

Complex Sentences

Subordinate (Dependent) Clause: Has its own subject and verb, but does not express a complete thought and cannot stand alone. There are three types of subordinate clauses:

Adjective
Adverb
Noun

Adjective Clause

A subordinate clause that modifies or describes a noun or pronoun in the main clause (does the same work as an adjective)

Adjective clauses are introduced by RELATIVE PRONOUNS:

that	who	whose	what
which	whom	whoever	

Also may start with:

how	when
why	where

Adjective clauses are found *directly after* the noun or pronoun they modify.

The reason why I can't go to the concert with you is complicated.

(modifies the noun *reason*)

The squirrel that was trapped in the attic finally escaped today.

(modifies the noun *squirrel*)

Anyone who likes ice cream will love the new place in town.

(modifies the pronoun *Anyone*)

Adverb Clause

A subordinate clause that modifies a verb, adjective, or adverb in the main clause (does the same work as an adverb)

Adverb clauses are introduced by SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS:

after	as long as	before	since	unless	where
although	as soon as	even though	so that	until	wherever
as	as though	if	than	when	while
as if	because	in order that	though	whenever	

Like adverbs, adverb clauses answer the following questions:

When?	How?	How much?
Where?	To what degree?	How little?
Why?	Under what circumstances?	How often?

Adverb clauses can be found *anywhere* in the sentence. A clause that starts a sentence and is set off with a comma is almost always an adverb clause.

The world would be a better place if more people listened to their parents.

(modifies adjective *better* – answers the question “under what circumstances?”)

I left the park when the kids started to fight.

(modifies the verb *left* – answers the question “when?”)

He walked as slowly as a turtle trudges through the mud.

(modifies adverb *slowly* – answers the question “to what degree?”)

Because Natalie was exhausted, she went to bed.

(modifies verb *went* – answers the question “why?”)

Noun Clause

A subordinate clause that functions as a noun in a sentence – as a subject, direct object, indirect object, object of a preposition, or a predicate nominative.

Noun clauses are introduced by the following words:

who	that	when	whoever
whom	if	where	whatever
whose	whether	how	whenever
which	what	why	wherever

Subject = “Doer” of the action

What I had for breakfast will keep me full all morning.

(What “will keep?” The answer is the entire clause – *what I had for breakfast*)

Whoever pitched the last inning saved the game for the team.

(Who “saved?” The answer is the entire clause – *whoever pitched the last inning*)

Direct Object = “Receiver” of the action

I will choose which friend will come with me on my trip.

(I “will choose” what? The answer is the entire clause – *which friend will come with me on my trip*)

Mom bought whatever we needed for school supplies.

(Mom “bought” what? The answer is the entire clause – *whatever we needed for school supplies*)

Indirect Object = “Receiver of the Direct Object”

*Indirect Object ALWAYS comes before the Direct Object in a sentence

She will give whoever wants a turn a ride on her new bike.

(She “will give” what? A RIDE – ride is the direct object. Who receives the ride? The answer is the entire clause – *whoever wants a turn* – the clause is the indirect object.)

The teacher threw whoever has a summer birthday a party at the end of the school year.

(Teacher “threw” what? A PARTY – party is the direct object. Who receives the party? The answer is the entire clause – *whoever has a summer birthday* – the clause is the indirect object.)

Predicate Nominative = Comes after a LINKING verb and refers back to the subject

The troublemaker is whoever made the mess.

(Clause comes after the linking verb “is” and means the same thing as the subject, troublemaker.)

Her favorite foods have always been what her grandmother made for Christmas dinner.

(Clause comes after the linking verb “have been” and means the same thing as the subject, foods.)

Object of a Preposition = Comes after a preposition – REMEMBER THE SONG!

We will celebrate with whoever can attend the party. (clause comes after the preposition *with*)

I cannot think of how I will fix the broken toy. (clause comes after the preposition *of*)