

Understanding the Parts of a Sentence

English Parts of a Sentence

Subject | Predicate | Direct Object | Indirect Object
Object of the Preposition | Transitive Verbs and
Intransitive Verbs
Linking Verbs | Complements | Exercises

Before we begin, let's first look at

**Independent and
Dependent Clauses**

Differences and Examples

Independent and **dependent** clauses are two types of clauses in the English language.

A **clause** is a group of related words that contains a **subject** and a **verb**.

Clause = **Subject** + **Verb**

Clauses are the basic **building blocks of sentences** in the English language.

A **subject** is the person or thing that is doing something or being something. The subject performs the verb.

A **verb** is the action word in a sentence.

Examples:

The dog jumped over the fence.

The **subject** of the sentence is the dog because the dog is doing the action. The **verb** is jumped because it is the action.

He smiled at her.

The **subject** of this sentence is He. The **verb** is smiled.

My teacher told us to read quietly.

The **subject** of this sentence is My teacher. The **verb** is told.



A verb can also describe a **state**, such as: **be, have, like, see**, etc.

Example:

Mom will be home soon.

The **subject** of this sentence is Mom. The **verb** is be.



Independent clauses

An **independent clause** is a group of related words that contains a subject and a verb and **expresses a complete thought**.

**Independent Clause =
Complete Thought**

Independent clauses are complete sentences. They begin with a capital letter and end with **punctuation**, such as a period.

Examples:

I picked a flower for you.

My mom is nice.

The teacher taught me how to read.

The woman sang.



Dependent clauses

Dependent clauses contain a subject and a verb, but do not express a complete thought.

**Dependent Clause =
Incomplete Thought**

A dependent clause is not a complete sentence.

The following words in **purple** are called **dependent marker words** and will be explained in the next section.

Examples:

When I picked a flower for you

What happened when I picked the flower?
This is not a complete thought or sentence.

If my mom is nice

What happens if my mom is nice? This is not a
complete thought or sentence.

While my teacher taught me to read

What happened while my teacher taught me to read? This is not a complete thought or sentence.

Because the woman sang

What happened because the woman sang? This is not a complete thought or sentence.

Dependent marker words

Dependent clauses usually start with a **dependent marker word**, as shown in **purple** in the previous examples.

A dependent marker word is a word added to the **beginning of an independent clause** to make it dependent.

For example, this is an independent clause:
I like flowers.

Now, let's turn it into a dependent clause. We do it by adding a word such as "because." This word is called a **dependent marker word**.

Now we get:

Because I like flowers

The above group of words does not communicate a complete thought and becomes a **dependent clause**.

The **dependent clause** must be **connected** with an **independent clause** to make a complete sentence

I planted flowers
because I like flowers.



Some common dependent marker words:

- After
- Although
- As
- As if
- Because
- Before
- Even if
- Even though
- If
- In order to
- Since
- Though
- Unless
- Until
- Whatever
- When
- Whenever
- Whether
- While

Connecting dependent and independent clauses

1. Connect independent clauses with coordinating conjunctions

Independent Clause + Coordinating Conjunction + Independent Clause

Example:

My mother is sleeping and my father is reading a book.

Coordinating conjunctions are connecting words that are used to connect **independent clauses**. There are seven coordinating conjunctions:

For

And

Nor

But

Or

Yet

So

The **coordinating conjunction** is placed **before** the second independent clause. A **comma** is used before the coordinating conjunction.

Examples:

She likes to cook carrots, but he likes to eat them raw.

She likes to cook carrots and He likes to eat them raw are both independent clauses because they are complete sentences. They are connected with the coordinating conjunction but.

Richard wanted to see a movie, so Lisa drove him to the theater.

Richard wanted to see a movie and Lisa drove him to the theater are both **independent clauses** because they are **complete sentences**. They are connected with the coordinating conjunction so.

The dog was fast, yet the cat got away by climbing the fence.

The dog was fast and The cat got away by climbing the fence are both **independent clauses** because they are **complete sentences**. They are connected with the coordinating conjunction yet.

2. Connect independent clauses with just a semicolon

Independent Clause + ; + Independent Clause

Example:

My mother is sleeping; my father is reading a book.

Semicolons can connect two **independent clauses**, without using a coordinating conjunction.

Examples:

The dog likes my blanket; he sleeps on my bed.

The trees are beautiful; it is autumn here.

That chair broke; it is time to buy a new one.

3. Connect independent clauses with an independent marker word

Independent Clause + Independent Marker Word + Independent Clause

Example:

My mother is sleeping; however my father is reading a book.

Independent marker words are another way to connect clauses. These words are used at the beginning of an **independent clause**.

Some common independent marker words:

also

consequently

furthermore

however

moreover

nevertheless

therefore

What's the difference between a **dependent marker word** (such as "if," "while," and "since") and an **independent marker word** (such as "also" and "therefore")?

Answer:

If a dependent marker word is used, the clause cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.

For example:

"If she leaves" = not a complete sentence

If an independent marker word is used, the clause can stand alone as a complete sentence.

For example:

"Therefore, she leaves" = a complete sentence

A **semicolon** (;) is placed before the independent marker word.

Note: Do NOT capitalize the independent marker word AFTER a semicolon.

You can also use a **period** (.) before the dependent marker word, but note that then you have two separate sentences.

Examples:

John did not study for his test; consequently, he failed the exam today.

Mike cleaned his room; therefore, he can stay up later tonight.

Sam wanted to ride his bike. However, the tire was flat.

Nick was tired after work. Nevertheless, he washed the dishes after supper.

4. Dependent clauses are completed by adding an independent clause to the sentence.

Independent Clause + Dependent Clause

Example:

My father is reading a book + because my mother is sleeping

OR

Independent Clause + , + Dependent Clause

Example:

Because my mother is sleeping, my father is reading a book

We usually place a comma after the **dependent clause** if it begins with a dependent marker word.

We can leave the comma out if we **reverse** the order of the clauses.

Incorrect: *Because the girl laughed*

What happened because the girl laughed? This is not a complete thought.

Correct: *Because the girl laughed, I smiled.*

Correct: *I smiled because the girl laughed.*

Note that in this case we left out the comma.

Incorrect: *When I picked a flower for you*

What happened when I picked the flower? This is not a complete thought.

Correct: *When I picked a flower for you, a bee stung me.*

Correct: *A bee stung me when I picked a flower for you.*

Incorrect: *If my mom is nice*

What happens if my mom is nice? This is not a complete thought.

Correct: If my mom is nice, she will take us to the park today.

Correct: My mom will take us to the park today if she is nice.

Incorrect: *While my teacher taught me to read*

What happened while my teacher taught me to read? This is not a complete thought.

Correct: *While my teacher taught me to read, the other students worked quietly in their notebooks.*

Correct: *The other students worked quietly in their notebooks while my teacher taught me to read.*

Comma splices

A **splice** means a connection point.

Do NOT use just a comma to connect independent clauses. This is called a **comma splice** and is incorrect.

Incorrect example: He is wearing a sweater, he is cold.

Correct example: He is wearing a sweater because he is cold.

Correct example: Because he is cold, he is wearing a sweater.

Correct example: He is wearing a sweater, and he is cold.

Correct example: He is wearing a sweater; he is cold.

Correct example: He is wearing a sweater. He is cold.

Correct example: He is wearing a sweater. Therefore, he is cold.

These were differences between **independent** and **dependent** clauses. Now that you know them, it is **time to practice!** Follow the links below and take the quizzes. **Send screenshots of successful pass rates of at least 70% to your respective TL's email.**

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quizzes/indep_clause_quiz.htm

<http://www.proprofs.com/quiz-school/story.php?title=independent-dependent-clauses-1>

http://www.softschools.com/quizzes/grammar/identifying_subordinate_dependent_clauses/quiz3637.html

THE END!



Resource used for this material: Really-Learn-English.com. 2010-2014