	Under the queen's chair	A stitch in time
Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall	All the king's horses	The clock struck one
Like a diamond in the sky	up the hill	Pussy in the well
Who pulled her out?	a nice fairy story	After sealing the letter
And Jill came tumbling after	Jack fell down	to fetch a pail of water

Activity - 2:

Draw double lines under the main clauses and single lines under subordinate clauses in the following sentences. Ignore coordinate clauses.

I cannot express how sorry I am.	Do you know when the next train arrives?
Jack fell down and he broke his crown.	All that glitters is not gold.
All depends on how the work is done.	He says that his mother is ill.
It is feared that he will not help us.	He told me that he was ready.
It is clear that he is honest.	What he says may be true.
I asked the boy how old he was.	He waved his hand and boarded the bus.

The point is that he was absolutely honest.

When his father will return is uncertain.

His great fear is that he may not succeed.

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall and he had a great fall.

A proverb is one man's wit but it is all men's wisdom.

There is many a slip before the cup is taken to the lip.

Noun Clauses

Some subordinate clauses are called **noun clauses** because they work like nouns in the sentence. For example, study the following sentences:

- 1a. Ajay remembers *that it was a Friday*. [that...Friday is a clause.]
 1b. Ajay remembers *the Independence Day of India*. [the...India is a phrase.]
 1c. Ajay remembers *it*. [It is a word, a pronoun.]

The italicised expressions are a clause, a phrase and a word in 1a, b and c respectively. All of them are objects of the verb *remembers*. A noun, a noun phrase or a noun clause can work in a sentence as one of the following:

- The *subject* of the sentence
- An *object of a transitive verb* in the sentence
- A *complement* of a verb of incomplete predication
- An *object of a preposition*
- An expression *in apposition to* another noun or pronoun

Let's see how noun clauses function in the following sentences:

- 2a. *What he says* is correct.
 2b. *That his father has come home* is true.
 2c. *Whether he will stay here for more than a week* depends on a lot of things.

In these sentences, the italicised expressions are noun clauses working as the **subjects** of the sentences.

- 3a. Radha said *(that) she was happy*.
 3b. I asked Radha *how she felt*.
 3c. Tell me *if Radha would go there*.

In these sentences, the italicised expressions are noun clauses working as the **objects** of transitive verbs. In 3b and 3c the transitive verbs need two objects each: the noun clause and Radha/me.

4a. The difficulty was *how we would arrange the fund*.

4b. The problem is (*that*) *we do not have any money*.

In these sentences, the italicised expressions are noun clauses working as the **complements** of the verbs of incomplete predication. To verify this, try putting a full stop before the noun clause. (*The difficulty was. Is it a sentence ?)

5a. You should pay attention to *what I say*.

5b. There is no meaning in *what you say*.

5c. I have no objection to *whatever you say*.

In these sentences, the italicised expressions are noun clauses working as the **objects of prepositions**.

6a. The news *that his father has come* is true.

6b. It is true *that his father has come*.

6c. It is a pity *that his father does not come home more often*.

In 6a, the italicised expression is a noun clause **in apposition to** the noun phrase *the news*. In 6b and 6c, the italicised expressions are in apposition to the subject *it* even though they come after the complements. (*True* is an adjective and *pity* is a noun - but both are complements of *is*, a verb of incomplete predication.)

From these examples (1 - 6) we see that a noun clause works in the sentence as a noun and it usually begins with a *wh-word*, *if* or *that*. In some cases, *that* may be hidden. See 3a and 4b.

Activity - 1

Underline the noun clauses in the following sentences. Mention whether they work as subject, object, complement, object of preposition or in apposition to another noun or pronoun.

It is not clear who has done it.

You know how hard she works.

That he is honest is known to all.

The film depends on how it ends.

"I'm glad to hear it," Mrs Bethy said.

My decision is that he must help you.

What is in our fate cannot be avoided. The matter is that they have cheated us.

Shanti didn't know that her uncle had come.

Can you tell me who wrote 'The Ramayan'?

No one can say how the war will come to an end.

Mr Gupta promised that he would put some flowers on her brother's grave.

Activity - 2

Complete the following sentences using noun clauses.

Can you tell me _____ ? He admitted that _____

His looks prove _____ He wanted to know _____

We all thought that _____ I have no objection to _____

His plan is that _____ Copernicus proved that _____

_____ is known to all. The rumour _____ is true.

Relative Clauses

Some subordinate clauses are called Relative or Adjective clauses because they work like adjectives in the sentence. For example, study the following sentences:

1a. I have already read the book *which you gave me*.

1b. The book *which is lying on the table* belongs to my friend.

1c. The boy *who always gives me books* is my friend.

The italicised clauses work as the adjectives of the nouns that come before those clauses: book or boy. If we study the sentences, we will find that each of them is a combination of two sentences. For example, 1a is actually a combination of

1d. You gave me a book.

1e. I have already read that book.

The common word between the two sentences is *book*. So, we should use one of the sentences along with a relative pronoun after the common word *book* present in the other sentence. Now, break the sentences 1b and 1c in a similar way. Further, reconsider 1a.

1a. I have already read the book *which you gave me*.

I have already read the book *that you gave me*.

I have already read the book *you gave me*.

If the relative pronoun is the object of verb in the relative clause, the relative pronoun can be dropped as in the last sentence. Relative clauses usually begin with relative pronouns such as *who, whom, which, that, whose*, etc.

Activity - 1 :

Combine the following pairs of sentences using one of them as a relative clause:

The birds are chirping.	+	The birds live in the neighbourhood.
I write with the pen.	+	My father bought the pen for me.
The sick were delighted.	+	Florence Nightingale nursed the sick.
I like the man.	+	The man has a smiling face.
The thief escaped in the dark.	+	The thief had robbed me.
The boy is our monitor.	+	I have borrowed his book.
The chair has a cracked leg.	+	He is sitting in the chair.

Activity - 2 :

In some of the following sentences the *relative pronoun* can be dropped. Rewrite those sentences without the *relative pronouns*. [You are not allowed to perform any other change.]

The children who are playing cricket live in this locality.

I have read the story book that my father bought yesterday.

The shopkeeper who I was working for is a good person.

It is the best possible explanation that we can give about Socrates.

The only question that drew everybody's attention is worth discussing.

Our school, which works for the young people of our area, is highly popular.

Pramod, who is my classmate, is very sincere.

The travellers who knew about the floods took another road.

The travellers, who knew about the floods, took another road.

The man that Mohan was talking to is his uncle.

The music which we were listening to was a 16th century devotional song.

I write with the pen which my father bought.

Activity - 3 :

Define the terms as given in the example:

Example: A greengrocer - is a person who sells fruits and vegetables.

A driver is a person who ... A conductor is a person who ...

An actor is a person who ... A teacher is a person who ...

A journalist is a person who ... A plumber is a person who ...

A farmer is a person who ... A doctor is a person who ...

A patient is a person who ... A hospital is a place where ...

A newspaper is a document in which ... A transitive verb is a verb which ...

Activity - 4 :

In the following four columns some proverbs or quotations have been given. Expressions in column **A** and column **D** belong to the same proverb. Put a suitable relative pronoun in column **B** and choose the correct expression from column **C**. In this way write the proverbs. As soon as you complete, raise your hand and draw the teacher's attention.

A	B	C	D
All	_____	pays the piper	is not gold.
People	_____	laughs last	should not throw stones.
All's well	_____	prays together	well.
He	_____	glitters	calls the tune.
He	_____	blows nobody	laughs best.
It's a long lane	_____	do not want	_____ .
It's an ill wind	_____	ends	any good.
There are no one so deaf as those _____ live in glass houses			to hear.
The family _____		has no turning	stays together.

Study the following sentences:

- 1c. The boy *who always gives me books* is my friend.
2. Amit, *who always gives me books*, is my friend.

In 1c, the relative clause defines the noun phrase going before it: *the boy*. With the help of the relative clause, the large number of boys is restricted to only one boy. So this type of relative clause is called **defining or identifying relative clause**.

On the other hand, 2 tells us about Amit, the writer's friend. In addition to that, the writer tells us that Amit always gives him/her books. So, here the relative clause is not as much necessary as in 1c. It is an extra-information clause. Such relative clauses are called **non-defining or non-identifying relative clauses**. Mark the commas before and after the non-defining relative clause.

REMEMBER:

- The defining relative clause is an essential part of the sentence but the nondefining relative clause is an additional part. It gives extra information.
- The nondefining clause is kept separate from the main clause with the help of commas or a comma.
- The non-defining clause cannot take the relative pronoun 'that'.
- The relative pronoun cannot be dropped in the nondefining relative clause.

- The non-defining clause cannot be used after an indefinite pronoun like anyone, anybody, anything, someone, somebody, something, etc.
- The non-defining clause can sometimes qualify the whole main clause and not a particular noun or pronoun. e.g. Satish scored a goal in the last minute, *which was fortunate*.

Activity - 5 :

Underline the relative clauses in the following sentences. Write **D** for *defining* and **N** for *non-defining* relative clauses.

- A green grocer is a person who sells fruits and vegetables.
- Bhola, who is a green grocer, goes to the fields every morning.
- What is the name of your friend who often comes to our house?
- Where does Amit, who often comes to our house, live?
- My uncle who is a judge is coming here tomorrow.
- My uncle, who is a judge, is coming here tomorrow.
- My father, who is a teacher, loves to talk.
- Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.
- We love the man who thinks of our welfare.
- We call Uncle Bhola, who thinks of our welfare, as the Gandhi of our village.

Activity - 6 :

Put commas in the following sentences, if they are necessary.

- The man whom the police arrested is not known to us.
- The strike at the factory which lasted ten days is over now.
- My father who is working at Koraput is a doctor.
- I have found the book which I was looking for.
- Mira's grandmother who is sick is in hospital now.
- Einstein who discovered the theory of relativity once failed in an examination.
- Engineer Choudhury who got this bridge built is on a visit to our village.

- viii. Mother Teresa who faithfully served the poor is called a saint now.
- ix. He has stopped attending classes which is unfortunate.
- x. The chairman of the committee who is impartial solves all problems cleverly.

Activity - 7 :

Fill in the blanks with relative pronouns such as *who, which, where, whose, that*, etc.

The house in —— I lived as a child has been pulled down now.

My grandmother, —— was an extraordinary woman, lived to the age of one hundred.

Stop him! He's the man —— stole my purse.

They have invented a television set —— is as small as a watch.

There are many people —— lives have been spoilt by this factory.

Is that the button —— you pressed?

Could everybody —— answer sheets are with me raise their hands?

That scientist has invented a kind of ink —— is visible in darkness.

Activity - 8 :

Work in pairs. Think of a puzzle whose answer you know. The clue you give must have a relative clause. For example,

A black and white bird which can swim but can't fly. Seven letters. (Penguin)

Now, the other partner must think of a puzzle whose answer must contain one of the letters of *Penguin*. For example, *A snow house that an Eskimo builds*. Five letters. (Igloo). In this process make a crossword puzzle, always using an existing letter, e.g.

I
P E N G U I N
L
O
O

When ten words have been formed, show it to the teacher (or present before the class).

