 SAU FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT ENGLISH PREP CLASSES

# NOUN CLAUSES

**CHAPTER I: WHAT IS A NOUN CLAUSE?**

A ***noun clause*** is a clause which ***does the work of a noun in a sentence***. It is a group of words containing ***a subject and a verb*** of its own. In other words, when a clause functions as the subject or the object of a sentence, it is called a ***noun*** ***clause***.

**Usually noun clauses begin with “ that, what, where, when, who, whom, which, whose, how, why, if, whether, etc.”**

***Examples***

***Everybody knows (that) the Everest is the highest mountain in the world.***

***That people do not give importance to education is the biggest problem of the country.***

She didn't realize (***that) the directions were wrong****.*

***Nobody knows when the next exam will be taken.***

***Jane is not sure which university she should apply for.***

***What Alicia said*** made her friends cry.

***How the baby fell from the window is a mystery.***

***They asked the boy why he had hit his classmate.***

***Whether*** you like it or not doesn’t concern me.

I cannot exactly say **if** the new law will be useful for everyone in the society.

**CHAPTER II: types of Noun Clauses**

Noun Clauses can be used in the following ways:

***A. Noun clauses beginning with* that**

**I**. As the **object** of a sentence.

\* Some scientists believe **(that) the universe has no limits**.

( ‘*that the universe has no limits* is the **object** of the sentence.)

\* Some people claim (**that) spring is the most suitable season for traveling.**

( ‘*spring is the most suitable season for traveling’* is the **object** the sentence.)

\* The ancient Egyptians knew **(that) a year is 365 days.**

( ‘*that a year is 365 days’* is the **object** of the sentence.)

\* I remember **(that) Tom was a very intelligent student**.

(*‘that Tom was a very intelligent student’* is the **object** of the sentence )

**NOTE:** The subordinator ‘***that’*** may be omitted. (Especially in speaking.)

I think that John came to class. **OR** I think John came to class.

The teacher told us that the class begins at eight o’clock.

**OR** The teacher told us the class begins at eight o’clock.

**II**. As the **subject** of a sentence.

\* **That the Vikings were the first to reach America** is not known by many people.

(‘That the Vikings were the first to reach America’ is the **subject** of the sentence.)

\* **That Tom came on time** surprised the teacher.

(‘That Tom came on time’ is the **subject** of the sentence.)

\* **That the new student got the highest mark** made the others angry.

(‘That the new student got the highest mark’ is the **subject** of the sentence)

\* **That it will be rainy in the afternoon** is quite clear.

(‘That it will be rainy in the afternoon’ is the **subject** of the sentence)

**NOTE: Here we cannot omit *that*.**

***B. Noun clauses beginning with question words.***

**I**. As the **object** of a sentence.

**When** does the film start? Jill wants to learn **it**.

Jill wants to learn **when the film starts.**

(**it**= **When does the film start**?

(‘**when the film starts’**  is the **object** of the sentence.)

**Where** did William find the wallet? A police officer asked **this question**.

A police officer asked where William found the wallet.

(**this question**= where did William find the wallet.)

(‘**where William found the wallet**’ is the **object** of the sentence.)

**Why** is the climate changing in the North Pole? The scientists cannot explain **it**.

The scientists cannot explain **why the climate is changing in the North Pole.**

(**it**= why is the climate changing in the North Pole)

(‘**why the climate is changing in the North Pole’** is the **object** of the sentence.)

**Who** is the richest man in Turkey? Many people don’t know **this**.

Some people don’t know **who the richest man in Turkey is.**

(**this**= who the richest man in Turkey)

(‘**who the richest man in Turkey is’** is the **object** of the sentence.)

**Who** invented the radio? Tom knows **this.**

Tom knows **who invented the radio.**

(**this**= who invented the radio)

(‘**who invented the radio’** is the **object** of the sentence.)

**II**. As the **subject** of a sentence.

**What happened to the five planes over Bermuda** is still a mystery.

(‘**What happened to the five planes over Bermuda’** is the subject of the sentence.)

**When the war will start** depends on the decision of the U.S.

(‘**When the war will start’** is the subject of the sentence.)

**How long our journey will take** is not known by anyone.

(**‘How long our journey takes’** is the subject of the sentence.)

**Where Tom found the wallet** was far away from the city center.

(‘**Where Tom found the wallet’** is the subject of the sentence.)

**What the thieves did** has puzzled the police.

(‘**What the thieves did’** is the subject of the sentence.)

**C. *Noun clauses beginning with if / whether.***

**I**. As the **object** of a sentence.

**When a yes/no question is changed to a noun clause (As the examples below), if or whether is used to introduce the clause.**

***Is*** the sun round? The little boy wants to learn this.

The little boy wants to learn **if/ whether the sun is round.**

(**‘if/ whether the sun is round’** is the **object** of the sentence.)

***Did*** the Vikings reach America before Columbus? Some historians have researched on this.

Some historians have researched on **whether the Vikings reached America before Columbus.**

(**This** = did the Vikings reach America before Columbus)

(**‘whether the Vikings reached America before Columbus’** is the **object** of the sentence.)

***Do*** the Argentineans speak Spanish? The students argue about this.

The students argue about **whether the Argentineans speak Spanish.**

(**This**= Do the Argentineans speak Spanish)

(‘**whether the Argentineans speak Spanish’** is the object of the sentence.)

**II**. As the **subject** of a sentence.

***Will*** the new system be useful? It hasn’t been answered yet.

**Whether the new system will be useful** hasn’t been answered yet.

(**It** = whether the new system will be useful)

(“**Whether the new system will be useful**” is the **subject** of the sentence.)

***Is*** Barcelona going to transfer a new player? This is being discussed among fans.

**Whether Barcelona is going to transfer a new player** is being discussed among fans.

(**This** = Whether Barcelona is going to transfer a new player)

(**‘Whether Barcelona is going to transfer a new player”** is the su**bject** of the sentence.)

***Did*** aliens build the pyramids? This has confused many scientists.

**Whether aliens built the pyramids** has confused many scientists.

(**This** = Whether aliens built the pyramids)

(**‘Whether aliens built the pyramids”** is the **subject** of the sentence.)

**NOTE: The noun clause beginning with ‘If’ cannot be used as the subject of the sentence!**