



IIT Madras
ONLINE DEGREE

COMPLEX SENTENCE 4: ADVERBIAL CLAUSE

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Adverbial Clause

- We have seen in earlier units of this module that a subordinate clause can function like a noun clause and an adjectival clause.
- A subordinate clause can also function like an adverbial clause.

- See the following, for instance

The fairy was so charming that all the noisy children became silent as she began singing.

In this sentence:

Main Clause

The fairy was so charming

Sub. Cl. 1

that all the noisy children
became silent

Sub. Cl. 2

as she began singing.

- Subordinate Clause 1 is actually an adjectival clause modifying the adjective “charming” in the main clause.
- Subordinate Clause 2 is also an adverbial clause modifying the verb “became” in the subordinate clause1.
- So just as adverbs do, adverbial clause also modifies, gives additional information about, adjectives and verbs. That is why it is called adverb. Adverbs can be one word, like “very” in an adjectival phrase like “very good”, can be “so” as in “so charming”, etc. They intensify adjective.

- Adverbs can also be a phrase, as in :

The Rajdhani Express is always on time.

- In this sentence, “always on time” is a phrase, where “always” indicates frequency of time, and “on time” indicates manner. Incidentally, “on time” itself is a phrase within a phrase.
- So we know that besides intensifying the adjectives, adverbs also indicate the following about verbs. See the following table.

Some Functions of Adverb

	Answers	Example
Manner of Verb	How	Policemen arrived <u>very</u> late.
Reason	why	They wanted to arrest (the thief).
Purpose	what for	They wanted to stop (crime).
Place	where	They came to the right place.
Time	Duration: how long	They took much time.
Time	Frequency	They are always late.
Condition	If..., then...	If it rains, cricket match will be cancelled.

- All of these functions of adverbs are also usually done by adverbial phrase and by adverbial clause. See the following for example.

Strike the iron while it is hot.

- “Strike the iron” is main clause, but “while it is hot” is the subordinate adverbial clause indicating time of the verb “strike” in the main clause.

As you sow, so you reap.

- “so you reap” is the main clause, but “As you sow” is the adverbial clause of manner qualifying the verb “sow”.

This is the night mail crossing the border.

- “crossing the border” is the adverbial phrase indicating the place of verb “is”.

The mail is bringing the cheques and the postal order

- the adverbial phrase indicates the purpose of the verb “is”.

Kate Kate you are always late.

- the adverbial phrase, “always late”, indicates frequency and manner of verb “are” within the same clause.

If you are not on time, you will miss the bus.

- a result is indicated for a certain condition.

- An adverbial clause can do all this. See the following examples.

I removed the pendant when your father was born.

- Here “when your father was born” is the subordinate adverbial clause indicating time of the verb “removed” in the main clause “ I removed the pendant”.

ACTIVITY

1. Find adverbial clauses in the following sentences and describe what verb or adjective they modify/ intensify, etc.
 - a. When Rajam was a small boy, he killed a tiger.
 - b. Granny was half-way through it when Swaminathan's rhythmic snoring punctuated her narration.
 - c. If I fail in the examination, no one will be pleased.
 - d. If Rajam is in the house, we are here to see him.
 - e. Rajam liked to keep his friends waiting, because he had seen his father doing it.
 - f. When he could keep away no longer, he burst in upon his friends.
 - g. He cried when he saw them standing.

ANSWERS

All adverbial clauses are underlined.

a.	<u>When Rajam was a small boy,</u> he killed a tiger.	indicates times of killing
b.	Granny was half-way through it <u>when</u> <u>Swaminathan's rhythmic</u> <u>snoring punctuated her</u> <u>narration.</u>	indicates time for “was half-way...”
c.	<u>If I fail in the examination,</u> no one will be pleased.	indicates condition
d.	<u>If Rajam is in the house,</u> we are here to see him.	indicates condition

e.	Rajam liked to keep his friends waiting, <u>because he had seen his father doing it.</u>	indicates reason
f.	<u>When he could keep away no longer,</u> he burst in upon his friends.	Indicates time
g.	He cried <u>when he saw them standing.</u>	indicates time

Thank You!