

## Clauses & Types of Sentences

You have probably been told that a sentence has a subject and a verb. This is true, but it doesn't give a complete explanation. A subject and a verb first create a *clause*. There are two types of clauses, dependent and independent. An independent clause can be a complete sentence, but a dependent clause cannot.

Independent (main) Clause	Dependent (subordinate) Clause
Has a subject and a verb	Has a subject and a verb
Can stand alone as a sentence	Is a fragment; cannot stand alone as a sentence
Expresses a complete thought	Does <b>not</b> express a complete thought (needs to be completed)
Does not need any additional clauses	Must be attached to a main (independent) clause
Does <b>not</b> begin with a <b>subordinate</b> word	Begins with a subordinate word (words like <i>when, although, since</i> )

### INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

If you have a subject and a verb in a complete idea, you have an independent clause.

I am taking 15 units this quarter.

One independent clause is called a simple sentence and expresses one idea. A simple sentence can include many phrases but has only one subject and verb.

According to Mary Pyc, a specialist in cognitive science, rather than cramming, students should use flashcards regularly to increase retention.

As we write, we have to develop our ideas and show connections between them. Therefore, we build on simple sentences by joining independent and dependent clause to create sentences that represent these combined ideas.

### COMPOUND SENTENCES

When two independent clauses are joined, they form a compound sentence. This is referred to as coordination. "Coordinate" means to work together. When two people coordinate a project, they both work equally hard. The same is true for two independent clauses. They are seen as working together; one is not more important than the other.

When these sentences are created, the independent clauses need to be joined in one of three ways:

- semicolon (;)
- , F(for) A(and) N(nor) B(but) O(or) Y(yet) S(so)
- ; therefore (however) (nonetheless) (moreover) (nevertheless) ,

Correct: I am taking 15 units this quarter, so I will not work more than 10 hours a week.

**Incorrect: I am taking 15 units this quarter, I will not work more than 10 hours a week.**

Each of the clauses expresses a complete idea and could be a separate sentence, so they are main (independent) clauses. They are joined by a comma (,) followed by a coordinating word to show that they are of equal importance. In American English, you may not join independent clauses with a comma alone. This is called a comma splice and is viewed by your reader as a run-on sentence.

### COMPLEX SENTENCES

A **complex sentence** is a combination of one independent clause and any number of dependent clauses. This is referred to as "subordination," which means that one is less important than the other. Think of a

manager at an office. The people that he or she oversees are considered “subordinates” because the manager outranks them. A clause that is joined to a main clause by a subordinate word is in a lesser position than the independent clause because its meaning is incomplete without the main clause.

Some college students plagiarize because they ~~don't manage~~ their time well.

The first clause expresses a complete idea, but the idea in the second clause is incomplete. It is introduced by a subordinating word, *because*, so we call it a subordinate clause. When the subordinating clauses comes after the main clause, we do not usually use a comma (,).

If the dependent clause comes at the start, then there must be a comma after the dependent clause, but if it comes after the independent clause, there is not comma.

Because they ~~don't manage~~ their time well, some college students plagiarize.

**There are different kinds of subordinating words. Some are conjunctions; their only function is to join clauses together. Removing these conjunctions will create an independent clause.**

Because they don't manage their time well. (*Alone, this dependent clause is a fragment.*)

~~Because~~ they don't manage their time well. (*If we remove “because,” the clause is now independent.*)

Other types of words that create dependent clauses are relative pronouns and adverbs. These have slightly different functions. Relative pronouns begin clauses that give specific information about a noun in the sentence. They often come directly *next* to the noun they are referring to.

Plagiarism, which is considered cheating, can have serious consequences, including an F in the course and disciplinary action taken by the university.

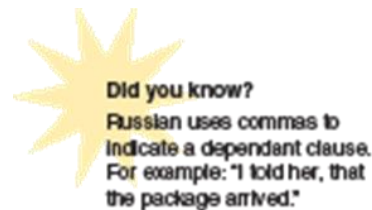
The clause that begins with “which” is telling us more about plagiarism. Notice that it is the subject of the dependent clause.

Plagiarism, which is considered cheating, can have serious consequences, including an F in the course and disciplinary action taken by the university.

Plagiarism can have serious *consequences* which many students may not be aware of.

In both of the above sentences, *which* signals a dependent clause that describes the noun it is next to. However, in the first sentence *which* is the subject, but in the second it is not; *students* is the subject. Unlike with *because* in the earlier example, *which* cannot simply be removed to create an independent clause.

The chart below compares all of the words that are used to join independent and dependent clauses.<sup>1</sup>



Used to signal DEPEDENT CLAUSES. If a clause begins with these, it must be attached to a main (independent) clause			Use to connect Independent Clauses	
<b>Subordinating Conjunctions</b> (Removing these from the beginning of the clause makes the clause independent).	<b>Relative Pronouns</b>	<b>Relative Adverbs</b>	<b>Coordinating Conjunctions</b> <i>used with a comma (,) to join equal clauses</i>	<b>Sentence Connectors</b> <i>used with a semicolon (;) or may start new independent clauses</i>
	<i>(cannot be removed; they come next to the word they are describing or referring to)</i>			

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: <https://blogs.voanews.com/student-union/2016/11/23/international-us-students-still-sit-at-different-tables/>

after	even if	no matter how	wherever	which	when	for	as a result
although	even though	now that	whether	whichever	where	and	therefore
as/as if	how	once	so that	who	why	nor	however
until	if	provided that	then	whoever	how	but	nevertheless
as long as	in case	rather than	than	whom		or	instead
as soon as	in that	since	that	whomever		yet	also
as though	in order that	whenever	though	whose		so	then
because	in so far as	where	while				thus
before	just as	whereas	unless		for example		
					on the other hand		

**ACTIVITY: CLAUSE COMBINATIONS**

Combine these clauses using the connectors in parentheses.

- 11. Many students are addicted to their phones. They must constantly check them in class. (because) \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. Students have many friends on social media. They often feel isolated. (although) \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. Many professors use Turnitin to check if work is plagiarized. Students find other more creative ways to plagiarize. (however) \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. Students often say that they can listen to music when doing their homework. The quality of their work is poor. (although) \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. The internet exposes students to a lot of helpful information. They should not borrow it without giving credit to the source. (yet) \_\_\_\_\_

**ACTIVITY: UNDERSTANDING EMPHASIS IN CLAUSE USE**

Take a look at the following groups of sentences. In the box, discuss how the emphasis changes in each set of groups below depending on whether the clauses are connected with a coordinator, subordinator, or transition. Then write your own set of sentences with different connective devices.

- 1a. There were some differences in how the professor and the TA explained the concept, but I learned a lot in that class.
- 1b. Although there were some differences in how the professor and the TA explained the concept, I learned a lot in that class.
- 1c. There were some differences in how the professor and the TA explained the concept. However, I learned a lot in that class.

**Discussion:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Your own sentences:**

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- 2a. Some students do not properly give credit to sources they use in their papers, so they are accused of plagiarism by their professors.
- 2b. Because some students do not properly give credit to sources they use in their papers, they are accused of plagiarism by their professors.
- 2c. Some students do not properly give credit to sources they use in their papers. Therefore, they are accused of plagiarism by their professors.

**Discussion:**

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**Your own sentences:**

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<b>ACTIVITY: EDITING SENTENCES IN STUDENT WRITING</b>
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**Read the student paragraph below. Edit any sentence errors.**

My ideal college classroom is the opposite of a large lecture, it is much smaller and has more interaction. This classroom has less than twenty students in a class. Because less students can make instructors interact with all the students and know all the students well. A class with less students also can force students to pay attention to the class they miss less class. In my ideal college classroom professors are always lecture with interesting examples to explain materials. Rather than write everything on the board. Although technology is used in the classroom a lot, but the writing on the board or paper is clear and easy to read so students could follow their professors and take notes easily. I also feel classes should have teaching assistants, they must be carefully selected by the professor and willing to tutor students. I think the best learning happens with less people. Since they can be more active in their own learning. If there too many people, the class becomes in personal.