

Clauses



Introduction

An important aspect of English grammar is to understand the mutual relationship among the component parts of a sentence. For this, a sentence has to be broken into various parts. This breaking up of a sentence into its component parts in order to show their mutual relationship is called Analysis.



The Sentences

As we already know, a group of words which makes a complete sense is called a sentence, and every sentence has a Finite Verb. For example:

- ❖ He **ate** a sumptuous dinner.
- ❖ She **admires** his courage.

Here **ate** and **admires** are Finite Verbs, thus they are sentences.



The Clause

The part of a sentence which has a subject and a Finite Verb is called a clause.

For Example:

The teacher told me **that she would guide me**.

In the above given sentence, 'that she would guide me' is a part of the whole sentence in which there is one subject 'she' and one Finite Verb 'would guide'.

The entire part 'that she would guide me' is a clause.



Kinds of Clauses

Clauses are of three kinds.

- (i) Principal Clause
- (ii) Coordinate Clause
- (iii) Subordinate Clause



Principal Clause

A clause which does not depend on any other clause is called a Principle Clause.

Illustrative EXAMPLE



- ❖ I am not aware where he is going.
- ❖ Don't interrupt while I am doing my work.

In the above given sentences, 'I am not aware' and 'don't interrupt' are Principal Clauses as they make a complete sense. We should remember one thing that a Principal Clause doesn't start with a connective.



Coordinate Clause

This clause is totally independent as it does not depend on any clause for its meaning. These are simple sentences which are joined together with coordinate conjunctions. But it becomes a helper after which this clause comes.

For example:

❖ Steve will go and Smith will come.

In this sentence, 'Steve will go' and 'Cyrus will come' are two independent Clauses but the first one is called a Principal Clause and the second one is called a Coordinate Clause connected by 'and'



Subordinate Clause

This clause is not independent as it does not make complete sense on its own. It is dependent on Principal Clause to express its meaning.

❖ The teacher asked the student why she came so late.

In the above given sentence, the clause 'why she came so late' is unable to make a complete sense, thus it is a Subordinate Clause.



Kinds of Subordinate Clauses

There are three kinds of Subordinate Clauses:

1. Noun Clause
2. Adjective Clause
3. Adverb Clause



Noun Clause

A clause which acts as a noun or which is used in place of a noun is called a Noun Clause.

To identify the Noun Clause, a question is formed by adding 'what' to the main verb and the clause in which we get its answer is the Noun Clause.

❖ She told me that she was not keeping well.

❖ What did she tell you a question 'that she was not keeping well' is an answer which is a Noun Clause.

Noun Clauses are used in various forms



Subject to a Verb

If any clause comes in place of the subject of a verb then that Noun Clause is a Subject to the verb.

❖ When she will return is not sure.

In the above given sentence, '(it) is not sure' is the Principal Clause, and '*when she' will return' is a subject Noun Clause, subject to the verb 'is'



Object to a Verb

If any clause in a sentence takes the place of an object of a Finite Verb, then that Noun Clause is called an object to the verb.

❖ Do you know when the teacher will come?

In the above given sentence, 'Do you know' is the Principal Clauses; 'when the teacher will come' is a subject Noun Clause, object to the verb 'know'.

➡ Object to an Infinitive

If in a sentence, a clause begins after the infinitive and which acts as an object, then that Noun Clause is an object to the infinitive.

❖ Steve wants to say that he is not to blame.

In the above given sentence, 'Steve wants to say' is the Principal Clause, and 'that he is not blame' is a Sub. Noun Clause, object to the infinitive 'to say'.

➡ Object to a Preposition

If any Clause which comes after the preposition in the form of an object, then that Noun Clause is an object to the preposition.

❖ Her future depends on how she plans it now.

In this sentence, 'Her future depends on' is the Principal Clause, and 'how she plans it now' is a Sub. Noun Clause, object to the preposition 'on'.

➡ Object to a Participle

If any clause comes after any participle and acts as an object, then that Noun Clause is an object to the participle.

❖ Hoping that my friend would be in the house, I went there.

In the above given sentence, 'I went there, hoping' is the Principle Clause, and 'that my friend would be in the house' is a Sub. Noun Clause, object to the participle 'hoping'.

It is important to note that if the participle is used before the sub. Clause, then while analyzing, the participle is put at the end of the Principal Clause.

➡ Complement to an Incomplete Verb

If at the end of a Principal Clause there is any helping verb, then the Noun Clause coming after it is called a complement to an incomplete verb as this clause is used to complete the sense of a sentence.

❖ He is what he has made himself.

In the above given sentence, 'He is' is the Principal Clause; ' what he has made himself Sub. Noun Clause Complement to the incomplete verb 'is'.

➡ In Apposition to a Noun or a Pronoun

If any clause is used to clear the meaning of any noun or pronoun, then that Noun Clause is called 'in apposition to the noun or pronoun'.

❖ It is strange that he should behave in such a manner.

In the above given sentence, 'It is strange' is the Principal Clause and 'that he should behave in such a manner' is a Sub. Noun clause in apposition to the pronoun

➡ Adjective Clause

In a sentence, an Adjective Clause acts as an adjective, that is, it describes a noun or a pronoun of any other clause.

❖ These start with Relative Pronouns like who, whose, whom, that, which or as.

❖ These also start with Relative Adverbs like when, where, why, how.

Adjective Clauses are used before nouns or pronouns beginning with who, whose, whom, that, which; for time we use 'when' for place; 'where' for reason or cause 'why' for manner or way 'how'; for such + noun 'as'.

1. This is the man who has smashed the windowpane.

In this sentence, 'This is the man' is the Principal Clause; 'who has smashed the window pane' is a Sub. Adjective Clause, qualifying the noun 'man'.

2. This is the place where I first met my wife.

In the above given sentence, 'This is the place' is the Principal Clause and 'where I first met my Wife' is a Sub. Adjective Clause, qualifying the noun 'place'.

3. Sometime, a part of the Prindpal Clause comes before the Sub. Clause and the rest after it.

❖ The girl who came here today is my classmate.

In this sentence, 'This girl is my classmate' is the Principal Clause, whereas 'came here today' is a Sub. Adjective Clause, qualifying the noun 'girl'.



Adverb Clause

Adverb Clause is that Subordinate Clause which modifies the verb, adjective or adverb coming in any other clause. It informs about the following things:

- (i) Time
- (ii) Place
- (iii) Purpose
- (iv) Reason or Cause
- (v) Manner
- (vi) Extent
- (vii) Condition
- (viii) Result
- (ix) Comparison
- (x) Contrast

(A) Adverb Clause of Time

It indicates the time and normally begins with any of these subordinating Conjunctions like when, whenever, after, before, till, until, since, while, as, as soon as, as long as, so long as, etc.

❖ I eat my food after I have served my parents.

In this sentence, 'I eat my food' is the Principal Clause and 'after I have served my parents' is a sub. Adverb Clause showing Time'.

❖ As soon as the thief saw the policeman, he ran away.

In this sentence, 'he ran away' is the Principal Clause and 'As soon as the thief saw the policeman' is a Sub. Adverb Clause showing Time',

(B) Adverb Clause of Place

As it suggests, it points to the place and normally starts with the Subordinating Conjunction like wherever, where, whether, whence, etc.

Example: He shall go where his mother goes.

In the above given sentence, 'He shall go' is the Principle clause and 'where his mother goes' is a Sub. Adverb Clause showing 'Place'.

Example : She will follow you wherever you go.

In this sentence, 'She will follow you' is the Principle Clause and 'wherever you go' is a Sub. Adverb Clause showing 'Place'.

(C) Adverb Clause of Purpose

It expresses purpose. It begins with: in order that, so that, lest, etc. which are Subordinating Conjunctions.

Example : We work hard so that we may succeed.

In the above given sentence, 'We work hard' is the Principle Clause and 'so that we may succeed' is a Sub. Adverb Clause showing 'Purpose'.

Example : Use the knife carefully lest you should cut your fingers.

In this sentence, 'Use the knife carefully' is the Principle Clause and 'lest you should cut your fingers' is a Sub. Adverb Clause showing 'Purpose'.

(D) Adverb Clause of Reason

This clause always tells the reason of any event. It starts with any of these Subordinating Conjunctions like because, since, as, that, now, etc.

Example: This task cannot be accomplished as it is difficult.

In the above given sentence, 'This task cannot be accomplished' is the Principle Clause and 'as it is difficult' is a Sub. Adverb Clause showing 'Reason'.

Example: I am happy because you have cleared your engineering examination.

In this sentence, 'I am happy' is the Principle Clause and because you have cleared your 'engineering examination' is a Sub. Adverb Clause showing 'Reason'.

(E) Adverb Clause of Manner

This clause describes the manner and it usually begins with any of these Subordinating Conjunctions such as : as, as.... so, as if, as though, etc.

Example: He cried as if he were in deep pain.

In the above given sentence, 'He cried' is the Principle Clause and 'as if he were in deep pain' is a Sub. Adverb Clause showing 'Manner'.

(F) Adverb Clause of Condition

As the name suggests, this Clause points to a condition. This Clause begins with any of these Subordinating Conjunctions like if, unless, in case, whether — or, provided, etc.

Example : In case you are interested, you can come.

In the above given sentence, 'you can come' is the Principal Clause, whereas 'in case you are interested' is a Sub. Adverb Clause showing 'Condition'.

(G) Adverb Clause of Extent

This clause expresses the extent of the statement and generally begins with any of these Subordinating Conjunctions as far as, so far as, etc.

Example: As far as I think, he will not come today.

In the above given sentence, 'he will not come today' is the Principal Clause, whereas 'as far as' is a Sub. Adverb Clause showing 'Extent'.

(H) Adverb Clause of Result

This clause points out the outcome or result of what is being said and generally begins with 'that' but before this 'so' or 'such' is used in the Principal Clause.

Example: She is so tired that she cannot stand.

In the above given sentence, 'She is so tired' is the Principal Clause and 'that she cannot stand' is a Sub. Adverb Clause showing 'Result'.

(I) Adverb Clause of Comparison

This clause tells us about the comparison between two qualities and generally begins with the Subordinating Conjunction 'than' as — as; so—as.

Example: Lina is more beautiful than Serena.

In the above give sentence, 'Lina is more beautiful' is the Principal Clause whereas 'than Serena' is a Sub. Adverb Clause showing comparison.

PRACTICE EXERCISE



Identify the types of clause in the following sentences:



James asked his younger brother why he came here. (Subordinate Clause)

Answer: Why he came here



Don't call while I am crossing the road. (Principal Clause)

Answer: Don't call



This is the boy who has got highest marks in the examination. (Sub. Adjective Clause)

Answer: Who has got highest marks in the examination?



He will read and I will play (Coordinate Clause)

Answer: i will play

Commonly Asked QUESTIONS

Identify the types of clause in the following questions:



The teacher asked the student why she came so late. (Subordinate Clause)

- (A) Why she came so late (B) So late
(C) The teacher asked (D) The student
(E) None of these

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Subordinate clause is 'why she came so late'.



I am not aware where he is going. (Principal Clause)

- (A) He is going (B) I am not aware where
(C) I am not (D) Where he is
(E) Going

Answer: (b)

Explanation: A Clause which does not depend on any other clause is called a Principle Clause.

Self Evaluation TEST



Duration
10 Minutes

In the following sentences, analyze the clauses giving the kind and function of each clause:



He shall go where his mother goes. (Sub. Adverb Clause)

- (A) Where his mother goes
- (B) Mother goes
- (C) He shall
- (D) Goes
- (E) Mother



He cried as if he were in deep pain. (Principal Clause)

- (A) Deep pain
- (B) He cried
- (C) He were
- (D) Pain
- (E) If he



Don't interrupt while I am doing my work. (Principal Clause)

- (A) My work
- (B) I am doing
- (C) Don't interrupt
- (D) While I am
- (E) Interrupt



Marry shall go and Ravi will come. (Coordinate Clause)

- (A) Marry shall go
- (B) Come
- (C) Go
- (D) Ravi will come
- (E) And



I eat my food after I have said my prayers. (Principal Clause)

- (A) I eat
- (B) My prayers
- (C) I have said
- (D) Food
- (E) I eat my food



She is so tired that she cannot stand. (Sub. Adverb Clause)

- (A) Tired
- (B) Cannot stand
- (C) That she cannot stand
- (D) She is
- (E) Stand



Either you or I should go. (Coordinate Clause)

- (A) Either you
(B) Go
(C) Either
(D) I should go
(E) Should
-



As far as I think, he will not come today. (Sub. Adverb Clause)

- (A) I think
(B) Come
(C) Today
(D) He will not come
(E) I think
-



The father asked Serena why she came so late. (Subordinate Clause)

- (A) Why she came so late
(B) The father asked
(C) So late
(D) Late
(E) The father asked Serena
-



I know why he is absent today. (Coordinate Clause)

- (A) Why he is
(B) He is absent today
(C) I know
(D) Absent
(E) He is
-

Self Evaluation Test

SOLUTIONS



Explanation for selected Questions

1. Adverb Clause is that Subordinate Clause which modifies the verb, adjective or adverb coming in any other clause.
2. A clause which does not depend on any other clause is called a Principle Clause.
3. A clause which does not depend on any other clause is called a Principle Clause.
4. This clause is totally independent as it does not depend on any clause for its meaning.
5. A clause which does not depend on any other clause is called a Principle Clause.
6. Adverb Clause is that Subordinate Clause which modifies the verb, adjective or adverb coming in any other clause.
7. Coordinate Clause is joined by the Connective 'either — or'.
8. This clause expresses the extent of the statement and generally begins with any of these Subordinating Conjunctions as far as, so far as, etc.
9. This clause is not independent as it does not make complete sense on its own. It is dependent on Principal Clause to express its meaning.
10. This clause is totally independent as it does not depend on any clause for its meaning.

Answer

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|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | A | 2. | B | 3. | C | 4. | D | 5. | E | 6. | C | 7. | D | 8. | E | 9. | A | 10. | B |
|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|---|-----|---|