

Book 6

**Mastering English  
Grammar**

# **COMPLEX SENTENCES**

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# COMPLEX SENTENCES

Book 6 of the MASTERING ENGLISH GRAMMAR  
Series

David Moeller

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# GENERAL INTRODUCTION: *MASTERING ENGLISH GRAMMAR*

The nine titles in the *Mastering English Grammar* series can be subdivided into three books on the parts of speech, three on sentence structure, and three on punctuation:

## **Parts of Speech**

- Book 1: *Nouns and Adjectives*
- Book 2: *Verbs and Adverbs*
- Book 3: *Pronouns, Prepositions, and Conjunctions*

## **Sentence Structure**

- Book 4: *Subjects and Verbs*
- Book 5: *Compound Sentences*
- Book 6: *Complex Sentences*

## **Punctuation**

- Book 7: *Commas*
- Book 8: *Semicolons and Colons*
- Book 9: *Parentheses, Brackets, Dashes, Ellipses, Italics, and Hyphens*

What sets this series apart from other grammar books is that instead of trying to include all that can be said on the topic of grammar (the data-dump approach), it focuses on those concepts that promise a higher return on investment (ROI). In other words, as much as possible, the books in this series aim to translate the study of grammar into more competent reading and writing.

The term *generative* refers to a study of grammar or rhetoric that helps us achieve in writing what we wouldn't have been able to achieve otherwise. Generative grammar is grammar at its most practical—it's grammar we can use. Such generative material has been sprinkled throughout the pages of the books in this series.

The nine books in this series constitute a writer's grammar. The *Mastering*

that appears in the series title is not a reference to earning high scores on grammar quizzes; instead, it refers to increasing our ability to understand the texts of others and to formulate words, phrases, and clauses while writing. Ultimately, we will want to use the knowledge we gain to *generate* more complex structures as we write.

All nine books in this series contain exercises (called *Your Turn*), a book-ending *Test Questions* section, and answers to all exercise and test questions.

Ultimately, the aim of each title is to equip you with some knowledge and some practical skills to add to your arsenal of writing strategies.

### **E-Book Vs. Print**

Because the nine titles in the series contain exercises and test questions, a discussion of the difference between an e-book and a print book is really a discussion of writing out answers vs. working out answers in our heads. The e-books in this series are designed to accommodate the limitations of e-readers. For example, to reduce scrolling, answers follow immediately upon the heels of questions. When access to reference material—like word lists, for example—is necessary, that material will reappear in those places where it is needed.

Print versions, on the other hand, leave room for writing out answers or marking up text. And in the print versions, the answers are in the back of the book.

# INTRODUCTION TO BOOK 6: *COMPLEX SENTENCES*

Welcome to *Book 6: Complex Sentences*, a book that teaches how subordinate clauses join with independent clauses to create complex sentences.

The twenty-three lessons in this e-book are dedicated to learning how three types of subordinate clauses—adverb, adjective, and noun—are added to independent clauses to create complex sentences.

Here is one common way to categorize sentences:

1. simple
2. compound
3. complex
4. compound-complex

Books 4, 5, and 6 of *Mastering English Grammar* take us on a journey through these four sentence types. In Book 4 we study subjects and verbs and, by doing so, we establish our understanding of the simple sentence. In Book 5 we study the compound sentence. Here in Book 6 we'll spend most of our time studying the complex sentence and, in Lesson 23, we'll pay a visit to the compound-complex sentence.

Our journey toward complex sentence mastery will be assisted by three key word groups: the subordinating conjunctions, the relative clauses, and the noun-clause markers.

Before we begin, we should know that the term *complex* is not really about complexity.

Example:

- **complex sentence:** It's quiet when he leaves.

Yes, that is a complex sentence and, yes, complex sentences can be that simple.

## **Apply Your Learning**

There will be much to learn in the pages ahead. But this book will not be truly beneficial unless it translates into more skillful reading and writing. So in addition to studying the lessons in this book, try to notice when the teachings found in this book match the sentence structures you encounter in the reading you do elsewhere. And most importantly, start applying the sentence structures described in the book. Each time you sit down to write, push yourself by adorning your own writing with some of the patterns and devices you will learn about in the following lessons.



# Lesson 1: Independent Clause Vs. Subordinate Clause

A **clause** is a word group that contains a subject and verb. If that clause can stand alone—in other words, if that clause is the same as a sentence—we call it an ***independent clause***.

Example:

- **independent clause:** she **held** the scale (*Subjects are underlined; verbs are boldfaced.*)

However, if a word group has a subject and verb but cannot stand alone, we call it a ***subordinate*** (or *dependent*) **clause**.

- **subordinate clause:** AS she **held** the scale

In a compound sentence consisting of two independent clauses, each clause can stand alone.

Example of a **compound sentence**:

- [Independent clause], AND [independent clause].
- [She held the scale], AND [she lifted the sword].

In the compound sentence above, *she held the scale* is independent and can stand alone as a sentence. *She lifted the sword* is also independent and can also stand alone.

Example of a **complex sentence**:

- [Independent clause] [subordinate clause].
- [She held the scale] [AS she lifted the sword].

In the complex sentence above, *she held the scale* is independent and can stand alone as a sentence. But *AS she lifted the sword* is not independent. It cannot stand alone without the independent clause to attach itself to.

Note that when we say that a clause is *subordinate*, we are not referring to its importance, but simply to its grammatical dependence on the independent clause.

So what is a complex sentence? It is ***a sentence that contains at least one subordinate clause***. So the study of complex sentences is really little more than the study of subordinate clauses.

It is important to keep this fact in mind. The term *subordinate clause* will appear in abundance, while the term *complex sentence* may seem to fade into the background. But every single sentence we will encounter that contains a subordinate clause is, in fact, a complex sentence.

Subordinate clauses can be divided into three categories based on their function:

- **adjective clauses**
- **adverb clauses**
- **noun clauses**

(The adjective forms of *adjective*, *adverb*, and *noun* are *adjectival*, *adverbial*, and *nominal*.)

As we make our way through this e-book, we will need to distinguish between independent clauses that can stand alone as sentences and subordinate clauses that cannot stand alone.

Here are some examples:

- **independent clause/sentence:** They got into a station wagon. (*has a subject and verb and can stand alone*)
- **subordinate clause/adverb:** As they got into a station wagon. (*has a subject and verb but cannot stand alone*)
- **subordinate clause/adjective:** Which was a station wagon. (*has a subject and verb but cannot stand alone*)
- **subordinate clause/noun:** That they got into a station wagon. (*has a subject and verb but cannot stand alone*)

## **YOUR TURN 1**

For each clause below, determine whether the clause is independent (can stand alone) or subordinate (cannot stand alone).

1. A single sword is held aloft.
2. After you left me.
3. Because my uncle sat at the stone table.
4. That a serpentine hair hangs over one ear.
5. Which is a hidden pleasure.
5. Who knew the rules and punishments.
7. Why she chose to wear the hex on her forehead.
3. You lose yourself in the cave of endless breath.

## ANSWERS 1

1. A single sword is held aloft. ***independent***
2. After you left me. ***subordinate***
3. Because my uncle sat at the stone table. ***subordinate***
4. That a serpentine hair hangs over one ear. ***subordinate***
5. Which is a hidden pleasure. ***subordinate***
5. Who knew the rules and punishments. ***subordinate*** [*a question mark instead of a period would have made this an independent clause*]
7. Why she chose to wear the hex on her forehead. ***subordinate***
3. You lose yourself in the cave of endless breath. ***independent***

# **PART 1: ADVERB CLAUSES**

## **Lesson 2: Subordinating Conjunctions**

An **adverbial subordinate clause** begins with a **subordinating conjunction**.

Here is a list:

- *after, as if, as long as, as soon as, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*

Now let's perform a magic trick. Let's take a complete sentence, add a word to that complete sentence, and get less than a complete sentence:

- **start with a complete sentence:** *the sunset behind Lake Tahoe is spectacular*
- **add a word:** *ALTHOUGH*
- **get less than a complete sentence:** *ALTHOUGH the sunset behind lake Tahoe is spectacular*

This is how adverb clauses are created.

- a subordinating conjunction + a sentence = an adverb clause
- *ALTHOUGH* + *the sunset behind Lake Tahoe is spectacular* = an adverb clause

## YOUR TURN 2

You are going to create your own adverbial subordinate clauses.

Read the sentences below. For each, add a subordinating conjunction (chosen from the list below) to the beginning of the sentence. By following this process, you will be creating adverbial subordinate clauses.

- **subordinating conjunctions:** *after, although, as, because, before, even if, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*

1. He wings the glass into the empty fireplace.
2. Night has already covered most of the country.
3. Traps are underfoot on every path.
4. Another gas lamp flutters against the gravel path.
5. There is no ladder.

*Continue the exercise using the same five sentences a second time. But this time use five different subordinating conjunctions:*

- **subordinating conjunctions:** *after, although, as, because, before, even if, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*
5. He wings the glass into the empty fireplace.
  7. Night has already covered most of the country.
  3. Traps are underfoot on every path.
  9. Another gas lamp flutters against the gravel path.
  10. There is no ladder.

## **POSSIBLE ANSWERS 2**

1. **BEFORE** he wings the glass into the empty fireplace
2. **WHILE** night has already covered most of the country
3. **BECAUSE** traps are underfoot on every path
4. **WHEREVER** another gas lamp flutters against the gravel path
5. **THOUGH** there is no ladder
6. **WHEN** he wings the glass into the empty fireplace
7. **WHENEVER** night has already covered most of the country
8. **ALTHOUGH** traps are underfoot on every path
9. **UNTIL** another gas lamp flutters against the gravel path
10. **IF** there is no ladder

# Lesson 3: Adverb Clauses: Two Patterns

To be fully clear about complex sentences, we must understand that three-part formula and the two-part formula below are *two ways of saying the same thing*.

- **3-part formula:** independent clause + subordinating conjunction + independent clause
- **2-part formula:** independent clause + subordinate clause

A subordinate clause consists of a subordinating conjunction + an independent clause. Recall that in the just-completed Your Turn, we used this very process to create subordinate clauses. Therefore, it helps to insert brackets into our 3-part formula so that we can see more clearly how the two formulas are really the same:

- **3-part formula:** independent clause + [subordinating conjunction + independent clause] = complex sentence
- **2-part formula:** independent clause + [subordinate clause] = complex sentence

Here are the two formulas with actual words filled in:

- **3-part formula:** you can try climbing on my back + [IF + there is no ladder] = complex sentence
- **2-part formula:** you can try climbing on my back + [IF there is no ladder] = complex sentence

In any discussion of sentences that contain multiple clauses, the importance of the conjunctions should be foregrounded. But with complex sentences, the conjunctions can easily get hidden: they can disappear within the term *subordinate clause*. We can solve that problem by keeping in mind that our conjunctions are inside our subordinate clauses—and in most cases, they serve as the first word of those clauses.

## PATTERN 1 AND PATTERN 2



The two most common places where adverbial subordinate clauses can be placed are after an independent clause and before an independent clause—on the right side or on the left side.

- (the left side) **independent clause** (the right side)
- (an adverbial subordinate clause can be placed here) **independent clause**  
(an adverbial subordinate clause can be placed here)

Here are the two basic patterns:

- **pattern 1:** independent clause + adverbial subordinate clause
- **pattern 2:** adverbial subordinate clause + (,) + independent clause

A **pattern 1** sentence—with the adverbial subordinate clause to the right—looks like this:

- He called me to the tannery [BECAUSE it was Sunday]. (*no comma*)

A **pattern 2** sentence—with the adverbial subordinate clause to the left—looks like this:

- [BECAUSE it was Sunday], he called me to the tannery. (*note the comma*)

As you probably noticed, the two patterns are really just flip-flopped versions of one another.

## YOUR TURN 3

Each of the following sentences follows pattern 1, as described above. You will be asked to identify independent clauses and adverbial subordinate clauses (*adverb clauses* for short). The independent clauses will be to the left. Remember that adverb clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions. In all of the examples below, the independent clause *stops just before* the subordinating conjunction; the adverb clause *begins with* the subordinating conjunction.

Here are the subordinating conjunctions:

- *after, as if, as long as, as soon as, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*
1. Identify the independent clause in this sentence: The parade is turning into our street because the other streets have been barricaded.
  2. Identify the subordinate clause in this sentence: The parade is turning into our street because the other streets have been barricaded.
  3. Identify the independent clause: We will get back to doing little things for each other after we paste these stamps together to form a tiny train track.
  4. Identify the subordinate clause: We will get back to doing little things for each other after we paste these stamps together to form a tiny train track.
  5. Identify the independent clause: History cannot be erased although we can soothe ourselves by speculating about it.
  5. Identify the subordinate clause: History cannot be erased although we can soothe ourselves by speculating about it.
  7. Identify the independent clause: A flock of minnows shivers awake as night closes in.
  3. Identify the subordinate clause: A flock of minnows shivers awake as night closes in.
  3. Identify the independent clause in this sentence: Sunlight drifts down and dulls and shatters before it hits the ground.

10. Identify the subordinate clause in this sentence: Sunlight drifts down and dulls and shatters before it hits the ground.

### ANSWERS 3

1. independent clause: **The parade is turning into our street** BECAUSE the other streets have been barricaded.
2. subordinate clause: The parade is turning into our street **BECAUSE the other streets have been barricaded.**
3. independent clause: **We will get back to doing little things for each other** AFTER we paste these stamps together to form a tiny train track.
4. subordinate clause: We will get back to doing little things for each other **AFTER we paste these stamps together to form a tiny train track.**
5. independent clause: **History cannot be erased** ALTHOUGH we can soothe ourselves by speculating about it.
5. subordinate clause: History cannot be erased **ALTHOUGH we can soothe ourselves by speculating about it.**
7. independent clause: **A flock of minnows shivers awake** AS night closes in.
3. subordinate clause: A flock of minnows shivers awake **AS night closes in.**
9. independent clause in this sentence: **Sunlight drifts down and dulls and shatters** BEFORE it hits the ground.
10. subordinate clause in this sentence: Sunlight drifts down and dulls and shatters **BEFORE it hits the ground.**

## Lesson 4: Adverb Clauses: Pattern 2

In Lesson 3 we learned that the two common positions for adverb clauses are the left side of an independent clause and the right side. In the Your Turn, we practiced identifying clauses in pattern 1 sentences—with the adverb clause appearing to the right of the independent clause. In this lesson we'll study some pattern 2 sentences. Pattern 2 looks like this:

- subordinate clause + (,) + independent clause

When an adverbial subordinate clause precedes an independent clause, the pause between the two clauses gets marked with a comma.

## YOUR TURN 4

The following sentences are all pattern 2 sentences. You will be asked to identify independent clauses and subordinate clauses. This time the subordinate clauses will be to the left. Use the commas to guide you.

Remember that adverbial subordinate clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions, listed here:

- *after, as if, as long as, as soon as, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*
1. Identify the independent clause in this sentence: *Because I love cedar waxwings, I stare up into the sky too long.*
  2. Identify the subordinate clause in this sentence: *Because I love cedar waxwings, I stare up into the sky too long.*
  3. Identify the independent clause: *If I were a lily, I think I would wait all day for the hummingbird's green face.*
  4. Identify the subordinate clause: *If I were a lily, I think I would wait all day for the hummingbird's green face.*
  5. Identify the independent clause: *So that Orpheus sings accurately, he practices from morning till noon.*
  5. Identify the subordinate clause: *So that Orpheus sings accurately, he practices from morning till noon.*
  7. Identify the independent clause: *Until only a child on a unicycle was left, the actors continually left the stage one-by-one.*
  3. Identify the subordinate clause: *Until only a child on a unicycle was left, the actors continually left the stage one-by-one.*
  9. Identify the independent clause: *When loneliness comes stalking, you should go into the fields and consider the orderliness of the world.*
  10. Identify the subordinate clause: *When loneliness comes stalking, you should go into the fields and consider the orderliness of the world.*

## ANSWERS 4

1. independent clause: **BECAUSE** I love cedar waxwings, **I stare up into the sky too long.**
2. subordinate clause: **BECAUSE I love cedar waxwings,** I stare up into the sky too long.
3. independent clause: IF I were a lily, **I think I would wait all day for the hummingbird's green face.**
4. subordinate clause: **IF I were a lily,** I think I would wait all day for the hummingbird's green face.
5. independent clause: SO **THAT** Orpheus sings accurately, **he practices from morning till noon.**
5. subordinate clause: **SO THAT Orpheus sings accurately,** he practices from morning till noon.
7. independent clause: UNTIL only a child on a unicycle was left, **the actors continually left the stage one-by-one.**
3. subordinate clause: **UNTIL only a child on a unicycle was left,** the actors continually left the stage one-by-one.
9. independent clause: WHEN loneliness comes stalking, **you should go into the fields and consider the orderliness of the world.**
10. subordinate clause: **WHEN loneliness comes stalking,** you should go into the fields and consider the orderliness of the world.

# Lesson 5: Subjects and Verbs in Sentences with Adverbial Subordinate Clauses

In the two complex sentences that follow, the subordinate clauses are marked by brackets. Each begins with the **subordinating conjunction** *though*.

- **pattern 1:** I sojourn here [THOUGH the sedge has withered from the lake].
- **pattern 2:** [THOUGH the sedge has withered from the lake], I sojourn here.

The two sentences above take the following two forms:

- **pattern 1:** Independent clause [subordinate clause].
- **pattern 2:** [Subordinate clause], independent clause.

Here we see the two common patterns demonstrated. If the subordinate clause appears to the left side of the independent clause (pattern 2), it will end at the comma; if the subordinate clause appears to the right side of the independent clause (pattern 1), it will end at the period.

- I sojourn here [THOUGH the sedge has withered from the lake].

Independent clause: I sojourn here

Subordinate clause: THOUGH the sedge has withered from the lake

The sentence above presents us with two sets of **subjects** and **verbs**: *I sojourn* and *sedge has withered*. Because one subject-verb combination appears in the independent clause and the other in the subordinate clause, we can think of the two subject-verb combinations as **primary** and **secondary**.

- **primary:** I sojourn
- **secondary:** sedge has withered

The primary subject-verb combination serves as *the* subject-verb of the complex sentence. When asked for *the* subject and verb of a complex sentence, we respond with the primary subject-verb—in this case, *I sojourn*. However, if we are asked for *a* subject-verb in the sentence above, we can



then point to either of the two subject-verb combinations.

## WHAT MAKES ADVERBIAL SUBORDINATE CLAUSES ADVERBIAL?

If these clauses are, indeed, adverbial, they should be doing something adverbial—like modifying or describing a verb, for example. And that’s exactly what these clauses are doing.

Within each adverbial subordinate clause lies a subject and verb. However, the *adverbial* work done by an adverb clause is done, not upon its own self-contained verb, but upon the verb in the other clause—the *independent clause*.

Example:

- I **sojourn** here THOUGH the sedge has withered from the lake.

Here, the adverbial subordinate clause *though the sedge has withered from the lake* describes the surprising nature of the verb *sojourn*. Normally, we assume that when the sedge starts withering, people quit their sojourning and get on with their lives.

As noted earlier, in complex sentences we find a hierarchy of subjects and verbs—a *primary* subject-verb and a *secondary* subject-verb.

- I **sojourn** here [THOUGH the sedge has withered from the lake].

In this example, the primary subject-verb combination (*I sojourn*) is found in the left-hand, independent clause; the secondary subject-verb (*sedge has withered*) is found in the right-hand, subordinate clause.

- **primary base sentence:** *I sojourn*
- **secondary base sentence:** *sedge has withered*

## YOUR TURN 5

Your task in this Your Turn is to identify the base sentences in each of the two clauses: one subject-verb combination in the independent clause and one in the subordinate clause.

In the following eight sentences, all subordinate clauses begin with one of the following subordinating conjunctions:

- *after, although, because, before, so that, when.*

### PATTERN 1

1. You begin when you are ready. [What is the primary base sentence? The secondary?]
2. The weathermen clomped four miles on snowshoes to get to their seats after they had thumped the vending machines empty. [*What is the primary base sentence? The secondary?*]
3. The heart of youth is so light because on its hot brow the wind of promise blows. [*What is the primary base sentence? The secondary?*]
4. The war was solved by isolating the two sections of the enemy's navy so that the mainland could protect the smaller ships. [*What is the primary base sentence? The secondary?*]

### PATTERN 2

5. When you are ready, you begin. [What is the primary base sentence? The secondary?]
5. After they had thumped the vending machines empty, the weathermen clomped four miles on snowshoes to get to their seats. [*What is the primary base sentence? The secondary?*]
7. Although the same words have been uttered, these questions have a different form. [*What is the primary base sentence? The secondary?*]
3. Before we leave from this good high place, we must catch a view of the city. [*What is the primary base sentence? The secondary?*]

## ANSWERS 5

1. You **begin** [WHEN you **are** ready].

primary base sentence: *you begin*

secondary base sentence: *you are*

2. The weathermen **clomped** four miles on snowshoes to get to their seats  
[AFTER they **had thumped** the vending machines empty].

primary base sentence: *weathermen clomped*

secondary base sentence: *they had thumped*

3. The heart of youth **is** so light [BECAUSE on its hot brow the wind of promise  
**blows**].

primary base sentence: *heart is*

secondary base sentence: *wind blows*

4. The war **was solved** by isolating the two sections of the enemy's navy [so  
THAT the mainland **could protect** the smaller ships].

primary base sentence: *war was solved*

secondary base sentence: *mainland could protect*

5. [WHEN you **are** ready], you **begin**.

Trick question. The answer is the same as for number 1.

5. [AFTER they **had thumped** the vending machines empty], the weathermen  
**clomped** four miles on snowshoes to get to their seats.

Another trick question. The answer is the same as for number 2.

7. [ALTHOUGH the same words **have been uttered**], these questions **have** a  
different form.

primary base sentence: *questions have*

secondary base sentence: *words have been uttered*

3. [BEFORE we **leave** from this good high place], we **must catch** a view of the  
city.

primary base sentence: *we must catch*

secondary base sentence: *we leave*

# Lesson 6: Adverb Clauses—Mixed Patterns

Here are the two patterns we have been studying:

- **pattern 1:** Independent clause + subordinate clause.
- **pattern 2:** Subordinate clause + (,) + independent clause.

In the previous two lessons, pattern 1 sentences were grouped together and pattern 2 sentences were grouped together. This time they will be mixed.

As we complete these exercises, we will be focusing on applying the rules; nevertheless, there is an exception to our comma-placement rule. At times, a comma might be the proper choice in a pattern 1 sentence. When we do choose to apply this exception to the rule, we will most likely be doing so in the presence of *although*, *as* (meaning *because*), *since* (meaning *because*), *though*, or *while* (meaning *whereas*).

- **exception to the rule:** Independent clause + (,) + subordinate clause.

## YOUR TURN 6

For each of the twelve sentences below, identify the two clauses.

- Which is the independent clause?
- Which is the adverbial subordinate clause?

To do this, you will need to know whether the subordinate clause is on the left or the right. The presence or absence of a comma will give you the information you need. Is there a comma?

- yes—the subordinate clause is to the left
- no—the subordinate clause is to the right

And here, once again, are the subordinating conjunctions:

- *after, although, as, because, before, even if, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*
1. He gunned the engine till he had hauled it out. [*Which is the independent clause? Which is the adverbial subordinate clause?*]
  2. I had decided to maintain seven personalities because seven is a mystical number.
  3. Though his family was already on their way, he knelt and raked his bare hands through that mound of dirt.
  4. If I had wings, I would have opened them.
  5. After I'd betrayed myself, I wish I had answered differently.
  6. Let me hoist you back up onto this Ship of Fools so that we might continue our search for the Fountain of Youth.
  7. One must learn to be content with staying home since all places one cannot go are fabulous.
  8. The registrar delivered her narrative while the voices crashed.
  9. Before she can remove her hand from the knob, the whole building will collapse.
  10. Its steely gaze fixed on him as he chewed.
  11. When the sky fell, the earth turned blue.

2. Unless they mistake us for burglars, we will be quite welcome to enter.

## ANSWERS 6

Numbers 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, and 10 follow this pattern: Independent clause [subordinate clause].

Numbers 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, and 12 follow this pattern: [Subordinate clause], independent clause.

In each of the following, the subordinate clause is inside brackets.

1. He gunned the engine [TILL he had hauled it out].
2. I had decided to maintain seven personalities [BECAUSE seven is a mystical number].
3. [THOUGH his family was already on their way], he knelt and raked his bare hands through that mound of dirt.
4. [IF I had wings], I would have opened them.
5. [AFTER I'd betrayed myself], I wish I had answered differently.
5. Let me hoist you back up onto this Ship of Fools [SO THAT we might continue our search for the Fountain of Youth].
7. One must learn to be content with staying home [SINCE all places one cannot go are fabulous].
3. The registrar delivered her narrative [WHILE the voices crashed].
9. [BEFORE she can remove her hand from the knob,] the whole building will collapse.
10. Its steely gaze fixed on him [AS he chewed].
11. [WHEN the sky fell], the earth turned blue.
12. [UNLESS they mistake us for burglars], we will be quite welcome to enter.



# Lesson 7: Adverb Clauses—Focus on *Although*, *Though*, *Until*, and *Till*

Our study of *although*, *though*, *until*, and *till* is a simple one. *Although* and *though* are two interchangeable words; *until* and *till* are also two equal words. All we need to know is that both choices are available. Anytime we choose *although*, we could have chosen *though*; anytime we choose *until*, we could have chosen *till*.

Examples:

- He is too full of sleep to care ALTHOUGH he knows his enemy is there.
- He is too full of sleep to care THOUGH he knows his enemy is there.
- The voice of La Muerte numbs them UNTIL they leave wrinkled bodies of flowers withering on the stump.
- The voice of La Muerte numbs them TILL they leave wrinkled bodies of flowers withering on the stump.

## YOUR TURN 7

Each of the four compound sentences below contains a blank. Where you see the blanks, substitute one of the following subordinating conjunctions:

- *although, though, till, until.*

Use each subordinating conjunction *one time* only.

1. The summer is reluctant to go \_\_\_ the scythes hang in the apple trees.
2. \_\_\_ the scythes hang in the apple trees, the summer is reluctant to go.
3. It was best to let Michael rest \_\_\_ he felt healthy and strong.
4. \_\_\_ he felt healthy and strong, it was best to let Michael rest.

## **POSSIBLE ANSWERS 7**

1. The summer is reluctant to go **THOUGH** the scythes hang in the apple trees.
2. **ALTHOUGH** the scythes hang in the apple trees, the summer is reluctant to go.
3. It was best to let Michael rest **TILL** he felt healthy and strong.
4. **UNTIL** he felt healthy and strong, it was best to let Michael rest.

# Lesson 8: Adverb Clauses—Focus on *Since* and *So That*

In this lesson we'll take a closer look at the subordinating conjunctions *since* and *so that*.

## SINCE

*Since* has two meanings. One of its meanings is shared with *because*. *Because*, like *since*, is a subordinating conjunction; therefore, the two words can be interchangeable.

Examples:

- Alice cannot be in the poem BECAUSE she's only a metaphor.
- Alice cannot be in the poem SINCE she's only a metaphor.

*Since* also means *from that time forward*. This is a meaning that *since* does not share with any other subordinating conjunction.

- It has been thirty years SINCE I have written you a letter.

## SO THAT

The subordinating conjunction *so that* is easily mistaken for the coordinating conjunction *so*.

Examples:

- The mother has given herself up as prey SO THAT her babies can escape.
- The allosaurus fell heavily, SO the fossil he left was broken to bits.

One way to distinguish between *so* and *so that* is to determine intention. We use *so that* when the action taken in the independent clause is intentional; we use *so* when the action is not intentional.

In the examples above, the mother in the first example *intentionally* gave herself up as prey; the allosaurus in the second example, however, did not fall intentionally. In both examples the content of the independent clause *causes* the content of the subordinate clause; the difference is that the mother

intended to cause the escape of her babies and the allosaurus did not intend to cause his broken skeleton.

In addition to the difference in intention, notice also that when *so* joins two clauses it is punctuated with a comma; when *so that* joins two clauses (while sitting between the clauses) it is not punctuated with a comma.

## YOUR TURN 8

Each of the four compound sentences below contains a blank. Where you see the blanks, substitute either:

- comma + *so* [or]
- *so that*

1. I would turn down dinner invitations \_\_\_\_ I could eat alone.
2. Surprisingly, they have done me no injury \_\_\_\_ I am happy and dance and sing.
3. The photos are hard to see \_\_\_\_ we ask if they can be blown up to a larger size.
4. The doctors drugged the children \_\_\_\_ they wouldn't fuss.
5. Their stingers have been removed \_\_\_\_ I enter the swarm of yellow jackets without harm.
5. Their stingers have been removed \_\_\_\_ I can enter the swarm of yellow jackets without harm.

## **ANSWERS 8**

1. I would turn down dinner invitations **SO THAT** I could eat alone.
2. Surprisingly, they have done me no injury, **so** I am happy and dance and sing.
3. The photos are hard to see, **so** we ask that they be blown up to a larger size.
4. The doctors drugged the children **SO THAT** they wouldn't fuss.
5. Their stingers have been removed, **so** I enter the swarm of yellow jackets without harm.
5. Their stingers have been removed **SO THAT** I can enter the swarm of yellow jackets without harm.

# **PART 2: ADJECTIVE CLAUSES**

## **Lesson 9: An Introduction to Relative Clauses**

Let's review:

A complex sentence is a sentence that contains an independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses; therefore, a good way to study complex sentences is to study subordinate clauses.

Subordinate clauses can be classified as adverb clauses, **adjective clauses**, or noun clauses.

We have studied adverb clauses, the first of our three clause types. Now we will move on to adjective clauses. Those subordinate clauses that function as adjectives are known as **relative clauses**.

Relative clauses begin with one of the following **relative pronouns**:

- *who, that, which, whom, whose, what, when, where, why.*

We are going to focus on the three that we use most often in our writing: *who, that, and which*.

Examples:

- I met a man [WHO had lost the ability to cry or sing]. (The independent clause *I met a man* + the relative clause *WHO had lost the ability to cry or sing*.)
- There came a dream of hopes [THAT never yet had flushed his cheek]. (The independent clause *there came a dream of hopes* + the relative clause *that never yet had flushed his cheek*.)
- The speaker spoke of youth, [WHICH night and time have quenched forever.] (The independent clause *the speaker spoke of youth* + the relative clause *WHICH night and time have quenched forever*.)



## YOUR TURN 9

Identify the independent and relative clauses contained in the following complex sentences.

1. The men of England plow for the lords who oppress them. [*What is the relative clause in this sentence? Hint: it starts with who, that, or which.*]
2. The men of England plow for the lords who oppress them. [*What is the independent clause in this sentence? Hint: it is all the words not contained in your previous answer.*]
3. At last we understood the woe that had wasted him. [*What is the relative clause in this sentence? Hint: it starts with who, that, or which.*]
4. At last we understood the woe that had wasted him. [*What is the independent clause in this sentence? Hint: it is all the words not contained in your previous answer.*]
5. Encircling ivy covered the halls, which the waterfalls willed with unfailing sound. [*What is the relative clause in this sentence? Hint: it starts with who, that, or which.*]
5. Encircling ivy covered the halls, which the waterfalls willed with unfailing sound. [*What is the independent clause in this sentence? Hint: it is all the words not contained in your previous answer.*]

## ANSWERS 9

*The men of England plow for the lords who oppress them.*

1. **the relative clause:** *WHO* oppress them
2. **the independent clause:** *the men of England plow for the lords*

*At last we understood the woe that had wasted him.*

3. **the relative clause:** *THAT* had wasted him
4. **the independent clause:** *at last we understood the woe*

*Encircling ivy covered the halls, which the waterfalls willed with unfailing sound.*

5. **the relative clause:** *WHICH* the waterfalls willed with unfailing sound
5. **the independent clause:** *encircling ivy covered the halls*

# Lesson 10: The Medial Position

In the previous lesson we took our first look at relative clauses. Each of the sentences contained in that lesson featured a relative clause in the **terminal position** (the position to the right of an independent clause):

- Independent clause + relative clause.

However, relative clauses may also appear in the **medial position**:

The terms *introductory*, *medial*, and *terminal* help us to refer to key places within a sentence. Quite simply:

- **introductory** = at the beginning
- **medial** = in the middle
- **terminal** = at the end

Here is an example of a relative clause in the medial position:

- The man [WHO had lost the ability to cry or sing] **was sitting** in the corner.

Here, the relative clause *who had lost the ability to cry or sing* sits in the medial position—between the subject *man* and the verb *was sitting*.

- The hopes [THAT never yet had flushed his cheek] **would soon be realized**.

Here, the relative clause *that never yet had flushed his cheek* sits in the medial position—between the subject *hopes* and the verb *would be realized*.

- Youth, [WHICH night and time have quenched forever], **cannot be recaptured**.

Here, the relative clause *which night and time have quenched forever* sits in the medial position—between the subject *youth* and the verb *can be recaptured*.

## YOUR TURN 10

Identify the independent and relative clauses contained in the following complex sentences. In each case, the relative clause sits in the medial position—between the subject and verb of the independent clause.

1. The living winds, WHICH flow like waves above the living waves below, are creating navigational difficulties for the nightingales. [*What is the relative clause in this sentence? Hint: it starts with who, that, or which.*]
2. The living winds, WHICH flow like waves above the living waves below, are creating navigational difficulties for the nightingales. [*What is the independent clause in this sentence? Hint: it is all the words not contained in your previous answer.*]
3. The sounds THAT soothed her sleep came in through the open window. [*What is the relative clause in this sentence? Hint: it starts with who, that, or which.*]
4. The sounds THAT soothed her sleep came in through the open window. [*What is the independent clause in this sentence? Hint: it is all the words not contained in your previous answer.*]
5. The people WHO are lost in stormy vision need our sympathy. [*What is the relative clause in this sentence? Hint: it starts with who, that, or which.*]
5. The people WHO are lost in stormy vision need our sympathy. [*What is the independent clause in this sentence? Hint: it is all the words not contained in your previous answer.*]

## ANSWERS 10

*The living winds, [WHICH flow like waves above the living waves below], are creating navigational difficulties for the nightingales.*

1. **the relative clause:** WHICH flow like waves above the living waves below
2. **the independent clause:** the living winds are creating navigational difficulties for the nightingales

*The sounds [THAT soothed her sleep] came in through the open window.*

3. **the relative clause:** THAT soothed her sleep
4. **the independent clause:** the sounds came in through the open window

*The people [WHO are lost in stormy vision] need our sympathy.*

5. **the relative clause:** WHO are lost in stormy vision
5. **the independent clause:** the people need our sympathy

# Lesson 11: Subjects and Verbs in Sentences with Relative Clauses

Relative clauses are clauses that function as adjectives. How so?

Here are three **relative clauses**, with their subjects and verbs marked:

- WHO **fall** in love
- THAT **sits** in the center of the circle
- WHICH **remained** obscure in the mind of his listeners

Each of these word groups is a clause because each contains a subject and verb. Each is subordinate because each is unable to stand alone as its own independent sentence.

To gain their status as clauses, these word groups cheat a bit: they use their own relative pronouns as subjects. They lack independence because their subjects are not true subjects. The relative pronouns that serve as subjects (*who*, *that*, and *which*) cannot exist without the **antecedents** they point to.

We'll return to this idea in a bit. But for now, let's take the three relative clauses from above and add them to some independent clauses.

## Complex Sentence 1

- People [WHO **fall** in love] **know** the movement of time.

In this example, the medial relative clause sits between the primary subject and verb.

- **primary subject-verb:** *people know*
- **secondary subject-verb:** *who fall*

With the relative clause *who fall in love*, we find that the relative pronoun *who* serves not only as the clause's first word, but also as its subject. Because *who* is a pronoun, it exists courtesy of an **antecedent** it can point to—which happens to be *people*, the subject of the independent clause. In this case, the subject of the relative clause is linked to the subject of the independent clause via a pronoun-antecedent connection.

## Complex Sentence 2

- The object [THAT **sits** in the center of the circle] **resembles** a silver tear.

In this example, the medial relative clause once again sits between the primary subject and verb.

- **primary subject-verb:** *object resembles*
- **secondary subject-verb:** *that sit*

With the relative clause *that sits in the center of the circle*, we find that the relative pronoun *that* serves not only as the clause's first word, but also as its subject. Because *that* is a pronoun, it exists courtesy of an antecedent it can point to—which happens to be *object*, the subject of the independent clause. Once again, we find that the subject of the relative clause is linked to the subject of the independent clause.

## Complex Sentence 3

- The chatterer **provided** no details in support of his statements, [WHICH **remained** obscure in the mind of his listeners].

In this example, the relative clause is not in the medial position, as it was in the two previous examples, but in the terminal position.

- **primary subject-verb:** *chatterer provided*
- **secondary subject-verb:** *which remained*

With the relative clause *which sits in the center of the circle*, we find that the relative pronoun *which* serves not only as the clause's first word, but also as its subject. Because *which* is a pronoun, it exists courtesy of an antecedent it can point to, which happens to be the noun *statements*, not the subject *chatterer*. We see, then, that when relative clauses are moved to positions further from the primary subject, the subjects of the two clauses no longer maintain a pronoun-antecedent connection.

# WHAT MAKES RELATIVE CLAUSES ADJECTIVAL?

Okay, but we still need to demonstrate that relative clauses do, in fact, function as adjectives.

Let's use the three example sentences we saw earlier:

- People [WHO **fall** in love] **know** the movement of time.

Here, the relative clause *who fall in love* is describing the noun *people*; thus it is functioning as an adjective.

- The object [THAT **sits** in the center of the circle] **resembles** a silver tear.

Here, the relative clause *that sits in the center of the circle* is describing the noun *object*; thus it is functioning as an adjective.

- The chatterer **provided** no details in support of his statements, [WHICH **remained** obscure in the mind of his listeners].

Here, the relative clause *which remained obscure in the mind of his listeners* is describing the noun *statements*; thus it is functioning as an adjective.

Note that, as a rule, relative clauses sit immediately next to the nouns they describe.



## YOUR TURN 11

Here we will focus on the adjectival quality of relative clauses by identifying relative clauses and the nouns those clauses are describing.

1. The rumormonger took the money from the safe, WHICH had been left unlocked. [*What is the relative clause? This relative clause is functioning as an adjective because it is describing which noun?*]
2. The savage, WHO wore a sassy leopard skin, defended his territory against all invaders. [*What is the relative clause? Which noun it is describing?*]
3. The shelter THAT was made of straw was blown down by the wolf. [*What is the relative clause? Which noun it is describing?*]
4. The trophy went to the sweeper WHO used the longest broom. [*What is the relative clause? Which noun it is describing?*]
5. The toddler chose the diaper THAT had been hanging on the clothesline. [*What is the relative clause? Which noun it is describing?*]
5. The toboggan, WHICH was painted magenta, raced down the icy hillside. [*What is the relative clause? Which noun it is describing?*]

## ANSWERS 11

*In the sentences below, the relative clauses are underlined and bracketed. The nouns being described are boldfaced. Note that the nouns being described sit immediately in front of the relative clauses that describe them.*

1. The rumormonger took the money from the **safe**, [WHICH had been left unlocked]. [*What is the relative clause? This relative clause is functioning as an adjective because it is describing which noun?*]
2. The **savage**, [WHO wore a sassy leopard skin], defended his territory against all invaders. [*What is the relative clause? Which noun it is describing?*]
3. The **shelter** [THAT was made of straw] was blown down by the wolf. [*What is the relative clause? Which noun it is describing?*]
4. The trophy went to the **sweeper** [WHO used the longest broom]. [*What is the relative clause? Which noun it is describing?*]
5. The toddler chose the **diaper** [THAT had been hanging on the clothesline]. [*What is the relative clause? Which noun it is describing?*]
5. The **toboggan**, [WHICH was painted magenta], raced down the icy hillside. [*What is the relative clause? Which noun it is describing?*]

# Lesson 12: Restrictive and Nonrestrictive Relative Clauses

You may have noticed in the examples we've worked with so far that some of the relative clauses have been punctuated with commas, some without. This is because relative clauses are either **restrictive** or **nonrestrictive**.

- **restrictive** = no commas
- **nonrestrictive** = commas

Here is the difference between the two: Often, restrictive clauses serve the purpose of narrowing the possibilities within a group; nonrestrictive clauses serve no such purpose.

For example, suppose we have a group of actors. During rehearsal that day some actors attended rehearsal; some did not. By using a restrictive relative clause, we can reduce the larger group of *all* actors to a smaller group—those who didn't attend rehearsal.

- The actors [WHO failed to attend rehearsal] were forgetting their lines.

When we use relative clauses, we must be consciously aware of our purpose in using them: Are we restricting a larger group (restrictive clause)? Or are we just adding additional information (nonrestrictive clause)? We must also be conscious of our punctuation choice: Are we restricting a larger group? (If so, we don't use commas.) Or are we just adding additional information? (If so, we do use commas.)

## YOUR TURN 12

For each sentence below, first identify the relative clause; then determine whether that clause is restrictive or nonrestrictive.

1. On every side now rose rocks, WHICH lifted their barren pinnacles in the light of evening. [*What is the relative clause? Is it restrictive or nonrestrictive?*]
2. The eagle, WHO can scale Heaven in a mighty flash, soars and screams round her empty nest. [*What is the relative clause? Is it restrictive or nonrestrictive?*]
3. The eddying waters rose, circling fast and dashing the roots of trees THAT stretched their arms in darkness. [*What is the relative clause? Is it restrictive or nonrestrictive? What larger group of things is being restricted to a smaller group?*]
4. The great moon, WHICH suspended her mighty horn over the wide world, guided us safely home. [*What is the relative clause? Is it restrictive or nonrestrictive?*]
5. The sweet brook THAT rose from the secret springs of a dark fountain gurgled its way down the mountainside. [*What is the relative clause? Is it restrictive or nonrestrictive? What larger group of things is being restricted to a smaller group?*]
5. These were the famous Euganean hills, WHICH bear the likeness of a clump of islands. [*What is the relative clause? Is it restrictive or nonrestrictive?*]
7. They do not borrow their glory from men WHO make the world their prey. [*What is the relative clause? Is it restrictive or nonrestrictive? What larger group of people is being restricted to a smaller group?*]
3. We looked out upon the grass THAT trembled with the sense of an unaccustomed presence. [*What is the relative clause? Is it restrictive or nonrestrictive? What larger group of things is being restricted to a smaller group?*]

## ANSWERS 12

Note in these examples that the relative pronoun *WHICH* is used to begin nonrestrictive clauses and the relative pronoun *THAT* is used to begin restrictive clauses. The relative pronoun *WHO* can be used to begin either type of clause. Note also that the nonrestrictive clauses get commas.

Relative clauses are bracketed and underlined.

1. On every side now rose rocks, [WHICH lifted their barren pinnacles in the light of evening]. **nonrestrictive**
2. The eagle, [WHO can scale heaven in a mighty flash, soars and screams round her empty nest]. **nonrestrictive**
3. The eddying waters rose, circling fast and dashing the roots of trees [THAT stretched their arms in darkness]. **restrictive—the larger group of trees is being restricted to a smaller group—just those that stretched their arms in the darkness**
4. The great moon, [WHICH suspended her mighty horn over the wide world], guided us safely home. **nonrestrictive**
5. The sweet brook [THAT rose from the secret springs of a dark fountain] gurgled its way down the mountainside. **restrictive—the larger group of brooks is being restricted to a smaller group—just the one that rose from the secret springs of the dark fountain**
5. These were the famous Euganean hills, [WHICH bear the likeness of a clump of islands]. **nonrestrictive**
7. They do not borrow their glory from men [WHO make the world their prey]. **restrictive—the larger group of men is being restricted to a smaller group—just those who make the world their prey**
3. We looked out upon the grass [THAT trembled with the sense of an unaccustomed presence]. **restrictive—the larger group of grass is being restricted to a smaller group—just the grass that trembled with the sense of an unaccustomed presence**

# Lesson 13: Focus on Relative Pronouns

## *Which Versus That*

You may have noticed by now that, with few exceptions, the relative pronoun *which* is punctuated with commas while the relative pronoun *that* is used without commas. In other words, *which* is used to create nonrestrictive clauses and *that* is used to create restrictive clauses.

## **YOUR TURN 13**

For each of the following, first identify the relative clause. Then decide whether the sentence needs one comma, two commas, or none at all. Clauses formed from *which* need commas; clauses formed from *that* go without.

1. Travelers crossing the water hear the bell that calls the maniacs from their cells.
2. The city that gave you refuge calls for you to return.
3. This wild spirit which moves everywhere is both a destroyer and a preserver.
4. And they dragged the cruel King to kiss their bloodied feet which threatened to trample him.

## ***Who Versus That***

With few exceptions, we use *who* with people and we use *that* with things. A common error occurs when we fail to notice that we have used *that* when we should have used *who*.

### **YOUR TURN (continued)**

Correct each of the following sentences by applying the rule use “*who*” with people and use “*that*” with things.

5. Freedom remains with those that are truly free.
5. There yet remained a few that would not bow their spirits to the Conqueror.
7. The sleeping mother dreamed of the children that once roamed throughout her house.
3. This is the poet that can't stop quoting haikus at his guests.

## ANSWERS 13

1. Travelers crossing the water hear the bell THAT calls the maniacs from their cells. (uses that = no comma)
2. The city THAT gave you refuge calls for you to return. (uses that = no comma)
3. This wild spirit [,] WHICH moves everywhere [,] is both a destroyer and a preserver. (uses which = needs 2 commas)
4. And they dragged the cruel King to kiss their bloodied feet [,] WHICH threatened to trample him. (uses which = needs 1 comma)
5. Freedom remains with those WHO are truly free.
5. There yet remained a few WHO would not bow their spirits to the Conqueror.
7. The sleeping mother dreamed of the children WHO once roamed throughout her house.
3. This is the poet WHO can't stop quoting haikus at his guests.



# Lesson 14: *Who* Versus *Whom* 1

## Subjective Versus Objective Forms

We've practiced using the relative pronouns *who*, *that*, and *which*. In this lesson we'll turn our attention to another relative pronoun—*whom*. *Who* and *whom* are actually two forms of the same word: *who* is the **subjective** form while *whom* is the **objective** form.

At this point we could digress into an explanation of the subjective case and the objective case—but we won't. Instead, we'll take a shortcut by learning this general rule:

- *Whom* is followed by a noun or pronoun; *who* is followed by a verb.

Study these two examples:

- This Earth has been peopled with the servants WHOM you require.
- I am the only man WHO writes in the margins.

In each example, the relative clause is boldfaced and the relative pronoun is underlined. Notice that *whom* is followed by the pronoun *you* and *who* is followed by the verb *writes*.

## YOUR TURN 14

Complete the sentences below by inserting *who* or *whom* in place of the blank. If the word after the blank is a verb, use *who*; if the word after the blank is a noun or pronoun, use *whom*.

1. Such aggressive action reminded us of the owl \_\_\_\_ faces whatever she sees.
2. That heavenly maiden \_\_\_\_ mortals call the Moon glides across the night sky.
3. The people \_\_\_\_ she loves move through the familiar rooms.
4. This was the massive father \_\_\_\_ lifted the boy high with one hand.
5. This is the man \_\_\_\_ fame singled out as her favorite.
5. Today we would study the poet \_\_\_\_ wrote of the oval office.

## **ANSWERS 14**

1. Such aggressive action reminded us of the owl **WHO** faces whatever she sees. (*faces is a verb—use who*)
2. That heavenly maiden **WHOM** mortals call the Moon glides across the night sky. (*mortals is a noun—use whom*)
3. The people **WHOM** she loves move through the familiar rooms. (*she is a pronoun—use whom*)
4. This was the massive father **WHO** lifted the boy high with one hand. (*lifted is a verb—use who*)
5. This is the man **WHOM** fame singled out as her favorite. (*fame is a noun—use whom*)
5. Today we would study the poet **WHO** wrote of the oval office. (*wrote is a verb—use who*)

# Lesson 15: *Who Versus Whom* 2

## A Writing Trick with *Whom* As the Object of a Preposition

Another function of the objective relative pronoun *whom* is to serve as the object of a preposition. The preposition category includes such words as *at*, *below*, *by*, *for*, *from*, *in*, *of*, *on*, *through*, *to*, and *with*.

Using *whom* as the object of a preposition allows us to perform the following trick. This trick can be performed with any relative clause that ends with a preposition.

Example:

- He was the kind of knight whom ladies could be proud of.

Now, we take the preposition (*of*) from the end of the relative clause and move it to the front of the relative clause:

- He was the kind of knight **of** whom ladies could be proud.

One more example, with the relative clause in the medial position:

- The people whom you smiled on were warmed to the heart. —*becomes*—
- The people **on** whom you smiled were warmed to the heart.

This simple trick can lend a more formal and stylish tone to our writing.

## **YOUR TURN 15**

In each sentence below, move the preposition from the end of the relative clause to the front of the relative clause. Note the more elevated tone that results. For this one, you might try voicing your results out loud.

1. I knew one like you whom this city gave welcome to.
2. The people whom Percy argued with were the ones he most tried to avoid.
3. We failed to recognize the shepherd whom wolves would flee from.
4. The sister whom you share your secrets with has written you a new song.
5. We now have a list of the souls whom the bell tolls for.

## **ANSWERS 15**

1. I knew one like you **to** WHOM this city gave welcome.
2. The people **with** WHOM Percy argued were the ones he most tried to avoid.
3. We failed to recognize the shepherd **from** WHOM wolves would flee.
4. The sister **with** WHOM you share your secrets has written you a new song.
5. We now have a list of the souls **for** WHOM the bell tolls.

# Lesson 16: Reduction of Relative Clauses

Now that we have learned how relative clauses are used, we must also learn to pay heed to this word of caution:

- It is often better to **reduce** relative clauses to shorter phrases.

We often find that perfectly good phrases are hiding inside relative clauses, waiting to be freed. We free them by removing the relative pronoun (*who*, *that*, *which*) and removing the *to be* verb (*is*, *am*, *are*, *was*, *were*) that follows the relative pronoun.

- **example 1:** The mountain, **which was** unconquered by those who scale it, cannot be mistaken for a molehill.

Remove *which was* and we get: *The mountain, unconquered by those who scale it, cannot be mistaken for a molehill.*

- **example 2:** The nation adores its hermits, **who are** the preservers of solitude.

Remove *who are* and we get: *The nation adores its hermits, the preservers of solitude.*

- **example 3:** The tree **that is** growing in Eden embodies opposites in balance.

Remove *that is* and we get: *The tree growing in Eden embodies opposites in balance.*

Relative pronouns are also deletable when they are objective pronouns.

Examples:

- The bed of flowers ~~that~~ she slept in . . .
- The children ~~whom~~ she once raised . . . .

## YOUR TURN 16

Each of the sentences below contains a relative clause, and each relative clause contains a phrase in need of liberation. Liberate those phrases by deleting the relative pronoun (*who, that, which*) and the *to be* verb (*is, am, are, was, were*). Simply read the sentences to yourself without voicing the two deletable words.

1. The billy goat, which is watching without judgment from behind his strange eyes, stands patient for two millennia.
2. I greeted the new ones, who were the frightened and longing ones.
3. The flowering chestnuts, which are red and white in the morning light, drift above the watery pavement.
4. I cannot reach the handkerchief that is drying on the hook.
5. The husband and wife, who are like two scrappy parlor pets, share an established glee.



## ANSWERS 16

1. The billy goat, ~~which is~~ watching without judgment from behind his strange eyes, stands patient for two millennia.
2. I greeted the new ones, ~~who were~~ the frightened and longing ones.
3. The flowering chestnuts, ~~which are~~ red and white in the morning light, drift above the watery pavement.
4. I cannot reach the handkerchief ~~that is~~ drying on the hook.
5. The husband and wife, ~~who are~~ like two scrappy parlor pets, share an established glee.

# **PART 3: NOUN CLAUSES**

## **Lesson 17: Creating Noun Clauses**

We began our study of complex sentences by learning that a complex sentence is an independent clause (a sentence) plus a subordinate clause. We learned that there are three types of subordinate clauses: adverb, adjective (the relative clause), and noun.

We have covered subordinate clauses of the adverb and adjective variety. The adverbial clauses appear to the left or the right of independent clauses and begin with subordinating conjunctions:

- *after, as if, as long as, as soon as, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*

The adjectival clauses are relative clauses. We focused on three key relative pronouns: *who, that, and which*.

This brings us to our final clause type—the **noun clause**.

Like their cousins the adverbial and relative clauses, the noun clauses, too, begin with key words. We can call these key words **noun-clause markers**.

Here is a list:

- *that, if, whether*
- [words that can be used to create questions] *how, what, when, where, whom, why*
- [the -ever words] *however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever*

If we take an independent clause (a sentence) and add a noun-clause marker to the front of it, we get a noun clause.

- noun-clause marker + independent clause = noun clause

Examples:

**Take a sentence:** *the foal was delivered by helicopter*

**Add a noun-clause marker:** *THAT*

**Get a noun clause:** *THAT the foal was delivered by helicopter*

Once more:

**Take a sentence:** *the Shah wanted it delivered*

**Add a noun-clause marker:** *WHENEVER*

**Get a noun clause:** *WHENEVER the Shah wanted it delivered*

When a noun clause gets added to an independent clause, the result is a complex sentence. Study these two examples:

- **example 1:** WHAT the clown found so funny was a mystery. (*complex sentence? no*)
- **example 2:** We did not understand WHY George was twitching in the forsythias. (*complex sentence? yes*)

A complex sentence consists of an independent clause and at least one subordinate clause. Example 1 above consists of a noun clause plus a predicate (*was a mystery*) and, therefore is not a complex sentence. In example 2, however, we do find one independent and one subordinate clause.

- **independent clause:** we did not understand
- **subordinate clause:** *WHY* George was twitching in the forsythias

We will be studying noun clauses in sentences like the example 2 sentence; in other words, our examples will be examples of complex sentences.

## YOUR TURN 17

Decide which noun-clause markers from the bulleted list below can be attached to which of the following sentences. (Not all noun-clause markers will work with all sentences.)

Keep in mind that you are creating noun clauses, not sentences. A noun clause is a type of subordinate clause and, therefore, cannot stand alone. In fact, the noun-clause marker you add is the word that converts what would have been an independent clause into a subordinate clause.

- **noun-clause markers:** *that, if, whether, how, what, when, where, whom, why, however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever*

1. that the time was far away
2. the old woman had painted a picture of a dozen oranges
3. truth is a mix of gold and silver
4. the duck had spoken to the drake
5. the opposite of kite is yo-yo
5. the weatherman would stop to bow

## **POSSIBLE ANSWERS 17**

1. **that** the time was far away
2. **how** the old woman had painted a picture of a dozen oranges
3. **when** truth is a mix of gold and silver
4. **whatever** the duck had spoken to the drake
5. **wherever** the opposite of kite is yo-yo
5. **whenever** the weatherman would stop to bow

# Lesson 18: Noun Clauses in Sentences

Complex sentences take this form:

- independent clause + subordinate clause

Noun clauses are one type of subordinate clause, so when we add noun clauses to sentences, we create complex sentences.

Noun clauses function as nouns; consequently, wherever we can place a noun, we can also place a noun clause. And we can test for *nounness* by using the key words **SOMETHING**, **SOMEWHERE**, and **SOMEONE**. Whatever can replace any of these three words is a noun.

Examples:

- We did not understand SOMETHING.
- We did not understand WHY George was twitching in the forsythias.

In this example, the noun clause *WHY George was twitching in the forsythias* functions as a single noun.

- We despised SOMEONE.
- We despised WHOEVER had been tolling the bell.

In this example, the noun clause *WHOEVER had been tolling the bell* functions as a single noun.

Note that when using noun clauses to create complex sentences, the number of forms such sentences can take is limited. The number of verbs that can be used in the creation of complex sentences with noun clauses is also limited.

Here is a list of verbs that can precede noun clauses:

- *accept, admire, adore, appreciate, ask, catch, cherish, claim, comprehend, covet, decide, demand, desire, despise, detest, doubt, enjoy, feel, hate, have, hear, know, lack, like, love, make, miss, own, prefer, realize, recognize, require, see, smell, take, taste, understand, value, want, wonder.*

## YOUR TURN 18

**step 1:** Turn the second independent clause into a noun clause by adding a noun-clause marker to the front of it.

**step 2:** Place the noun clause into the independent clause—simply replace the word SOMETHING.

### Example:

- **first independent clause:** you knew SOMETHING
- **second independent clause:** the time was far away

**step 1:** second independent clause + noun-clause marker = *THAT the time was far away*

**step 2:** insert the result of step 1 into the first independent clause = *you knew that the time was far away*

Result? You have created a complex sentence containing a noun clause.

### number 1:

- **first independent clause:** she understands SOMETHING
- **second independent clause:** truth is a mix of gold and silver
- **noun clause-markers:** *that, if, whether, how, what, when, where, whom, why, however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever*

First create a noun clause by adding a noun-clause marker to the front of the second independent clause; then insert your noun clause in place of the SOMETHING in the first independent clause.

### number 2:

- **first independent clause:** they did not comprehend SOMETHING
- **second independent clause:** the duck had spoken to the drake
- **noun-clause markers:** *that, if, whether, how, what, when, where, whom, why, however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever*

First create a noun clause by adding a noun-clause marker to the front of the second independent clause; then insert your noun clause in place of the

SOMETHING in the first independent clause.

**number 3:**

- **first independent clause:** we loved SOMETHING
- **second independent clause:** the weatherman would stop to bow
- **noun-clause markers:** *that, if, whether, how, what, when, where, whom, why, however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever*

First create a noun clause by adding a noun-clause marker to the front of the second independent clause; then insert your noun clause in place of the SOMETHING in the first independent clause.



## **POSSIBLE ANSWERS 18**

1. She understands **WHY** truth is a mix of gold and silver.
2. They did not comprehend **WHATEVER** the duck had spoken to the drake.
3. We loved **WHEN** the weatherman would stop to bow.

# Lesson 19: Subjects and Verbs in Complex Sentences with Noun Clauses

Clauses contain one or more subjects and one or more verbs; noun clauses are no exception.

Here are two noun clauses with their subjects and verbs marked:

- HOW the cat **got** into the pantry
- WHY he **had slept** so late

And here are two independent clauses with their subjects and verbs marked:

- We **could** not **tell** SOMETHING.
- Jameson **began** to explain SOMETHING.

By adding our noun clauses to the independent clauses, we get complex sentences consisting of one independent and one subordinate clause:

- We **could** not **tell** [HOW the cat **got** into the pantry].
- We **could** not **tell** [WHY he **had slept** so late].
- Jameson **began** to explain [SOMETHING].
- Jameson **began** to explain [WHY he **had slept** so late].

## YOUR TURN 19

For each of the following, identify the primary and secondary subjects and verbs. The secondary subject-verb combination will appear within the noun clause.

- **Example:** I know THAT the hand of God **is** the mirror of my own.

In this sentence, the primary subject-verb is *I know* and the secondary subject-verb (within the noun clause) is *hand is*.

1. I dreamed THAT I went into a forest.
2. You saw WHY five old pieces of fish-line hung from his lower lip.
3. They will know WHETHER it is all happening in the only possible way.
4. I am afraid WHENEVER I go with the Northern Army on the long march south.

## ANSWERS 19

1. I **dreamed** THAT I **went** into a forest.

primary subject-verb: *I dreamed*

secondary subject-verb: *I went*

2. You **saw** WHY five old pieces of fish-line **hung** from his lower lip.

primary: *you saw*

secondary: *pieces hung*

3. They **will know** WHETHER it **is** all happening in the only possible way.

primary: *they will know*

secondary: *it is*

4. I **am** afraid WHENEVER I **go** with the Northern Army on the long march south.

primary: *I am*

secondary: *I go*

# Lesson 20: Review

We have learned that a complex sentence consists of an independent clause (a sentence) and a dependent or subordinate clause. Once we understand this, we also understand that the study of complex sentences is really the study of subordinate clauses.

We have studied each type of subordinate clause: the adverb clause, the adjective (relative) clause, and the noun clause.

- **Adverb clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions:** *after, as if, as long as, as soon as, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while.*
- **Adjective (relative) clauses begin with relative pronouns:** *who, that, which* (the three most commonly used).
- **Noun clauses begin with noun-clause markers:** *that, if, whether, how, what, when, where, whom, why, however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever.*

# ***THAT* THE NOUN-CLAUSE MARKER VS. *THAT* THE RELATIVE PRONOUN**

But wait a minute. If the word *that* can mark both relative clauses and noun clauses, how can we tell them apart?

Let's do a comparison.

- **relative clause:** The trout THAT swim in the center of the river keep themselves safe.
- **noun clause:** I know THAT the hand of God is the mirror of my own.

Both examples contain a clause that begins with *that*. Let's let RC stand for *relative clause* and NC stand for *noun clause*. There are three differences between these two clauses:

## **difference 1: the part of speech**

**RC:** The relative clause, being an adjective, will describe a noun—in this case, the noun *trout*. What kind of trout? Trout *THAT swim in the center of the river*.

**NC:** The noun clause, being a noun, will pass the SOMETHING test:

- I know SOMETHING.
- I know THAT the hand of God is the mirror of my own.

## **difference 2: the clause's subject**

**RC:** The word *that* serves as the subject of the clause: THAT swim in the center of the river.

**NC:** The word *that* does not serve as the subject of the clause. (The subject-verb of the noun clause is *hand is*.)

## **difference 3: the preceding word**

**RC:** The word preceding the clause (*trout*) is a noun.

**NC:** The word preceding the clause (*know*) is a verb.

## YOUR TURN 20

For each of the following complex sentences, identify the independent and the subordinate clause. For each subordinate clause, decide whether the clause is functioning as an adverb, an adjective, or a noun.

The clause markers are listed here:

- **adverb clause markers (subordinating conjunctions):** *after, as if, as long as, as soon as, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*
- **adjective (relative) clause markers (relative pronouns):** *who, that, which* (the three most commonly used)
- **noun-clause markers:** *that, if, whether, how, what, when, where, whom, why, however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever*

### Example:

- **AFTER** he thumped the jammed vending machine, the trooper walked home in his snowshoes. (*The independent clause consists of which words? The subordinate clause consists of which words? What kind of clause is the subordinate clause: adverb, adjective, or noun?*)

**independent clause:** the trooper walked home in his snowshoes

**subordinate clause:** **AFTER** he thumped the jammed vending machine (*adverb clause*)

1. I could not learn his mind because he never knew it himself. (*The independent clause consists of which words? The subordinate clause consists of which words? What kind of clause is the subordinate clause: adverb, adjective, or noun?*)
2. I followed whatever it was that whispered of love. (*The independent clause consists of which words? The subordinate clause consists of which words? What kind of clause is the subordinate clause: adverb, adjective, or noun?*)
3. Imperfect stars create their reflections though the lake is mostly mud. (*The independent clause consists of which words? The subordinate clause*

*consists of which words? What kind of clause is the subordinate clause: adverb, adjective, or noun?)*

4. She wondered whether it was her heart or eyes that was faulty. (*The independent clause consists of which words? The subordinate clause consists of which words? What kind of clause is the subordinate clause: adverb, adjective, or noun?*)
5. We float messages to the refugees, who stand among the rubble of their flooded shelters. (*The independent clause consists of which words? The subordinate clause consists of which words? What kind of clause is the subordinate clause: adverb, adjective, or noun?*)
5. We still hoped that they might get passage. (*The independent clause consists of which words? The subordinate clause consists of which words? What kind of clause is the subordinate clause: adverb, adjective, or noun?*)
7. You might still touch the lips that once spoke. (*The independent clause consists of which words? The subordinate clause consists of which words? What kind of clause is the subordinate clause: adverb, adjective, or noun?*)
3. Your heart, which has been mined by others, will not recover its lightning and thunder. (*The independent clause consists of which words? The subordinate clause consists of which words? What kind of clause is the subordinate clause: adverb, adjective, or noun?*)



## ANSWERS 20

1. I could not learn his mind [BECAUSE he never knew it himself].

**independent:** I could not learn his mind

**subordinate:** BECAUSE he never knew it himself [*adverb clause*]

2. I followed [WHATEVER it was that whispered of love].

**independent:** I followed

**subordinate:** WHATEVER it was that whispered of love [*noun clause*]

3. Imperfect stars create their reflections [THOUGH the lake is mostly mud].

**independent:** imperfect stars create their reflections

**subordinate:** THOUGH the lake is mostly mud [*adverb clause*]

4. She wondered [WHETHER it was her heart or eyes that was faulty].

**independent:** she wondered

**subordinate:** WHETHER it was her heart or eyes that was faulty [*noun clause*]

5. We float messages to the refugees, [WHO stand among the rubble of their flooded shelters].

**independent:** we float messages to the refugees

**subordinate:** WHO stand among the rubble of their flooded shelters [*adjective clause*]

*Numbers 6 and 7 are designed so that you need to distinguish between two clauses beginning with THAT; one is a noun clause and one is an adjective (relative) clause.*

5. We still hoped [THAT they might get passage].

**independent:** we still hoped

**subordinate:** THAT they might get passage [*noun clause*]

7. You might still touch the lips [THAT once spoke].

**independent:** you might still touch the lips

**subordinate:** THAT once spoke [*adjective clause*]

*In number 8, the independent clause is split by the relative clause.*

3. Your heart, [WHICH has been mined by others], will not recover its

lightning and thunder.

**independent:** your heart will not recover its lightning and thunder

**subordinate:** WHICH has been mined by others [*adjective clause*]

# Lesson 21: Mixed Clauses, Multiple Clauses

The complex sentences we've been studying represent the complex sentence at its most basic level: an independent clause (a sentence) with one subordinate clause. But in fact, complex sentences can contain mixed clauses (such as an adverb clause and a relative clause) or multiple clauses (such as three adverb clauses).

Here is an example of a complex sentence containing mixed clauses:

- [WHEN Arjuna threw down his bow], the warriors, [WHO were his cousins and kin], ceased their fighting.

This example contains an independent clause and two subordinate clauses:

- **independent clause:** the warriors ceased their fighting
- **adverb clause:** WHEN Arjuna threw down his bow
- **relative clause:** WHO were his cousins and kin

Another example:

- The crowd [THAT assembled on the sidewalks] would never understand [WHY he filled his conversation with so many foreign words].

This example also contains an independent clause and two subordinate clauses:

- **independent clause:** the crowd would never understand
- **relative clause:** THAT assembled on the sidewalks
- **noun clause:** WHY he filled his conversation with so many foreign words

Try out the next two examples independently. In the following example, see if you can identify an independent clause and *three* adverb clauses:

- When a teaspoonful of silkworm eggs endowed the church, when the letters of sacred testaments were unreeled in the coastal cities, when a bookworm conspired to enter the maze of empty roads, the rivers began flowing.

And in this next example, identify an independent clause and *two* relative clauses:

- All this takes place on my lawn, which has nothing to do with the seasons that roll lightly by.

## YOUR TURN 21

For each of the following, identify the independent and subordinate clauses. For each subordinate clause, decide whether it's an adverb clause, a relative clause (adjective), or a noun clause.

Before you begin, however, here are the answers to the last two examples you tried out on your own:

- [WHEN a teaspoonful of silkworm eggs endowed the church], [WHEN the letters of sacred testaments were unreeled in the coastal cities], [WHEN a bookworm conspired to enter the maze of empty roads], the rivers began flowing.

**independent:** the rivers began flowing

**adverb clause:** WHEN a teaspoonful of silkworm eggs endowed the church

**adverb clause:** WHEN the letters of sacred testaments were unreeled in the coastal cities

**adverb clause:** WHEN a bookworm conspired to enter the maze of empty roads

- All this takes place on my lawn, [WHICH has nothing to do with the seasons] [THAT roll lightly by].

**independent:** all this takes place on my lawn

**relative clause:** WHICH has nothing to do with the seasons

**relative clause:** THAT roll lightly by

*Each of these five sentences consists of one independent clause and two subordinate clauses. Identify the three clauses in each and determine whether the subordinate clauses are adverb, relative, or noun.*

1. As the nails began to fly away, we wondered how we were to get any work done. (1 independent; 2 subordinate)
2. The busybody who lives next door understands that the bronze statues have been draped in towels. (1 independent; 2 subordinate)
3. The donkey's stance, which can be seen through the front window, will haunt you this day though you have left your shudders closed. (1 independent; 2 subordinate)

4. The poem begins when the poet stops, when the poet gets out of the way.  
(1 independent; 2 subordinate)
5. So that the speakers could still be heard from the steeple that graced our roof, we turned the knobs clockwise. (1 independent; 2 subordinate)

## ANSWERS 21

1. [As the nails began to fly away], we wondered [HOW we were to get any work done].

**independent:** we wondered

**adverb clause:** AS the nails began to fly away

**noun clause:** HOW we were to get any work done

2. The busybody [WHO lives next door] understands [THAT the bronze statues have been draped in towels].

**independent:** the busybody understands

**relative clause:** WHO lives next door

**noun clause:** THAT the bronze statues have been draped in towels

3. The donkey's stance, [WHICH can be seen through the front window], will haunt you this day [THOUGH you have left your shutters closed].

**independent:** the donkey's stance will haunt you this day

**relative clause:** WHICH can be seen through the front window

**adverb clause:** THOUGH you have left your shutters closed

4. The poem begins [WHEN the poet stops], [WHEN the poet gets out of the way].

**independent:** the poem begins

**adverb clause:** WHEN the poet stops

**adverb clause:** WHEN the poet gets out of the way

5. [SO THAT the speakers could still be heard from the steeple] [THAT graced our roof], we turned the knobs clockwise.

**independent:** we turned the knobs clockwise.

**adverb clause:** SO THAT the speakers could still be heard from the steeple

**relative clause:** THAT graced our roof

# Lesson 22: Complex Vs. Compound Sentences

Before we conclude our study of complex sentences, let's see how the complex sentence compares with the compound sentence (the subject of book 5 of *Mastering English Grammar*).

- **compound sentence:** The parade is turning into our street, **FOR** the other streets have been barricaded.
- **complex sentence:** The parade is turning into our street **BECAUSE** the other streets have been barricaded.

By studying these two examples, we note two differences: the comma and the conjunction. While complex sentences (those containing adverb clauses) are created with subordinating conjunctions (*although, because, when, etc.*), compound sentences are created with coordinating conjunctions (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*).

Stated this way, the difference between compound and complex sentences seems slight. And yet, they are treated as two different sentence categories. So what, really, is the difference between them?

Here is the difference: *Subordinating conjunctions attach to the right-hand sentence; coordinating conjunctions do not.*

Let's look at our two examples once again, except that this time we'll group the key components using brackets.

- **compound sentence:** 1[The parade is turning into our street], 2[**FOR**] 3[the other streets have been barricaded].
- **complex sentence:** 1[The parade is turning into our street] 2[**BECAUSE** the other streets have been barricaded].

The compound sentence consists of three components: (1) an independent clause, (2) a coordinating conjunction, and (3) a second independent clause. In other words, the coordinating conjunction *for* sits between the two clauses, independently and aloof.



The complex sentence consists of two components: (1) an independent clause (2) a subordinate (adverbial) clause. Here, the subordinating conjunction *attaches itself to the subordinate clause*.

In summary, it pays to understand the types of conjunctions and to be familiar with which conjunction groups create which sentence types. Much of the work of distinguishing between simple, compound, and complex sentences can be boiled down to understanding the work being done by the conjunctions.

## YOUR TURN 22

### Part 1: from Compound to Complex

In numbers 1-3, convert the compound sentences to complex sentences. To do this, replace the comma + coordinating conjunction (marked with small caps) with a subordinating conjunction chosen from this list:

- *after, although, as, because, before, even if, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while.*
1. The treasure could not be found, FOR the map had been drawn by a mad sea-captain.
  2. We would hold our candles aloft in the rain, AND John Brown could see justice after all.
  3. They had been completely surrounded by cowboys, SO the sparkling noise of horses sounded in their ears.

### Part 2: from Complex to Compound

This time we'll convert complex sentences to compound sentences. In numbers 4-6, replace the subordinating conjunction (marked with small caps) with a comma + coordinating conjunction chosen from this list: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.*

4. The swift runners had begun WHILE the slow runners had gone to sleep.
5. He had danced down the street's center THOUGH the snow had continued to fall.
5. You won't hear the mourners' song IF you are sobbing.

## **POSSIBLE ANSWERS 22**

1. The treasure could not be found **BECAUSE** the map had been drawn by a mad sea-captain.
2. We would hold our candles aloft in the rain **SO THAT** John Brown could see justice after all.
3. They had been completely surrounded by cowboys **WHILE** the sparkling noise of horses sounded in their ears.
4. The swift runners had begun, **BUT** the slow runners had gone to sleep.
5. He had danced down the street's center, **YET** the snow had continued to fall.
5. You won't hear the mourners' song, **FOR** you are sobbing.

# Lesson 23: Compound-Complex Sentences

The organizational structure for books 4, 5, and 6 of *Mastering English Grammar* is borrowed from the list of four sentence types. Using clausal structure as the key, all sentences can be placed into one of the categories listed below:

- **simple sentence:** an independent clause
- **compound sentence:** two independent clauses
- **complex sentence:** one independent clause and one subordinate clause
- **compound-complex sentence:** two independent clauses and one subordinate clause

Here in Lesson 23 we move on to the final sentence type, the **compound-complex sentence**.

To qualify as a compound-complex sentence, a sentence must have at least three clauses, two of them independent and one of them subordinate.

Let's assemble a compound-complex sentence of our own. We'll begin with our three clauses:

- he bid farewell to his loved ones
- the knight set out on an adventure
- he remained loyal to the queen

Now we'll turn our first clause into a subordinate clause by adding the subordinating conjunction *after* to the front of it. We'll join the other two clauses with the coordinating conjunction *but*, giving us a compound-complex sentence that looks like this:

- **compound-complex sentence:** AFTER he bid farewell to his loved ones, the knight set out on an adventure; BUT he remained loyal to the queen.

The simplest way to approach compound-complex sentences is to begin with a compound sentence and to add a subordinate clause to that compound sentence.

A compound sentence is two independent clauses joined together (discussed in book 5 of this series).

- independent clause [ ] independent clause

Once we've established our compound sentence, we'll need to insert a subordinate clause. Here are four slots where subordinate clauses can be inserted:

- 1 independent clause 2 [ ] 3 independent clause 4

The first requirement of a compound-complex sentence is the existence of three clauses. The second requirement is a way to join (or coordinate) the two independent clauses. In other words, in the formula *independent clause* [ ] *independent clause*, what goes inside the brackets?

Answer: The space inside the brackets can be filled by a coordinating conjunction, a conjunctive adverb, a semicolon, or a colon. Because we have so much new material to cover here and because these four methods are covered in detail in book 5, let's limit our options here to one of the seven coordinating conjunctions: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*.

Then, for our subordinate clause—whether it be an adverbial, a relative, or a noun clause—we will need a head- or clause-marking word to serve as the first word of the clause.

- If our clause is an adverb clause, we'll need a subordinating conjunction: *after, although, as, because, before, even if, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while*.
- If our clause is an adjective (relative) clause, we'll need a relative pronoun: *who, that, which*.
- If our clause is a noun clause, we'll need a noun-clause marker: *that, if, whether, how, what, when, where, whom, why, however, whatever, whenever, wherever, whichever, whoever, whomever*.

Now let's bring all this together. Begin by studying the following:

- 1 independent clause 2 [ ] 3 independent clause 4
- 1 The knight set out on an adventure 2 ; 3 BUT he remained loyal to the queen 4 .

The example above is a compound sentence consisting of two independent

clauses joined by the coordinating conjunction *but*. To convert our compound sentence to a compound-complex sentence, we decide to place an adverbial subordinate clause in slot 1:

- [AFTER he bid farewell to his loved ones], [the knight set out on an adventure]; BUT [he remained loyal to the queen].

This compound-complex sentence consists of an adverbial subordinate clause sitting to the left (slot 1) of a compound sentence. Note that the three clauses are bracketed; note also the important role being played by the conjunctions *after* and *but*.

Let's try another one. We begin with a compound sentence (two clauses joined by *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, or *so*):

- 1 [The hotel kept one pet] 2 , YET 3 [the guests would have been happy with a kitten] 4 .

We decide to add a subordinate clause—this time a relative clause—to slot 2:

- [The hotel kept one pet], [WHICH happened to be a racehorse]; YET [the guests would have been happy with a kitten].

Here, note that the relative pronoun *which* is part of the clause it appears in.

In summary, compound-complex sentences can be created with five ingredients:

- clause 1
- clause 2
- clause 3
- *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, *so* to make the sentence compound
- a creator of subordinate clauses: a subordinating conjunction, a relative pronoun, or a noun-clause marker

## YOUR TURN 23

In this Your Turn you'll do some composing. You are given four of the five ingredients found in the bulleted list above. The only thing lacking is one of the three clauses, which you will compose yourself.

Wherever you see the word *clause*, create a word group (it must contain a subject and verb) to insert into that position. Read your finished products out loud to see how your creations sound.

1. [Judy is sleeping confidently], AND AS [CLAUSE], [the sun is in no hurry to rise].
2. [CLAUSE], AND she asks everyone to sit down SO THAT she can boast about the special things her children have done.
3. [The mayor, [WHO CLAUSE], refuses to answer my question], SO [I stick my head in the sand].

*The subject of your relative clause is who, which appears inside an independent clause.*

4. AS [we face each other across the table], [we wonder about our long-ago trip to Connecticut]; FOR [CLAUSE].

*The conjunction for means because.*

5. [His notebook and pencil were ready], BUT [the crowd seemed too large and too frenzied] AS [CLAUSE].

## **POSSIBLE ANSWERS 23**

1. Judy is sleeping confidently; AND AS **she loses herself in dreams**, the sun is in no hurry to rise.
2. **We rush into Grandma's room**, AND she asks everyone to sit down SO THAT she can boast about the special things her children have done.
3. The mayor, WHO **can be ornery at times**, refuses to answer my question; SO I stick my head in the sand.
4. AS we face each other across the table, we wonder about our long-ago trip to Connecticut; FOR **our lives had only deteriorated since the day of that fateful trip**.
5. His notebook and pencil were ready, BUT the crowd seemed too large and too frenzied AS **they rambled to and fro**.



# Complex Sentences Glossary of Terms

**adverbial subordinate clause:** A clause with a subordinating conjunction added to the front of it. Adverbial subordinate clauses will usually appear to the right or the left of an independent clause:

- (pattern 1) independent clause + adverbial subordinate clause
- (pattern 2) adverbial subordinate clause + (,) + independent clause

**antecedents:** The nouns or pronouns that relative pronouns (*who*, *that*, *which*) connect with or point to.

**clause:** A word group that contains a subject and verb.

**complex sentence:** An independent clause to which a subordinate clause is added.

**compound sentence:** Two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction, a conjunctive adverb, a semicolon, or a colon.

**independent clause:** A word group that contains a subject and a verb and that can stand alone—the same as a sentence.

**noun clause:** A type of subordinate clause that begins with a noun-clause marker and that functions as a noun. Noun clauses follow verbs such as these: *accept*, *admire*, *adore*, *appreciate*, *ask*, *catch*, *cherish*, *claim*, *comprehend*, *covet*, *decide*, *demand*, *desire*, *despise*, *detest*, *doubt*, *enjoy*, *feel*, *hate*, *have*, *hear*, *know*, *lack*, *like*, *love*, *make*, *miss*, *own*, *prefer*, *realize*, *recognize*, *require*, *see*, *smell*, *take*, *taste*, *understand*, *value*, *want*, *wonder*.

**noun-clause markers:** *that*, *if*, *whether*, *how*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *whom*, *why*, *however*, *whatever*, *whenever*, *wherever*, *whichever*, *whoever*, *whomever*. These are the words we can add to the front of independent clauses to create subordinate noun clauses.

**reduction of relative clauses:** Relative clauses often contain phrases that are better off without the clauses they are found in. When this is the case, we can eliminate the relative pronoun and the *to be* verb, leaving behind the phrase

we want to leave behind.

**relative clause:** A type of subordinate clause that begins with a relative pronoun and that functions as an adjective.

**relative pronouns:** *Who, that, which, whom, whose, what, when, where, why.* The key members of this group are the three relative pronouns *who, that,* and *which.*

**restrictive and nonrestrictive:** These two terms usually refer to relative clauses.

- Restrictive relative clauses restrict larger groups to smaller groups and are punctuated without commas.
- Nonrestrictive relative clauses simply add information and are punctuated with commas.

**sentence positions:** The key slots for adding material (like clauses) to sentences are the *introductory, medial,* and *terminal* positions—the beginning, the middle, and the end.

**sentence types:** Simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex.

**SOMETHING test:** A way to test for noun clauses. If the word group can be replaced by *SOMETHING, SOMEWHERE,* or *SOMEONE,* that word group is functioning as a noun.

**subjects and verbs:** The primary building blocks that make clauses clauses. In complex sentences, the primary subject-verb is found in the independent clause and the secondary subject-verb is found in whatever subordinate clauses are added to the independent clause.

**subordinate clause:** A word group that contains a subject and a verb but cannot stand alone. The subordinate clauses we have studied in this e-book are the adverbial subordinate clause, the relative clause, and the noun clause.

**subordinating conjunctions:** *after, as if, as long as, as soon as, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, if, since, so that, though, till, unless, until, when, whenever, wherever, while.*

**whom:** The objective form of *who.* When a relative clause beginning with *whom* ends with a preposition, we can give the sentence a more formal tone by sliding that preposition to the left of *whom.*

# Test Questions

The Test Questions section contains thirty-six complex sentences, each containing one subordinate clause. Your task is to identify the subordinate clause in each of the sentences and to label that clause as either an adverb clause, a relative clause, or a noun clause.

Two of the word lists below—subordinating conjunctions and noun-clause markers—contain fewer members than the lists you’ve been seeing throughout this e-book. These word lists contain just the words that are used in the test questions below.

Pay close attention to the word *that*. In the sentences that follow, *that* will be used at times as a relative pronoun and at times as a noun-clause marker. The difference between the two is discussed in Lesson 20.

- **subordinating conjunctions (used to begin adverbial subordinate clauses):** *although, as, because, before, if, since, so that, though, till, until, when, while*
- **relative pronouns (used to begin relative clauses):** *who, that, which*
- **noun-clause markers (used to begin noun clauses):** *how, that, what, whatever, whether*

The question for each sentence is the same: The subordinate clause consists of which words? What kind of clause is it: adverb, relative, or noun?

## TEST PART 1

1. Although I did not understand a word they were saying, their sound surrounded me.
2. As I run to Kim's market, I thank my husband for his sacrifice.
3. Before you've had time to continue with your enthralling life story, they're telling you *their* life story.
4. Emily cursed the weasels that stole her chickens.
5. Her fair hand, which might bid heat return to a frozen age, trembles and swells once again.
5. His soft hand is placed over the mouth of the crier before it has time to gather the force of a cry.
7. I dined alone at a table with one rose vase as the mist advanced its coolly silvered drift of gray.
3. I know the poems much better than the man because I'm willing to be honestly confused and honestly fearful.
3. I'll tell of the things I've done when I am strong and able to bear arms.

## ANSWERS PART 1

1. [ALTHOUGH I did not understand a word they were saying], their sound surrounded me. **ADVERB CLAUSE**
2. [As I run to Kim's market], I thank my husband for his sacrifice. **ADVERB CLAUSE**
3. [BEFORE you've had time to continue with your enthralling life story], they're telling you *their* life story. **ADVERB CLAUSE**
4. Emily cursed the weasels [THAT stole her chickens]. **RELATIVE CLAUSE**
5. Her fair hand, [WHICH might bid heat return to a frozen age], trembles and swells once again. **RELATIVE CLAUSE**
5. His soft hand is placed over the mouth of the crier [BEFORE it has time to gather the force of a cry]. **ADVERB CLAUSE**
7. I dined alone at a table with one rose vase [AS the mist advanced its coolly silvered drift of gray]. **ADVERB CLAUSE**
3. I know the poems much better than the man [BECAUSE I'm willing to be honestly confused and honestly fearful]. **ADVERB CLAUSE**
9. I'll tell of the things I've done [WHEN I am strong and able to bear arms]. **ADVERB CLAUSE**

## TEST PART 2

10. If there is something unsoft in the city, God puts a soft stop to it.
11. Life extends to the naked salty shore, which crumbles evermore.
12. Since I had kept the trust and had loved the lady, the knight withheld his giant sword and let me go.
13. The angry years feel that the flowers exist for us to fall in to.
14. The careless men who have taken to railroading have traveled off in search of salvation.
15. The caves echoed back to the writer who entered and never quite emerged.
16. The crumbling wall was made by the women who wear keys at their waists.
17. The dinosaurs, who crawled like breathing lava from the earth's cracked crust, swung their tiny heads above their lumbering tons of flesh.
18. The empty basket of the child will float abandoned in the seaweed until the work of water unravels it in filaments of straw.

## ANSWERS PART 2

10. [IF there is something unsoft in the city], God puts a soft stop to it.  
ADVERB CLAUSE
11. Life extends to the naked salty shore, [WHICH crumbles evermore].  
RELATIVE CLAUSE
12. [SINCE I had kept the trust and had loved the lady], the knight withheld his giant sword and let me go. ADVERB CLAUSE
13. The angry years feel [THAT the flowers exist for us to fall in to]. NOUN CLAUSE
14. The careless men [WHO have taken to railroading] have traveled off in search of salvation. RELATIVE CLAUSE
15. The caves echoed back to the writer [WHO entered and never quite emerged]. RELATIVE CLAUSE
16. The crumbling wall was made by the women [WHO wear keys at their waists]. RELATIVE CLAUSE
17. The dinosaurs, [WHO crawled like breathing lava from the earth's cracked crust], swung their tiny heads above their lumbering tons of flesh.  
RELATIVE CLAUSE
18. The empty basket of the child will float abandoned in the seaweed [UNTIL the work of water unravels it in filaments of straw]. ADVERB CLAUSE

## TEST PART 3

19. The house dog understands what life was like in younger and stronger times.
20. The murmuring city desires that we three walk across this bridge.
21. The others rang the bells till the sound filled up the garden.
22. The planet that turns with them is always faithful.
23. The soup-supper, which in the easy half-yellow light of autumn looked oddly beckoning, sat waiting on the oaken table.
24. The speakers of French suddenly remember how crows are like small black rivers.
25. The statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe is placed below the altar stairs so that Pilar can kneel before her and pray straight into her face.
26. The youths in Union Square wonder whether fire or flowers grow crimson petals.
27. They swim among the peaks of mountains while the old nightmares of earth settle into silt.



## ANSWERS PART 3

19. The house dog understands [WHAT life was like in younger and stronger times]. NOUN CLAUSE
20. The murmuring city desires [THAT we three walk across this bridge]. NOUN CLAUSE
21. The others rang the bells [TILL the sound filled up the garden]. ADVERB CLAUSE
22. The planet [THAT turns with them] is always faithful. RELATIVE CLAUSE
23. The soup-supper, [WHICH in the easy half-yellow light of autumn looked oddly beckoning], sat waiting on the oaken table. RELATIVE CLAUSE
24. The speakers of French suddenly remember [HOW crows are like small black rivers]. NOUN CLAUSE
25. The statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe is placed below the altar stairs [SO THAT Pilar can kneel before her and pray straight into her face]. ADVERB CLAUSE
26. The youths in Union Square wonder [WHETHER fire or flowers grow crimson petals]. NOUN CLAUSE
27. They swim among the peaks of mountains [WHILE the old nightmares of earth settle into silt]. ADVERB CLAUSE

## TEST PART 4

28. Those fleas that escaped earth and fire died by the cold.
29. Those of us here will accept whatever it is that cannot be put down.
30. Though it is brightened by the last chapter of late autumn, the light returns somewhat pale.
31. Today I notice them and turn away though at one time they were my joy.
32. Today my son realized that in the meadows at the edge of the woods are the trees of white flowers.
33. When the tide turns, the water will fall by the ton.
34. While the wrecks accumulate, our disbelief is suspended.
35. Years of anger follow the hours that float idly down.
36. You should stay home if you can bring nothing to this place but your own body.

## ANSWERS PART 4

28. Those fleas [THAT escaped earth and fire] died by the cold. **RELATIVE CLAUSE**
29. Those of us here will accept [WHATEVER it is that cannot be put down].  
**NOUN CLAUSE**
30. [THOUGH it is brightened by the last chapter of late autumn], the light returns somewhat pale. **ADVERB CLAUSE**
31. Today I notice them and turn away [THOUGH at one time they were my joy]. **ADVERB CLAUSE**
32. Today my son realized [THAT in the meadows at the edge of the woods are the trees of white flowers]. **NOUN CLAUSE**
33. [WHEN the tide turns], the water will fall by the ton. **ADVERB CLAUSE**
34. [WHILE the wrecks accumulate], our disbelief is suspended. **ADVERB CLAUSE**
35. Years of anger follow the hours [THAT float idly down]. **RELATIVE CLAUSE**
36. You should stay home [IF you can bring nothing to this place but your own body]. **ADVERB CLAUSE**

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