

Clauses

Clauses are groups of words that have a subject and a verb.

There are two main types of clauses:

Independent (main): express complete thoughts. They can be complete sentences by themselves.

Dependent (subordinate): Does not express a complete thought and cannot be a sentence on its own. Think of them as a part of a sentence.

There are 3 different kinds of dependent (or subordinate) clauses:

1. **Adjective Clauses**- These describe nouns and pronouns. They act as adjectives.
2. **Adverb Clauses**- These Dependent clauses act as adverbs, describing verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs.
3. **Noun Clauses**- They are dependent clauses acting as nouns.

Let's take a closer look at the three types:

Adjective Clauses: They answer the questions: "Which one?" Or "What kind?"

-Most start with the pronouns *who, whom, whose, which, that, when, or where*. Some other pronouns that can start an adjective clause are: *whoever, whomever, whichever, what, whatever, and why*.

Examples:

The only one of the seven dwarfs *who does not have a beard* is Dopey.
The adjective Clause "who does not have a beard" describes one [Which one of the seven dwarfs? The one who does not have a beard]

It never rains on days *when my garden needs watering*.
The adjective clause "when my garden needs watering" describes days [What kind of days? The days when my garden needs watering]

Adjective Clauses beginning with one of the relative pronouns (who, whom, whomever, whose, which, where, what, that) are called **relative clauses**.

HINT: Sometimes these relative pronouns can be omitted from the sentence. “Where is the music [that] I bought?” “Rafael is the guitarist [whom] you will accompany on the trumpet.” Also, adjective clauses can be essential or nonessential, nonessential need to be set off with commas.

Adverb Clauses: These clauses act as adverbs and answer the questions:

- Where? -To what extent?
- Why? -Under what condition
- When? -In what manner?

-All adverb clauses start with a subordinating conjunction (*after, although, as, as long as, as soon as, as though, because, before, even though, if, in order that, provided that, since, so that, than, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, whereas, wherever, whether, while*) and are always followed by a comma.... unless they end a sentence.

Examples:

Wherever she goes, she leaves a piece of luggage behind.

The adverb clause “wherever she goes” modifies leaves. It answers the question “Where?”

Bob enjoyed the movie more *than I did*.

The adverb clause “than I did” modifies more. It answers the question “to what extent?”

Prince wanted to change his name *because too many dogs answered when his name was called*.

The adverb clause modifies wanted. It answers the question “Why?”

Noun Clauses: These function as nouns. Therefore they can be the subject, direct object, indirect object of a preposition, predicate nominative, or appositive. You may find all sorts of modifiers within a noun clause.

Check out these examples:

No one understands *why experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.*

The phrase functions as the direct object in this sentence

Where the candy bar is hidden remains a mystery.

Here it is functioning as the subject

The instructor gave *whoever got their papers in early* extra credit.

Now it is the indirect object

HINT: Think of Noun Clauses as a single thing, no matter how long the name to that one thing may be. In the first sentence above-- what does no one understand? *Why experience is something you don't get until just after you need it.*