**Types of Clauses**

A clause is “a group of words containing a subject and predicate and functioning as a member of a complex or compound sentence. An independent clause functions on its own to make a meaningful sentence and looks much like a regular sentence. Dependent Clauses are divided into three types and they are –

**1. Adjective Clause**

It is a Dependent Clause that modifies a Noun. Basically, Adjective Clauses have similar qualities as Adjectives that are of modifying Nouns and hence the name, Adjective Clause. These are also called Relative Clauses and they usually sit right after the Nouns they modify.

**Examples:**

I’m looking for the red book that went missing last week.

Finn is asking for the shoes which used to belong to his dad.

You there, who is sitting quietly at the corner, come here and lead the class out.

**2. Noun Clause**

Dependent Clauses acting as Nouns in sentences are called Noun Clauses or Nominal Clauses. These often start with “how,” “that,” other WH-words (What, Who, Where, When, Why, Which, Whose and Whom), if, whether etc.

Examples:

I like what I hear.

You need to express that it’s crossing a line for you.

He knows how things work around here.

**3.** **Adverbial Clause**

By definition, these are Dependent Clauses acting as Adverbs. It means that these clauses have the power to modify Verbs, Adjectives and other Adverbs.

**Examples:**

Alice did the dishes till her legs gave up.

Tina ran to the point of panting vehemently.

I went through the book at a lightning speed.

**Types of Clauses**

As discussed every clause has a subject and verb, but there are some other characteristics that can help you distinguish its types. To begin with, there are basically four types:

1. Independent or Main
2. Dependent or Subordinate
3. Relative or Adjective
4. Noun Clause
5. Adverbial Clause

**1. Independent or Main Clause**

An independent clause is a complete sentence on its own and does not require anything else to make it a full-fledged sentence. The basic form of the Main/independent clause is:

Subject + Verb = Complete Sentence

Let us consider some examples to understand it better:

These boys are always sleeping. (The subject is ‘boys’ whereas the verb is ‘sleeping’.)

My sister loves cold drinks. (The subject is ‘sister’ and the verb is ‘loves’.)

I read the book. (The ‘I’ represents the subject whereas the verb is ‘read’.)

Recommended Read: 20 Homonyms With Examples

**2. Dependent or Subordinate Clause**

A dependent/subordinate clause is the exact opposite of an independent clause. It is actually not a complete sentence and thus generally does not make any sense. But when put together with an independent one, it helps it to form a complete sentence.

The task of joining a dependent clause to an independent clause or any other of its type is done by a subordinator which makes the sentence complete. A subordinator might be a conjunction, relative pronoun or noun clause marker.

Subordinator + Subject + Verb = Incomplete Sentence

Now, let us take a look at some examples:

Whenever the boys sleep. (‘Whenever’ is the subordinator, ‘boys’ corresponds to the subject and ‘sleep’ is the verb.)

Because my sister loves cold drinks. (‘Because’ is the subordinating conjunction, ‘sister’ represents the subject and ‘loves’ is the verb)

If you don’t go (‘if’ is the subordinator, ‘you’ represents the subject and ‘go’ is the verb)

Thus, through the above examples, you can see how it is quite difficult for a dependent type alone to make any sense. It has to be joined to an independent one by a punctuation to make complete sense. Hence, the form of a complete sentence stands to be:

Subordinate Clause + Punctuation + Main Clause = Complete Sentence

OR

Main Clause + Subordinate Clause = Complete Sentence

**Examples:**

Whenever the boys sleep, their teacher scolds them.

I bought two bottles of cola because my sister loves cold drinks.

If you don’t go, I will get angry.

Must Read: 50 Difficult Antonyms

**3. Relative Clause**

A relative clause will always begin with either a relative pronoun such as ‘who’, ‘whom’, ‘whose’, ‘which’, ‘that’ or a relative adverb such as ‘when’, ‘why’ or ‘where’. You must also remember that a relative alone does not make any sense or a complete sentence, it also has to be attached to a main clause just like a dependent one.

Relative Pronoun or Adverb + Subject + Verb = Incomplete Sentence

OR

Relative Pronoun or Adverb as subject + Verb = Incomplete Sentence

**Examples:**

Whom the teacher hit with chalk (‘whom’ is the relative pronoun, ‘teacher’ is the subject and ‘hit’ is the verb )

Where he went joyfully (‘where’ is the relative pronoun, ‘he’ is the subject and ‘went’ is the verb)

Relative Clause + Main Clause = Complete Sentence

**Examples:**

The talkative boys whom the teacher hit with chalk soon learned to behave properly in class.

I know about the place where he went joyfully.

**4. Noun Clause**

When a sentence starts functioning as a noun, it is known as a noun clause. Take a look at the following example,

Let me know the ingredients of the stew. (‘Ingredients’ is the noun.)

When this noun is replaced with a clause, it becomes a noun clause.

Let me know all that you have added to the stew.

**5. Adverbial Clause**

An adverbial clause is a group of words that plays the role of an adverb.

**For example:**

He lost his double chin after he gave up chocolate

(The clause acts as an adverb. It could be replaced with an adverb, eg: Recently)

I am not afraid of the pen, the scaffold, or the sword. I will tell the truth where I please.

(This clause could be replaced with an adverb, eg: There)

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| **Difference Between Phrase & Clause** | |
| **Phrase** | **Clause** |
| A group of words standing together as a conceptual unit and do not have a subject and a verb. | A grammatical arrangement that contains a set of words having a subject and a verb. |
| Phrase is component of a clause. | Clause is a component of a complete sentence. |
| Each word of a phrase has a meaning but collectively it does not form complete sense like a sentence. i.e. it does not give a complete meaning when standalone. | Clause gives complete meaning and can even be a complete sentence when standalone. |
| A part of sentence without the two parts of speech i.e. Sentence and Predicate and(does not convey any idea). | A part of sentence having the two parts of speech i.e. Subject and Predicate (gives complete idea). |
| Phrase Example –   * Fish Swims **in the water**. * She is sleeping **on the floor**. * They will meet **at the concert**. * **Over the horizon**. * She is sketching**on the wall**. | Clause Example –   * **Fish Swims** in the water. * **She is sleeping** on the floor. * **They will meet** at the concert. * **He smiled.** * **She is sketching** on the Wall. |
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