

# NOUN CLAUSES

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## WHAT IS A NOUN CLAUSE?

- I know English.  
                    ↓  
                    noun
- I know what you did last summer.  
  ↓  
  noun clause
- English is great.  
          ↓  
          noun
- What you did for her is great.  
                            ↓  
                            noun clause

NOUN CLAUSES are used like a noun, and as a noun, in the sentence.

- They have their own «Subject + Verb + Object» structure. But this Subject and Verb are NOT the subjects and verbs of the sentence!

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## WHAT IS A NOUN CLAUSE?

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- Noun clauses can be used *in the subject position* or *object position* in the sentence.
  - ✓ **How you can upload the documents** will be explained in five minutes. (As the Subject)
  - ✓ I know **how you can upload the documents**. (As the Object)
  - ✓ **Why the sky appears blue** puzzled scientists for a long time, but not anymore. (As the subject)
  - ✓ The video explains in detail **why the sky appears blue**. (As the object)

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## TYPES OF NOUN CLAUSES

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- There are three types of noun clauses:
  1. All «Wh-» question forms: (what../where../when../etc.)
  2. Whether (or not)... / if...
  3. That / The fact that

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## 1. WH- NOUN CLAUSES

- Wh- noun clauses are formed as:

« **Wh-** + **S** + **V** + (**O**) ».

- ✓ I will tell you **where you can find the keys**.
- ✓ **Why we did not make much profit** seems pretty clear to me.
- ✓ Terry hides from everyone **how he can rent a car so cheap**.



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## WH- NOUN CLAUSES

- Sometimes «the object» in « **Wh-** + **S** + **V** + **O** » structure might not be used. When this happens, we might see sentences that look interesting, but gramatically correct:
  - ✓ No one knows **why the picnic was cancelled**.
  - ✓ **Why the picnic was cancelled** was not very clear.  
 SUBJECT                      VERB    OBJECT
  - ✓ The police did not tell us **where Tom is**.
  - ✓ **Where Tom is** is a secret.
  - ✓ **What he does** does not interest me.

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## WH- NOUN CLAUSES

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- Sometimes, «**who**» and «**what**» ask about the subject. In this case, there is no subject in the noun clause, so we have:

«**Wh- + V + O**».

- ✓ I don't know **who lives next door**. (Subject is asked)
- ✓ Parents want to know **what happened in the field trip**.
- ✓ I will definitely find out **who stole my camera**.
- ✓ I want to learn **who makes the decisions around here**.

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## WH- NOUN CLAUSES

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- When there is a person (or subject) after «**who**», it is also possible to use «**whom**».

- ✓ I don't know **whom/who you were talking to on the phone**.
- ✓ **Whom/who they will choose as the new mayor** will be a great surprise.
- ✓ You need to tell me **whom/who you want to work with** in your team.

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## NOUN CLAUSES WITH «WHAT»

- «What» can have two meanings in noun clauses: 1. «*what*» 2. «*thing / things*».

- ✓ **What she said** shocked many of the listeners.  
= The thing(s) that she said...
- ✓ **What you see is what you get.**  
= The thing that you see is the thing that you get.
- ✓ **What** I've felt, **what** I've known never shined through in **what** I've shown.  
(Metallica; *The Unforgiven*)  
= The things that I've felt, the things that I've known never shined through in the things that I've shown.



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## NOUN CLAUSES WITH «WHAT»



COOL HAND LUKE (1967)

«What we have got here is failure to communicate.»



## NOUN CLAUSES WITH «WHAT»



FORREST GUMP (1994)

«Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you are gonna get.»

## 2. WHETHER (OR NOT) / IF (OR NOT)

- «Yes / no?» question type is used as «**whether**» and «**if**» in noun clauses.
- It is used when there are *two options: this or that; yes or no.*
  - ✓ « I don't know. Does she love wearing green or not? »  
Noun Cl.: I don't know **if she loves wearing green or not.**
  - ✓ « Can this be seen as an opportunity? It will become clear afterwards. »  
**Whether this can be seen as an opportunity** will become clear afterwards.
  - ✓ I informed the parents about **whether the students would bring their sports outfits or not.**

## WHETHER (OR NOT) / IF (OR NOT)

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- «**Whether**» can be used both at the beginning of the sentence or in the middle.
- «**If**» cannot be used at the beginning of the sentence as a noun clause.
  - ✓ The bank did not tell me if they will give a higher interest.
  - = The bank did not tell me whether they will give a higher interest.
  - ✓ **Whether the bank will give me a higher interest** will become clear today.  
(«If» is not possible here.)

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## WHETHER (OR NOT) / IF (OR NOT)

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- Using the «**or not**» is optional. We do not have to use it.
- «**Or not**» is used differently in «**whether**» and «**if**».
  - ✓ whether ..... or not. (e.g. I don't know *whether* she likes me *or not*.) ( ✓✓ )
  - ✓ whether or not ..... (e.g. I don't know *whether or not* she likes me.) ( ✓✓ )
  - ✓ if ..... or not. (e.g. I don't know *if* she likes me *or not*.) ( ✓✓ )
  - ✓ if or not ..... (e.g. I don't know *if or not* she likes me.) ( ✕✕ ) (NOT possible.)
- EXAM STRATEGY: How we can use «**or not**» is not asked in grammar exams, but knowing it will be helpful in reading, listening, and writing.

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## WHETHER (OR NOT) / IF (OR NOT)

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- We cannot use «if» after a *preposition*; only «whether» is possible.
  - ✓ They were worried about **whether** they could afford a house. ✓
  - ✓ They were worried about **if** they could afford a house. X (Wrong!)
  - ✓ The key to success in business lies in **whether** you are willing to work hard and invest in it.
  - ✓ The key to success in business lies in **if** you are willing to work hard and invest in it. X (Wrong!)

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## IN SUMMARY...

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- We can say «if» has a limited use in noun clauses. It CANNOT be used...
  1. at the beginning of the sentence;
  2. in combination with «or not»;
  3. after prepositions.

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### 3. THAT / THE FACT THAT

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- «That» and «the fact that» imply *certainty, clarity, being definite*.
- «That» can be used in the middle of the sentence right after verb.
  - ✓ I feel **that the topic attracts a lot of attention**.
- They can also be used at the beginning of the sentence:
  - ✓ **The fact that Emma lost the game by 2 points only** shocked everyone.  
(= Emma lost the game by 2 points only. This shocked everyone.)

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### THAT / THE FACT THAT

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- «That» is usually used after verbs that express *an idea and opinion, feeling and emotion, or scientific truth or finding*.
- «S + V + THAT + SVO »
  - ✓ I **know** that they will become wealthier in time.
  - ✓ I **think** that Noah will come today.
  - ✓ Scientists **have discovered** that...
  - ✓ The police **found out** that...
  - ✓ Many young people **feel** that...
  - ✓ Our students **hope** that...

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## THAT / THE FACT THAT

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- «That» can also be used after **adjectives** that express *an idea and opinion, feeling and emotion, or scientific truth or finding*.
  - ✓ It is **certain** that we will pass this exam.
  - ✓ The citizens are **sure** that the prices will keep increasing.
  - ✓ I am **afraid** that...
  - ✓ It seems **clear** that...
  - ✓ My parents are **glad** that...
  - ✓ Scientists are **worried** that...

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## THAT / THE FACT THAT

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- «That» can also be used with certain **nouns**. However, this is not very common.
  - ✓ It is **a pity** that Logan moved to a remote place.
  - ✓ It is **a shame** that giant buildings are now everywhere.
  - ✓ It was **a surprise** that the final result was really satisfying.
  - ✓ It is **a fact** that temperatures are rising gradually.

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## THAT / THE FACT THAT

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- When «**that**» is used in the middle after verbs, adjectives, and nouns, it *can be omitted from the sentence*.

- ✓ *You will **believe** a man can fly!* (from *Superman*)
- ✓ *I **know** they will become wealthier in time.*
- ✓ *I **think** Noah will come today.*
- ✓ *The **citizens are sure** the prices will keep increasing.*
- ✓ *It is **certain** we will pass this exam.*
- ✓ *It is **a pity** Logan moved to a remote place.*

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## THAT / THE FACT THAT

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- We cannot use «**the fact that**» in the middle of the sentence, only «**that**» is possible.
  - ✓ I believe **that**... ( ✓✓ )
  - ✓ I believe **the fact that**... ( ✕✕ )
- «**The fact that**» is possible ONLY when there is *a preposition before the noun clause*. In this case, «**that**» cannot be used.
  - ✓ Scientists and activists are worried **about the fact that** the governments are not doing enough to stop global warming.

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## THAT / THE FACT THAT

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- Both «**that**» and «**the fact that**» can be used at the beginning.
  - ✓ **The fact that you are crying** will not affect my decision.  
(= You are crying. This will not affect my decision.)
  - ✓ **The fact that the wages were not at the desired level** caused the workers to go on a strike.  
(= The wages were not at the desired level. This caused the workers to go on a strike.)
  - ✓ **That there was too much rainfall during spring** has led to poor soil quality.  
(= There was too much rainfall during spring. This has led to poor soil quality.)

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## IN SUMMARY...

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- Both «**that**» and «**the fact that**» are possible at the beginning.
- Only «**that**» is possible in the middle (after verbs, adjectives, and nouns).
- ONE EXCEPTION: After a preposition, we use «**the fact that**» in the middle of the sentence.

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## SHORT FORMS IN NOUN CLAUSES

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- Noun clauses have only one type of short form.
- When «**Wh-**» or «**Whether**» noun clauses are followed by a «**modal verb**», then, the modal verb can be turned into «**to V1**».
- wh - + modal verbs      wh - + to V1  
       whether + modal verbs      whether + to V1

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## SHORT FORMS IN NOUN CLAUSES

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- Examples:
  - ✓ I just don't know **what I will do** with myself.  
 = I just don't know **what to do** with myself.
  - ✓ We need to learn **which goods we should take** on the tour.  
 = We need to learn **which goods to take** on the tour.
  - ✓ Please tell me **who I must apply to** for a loan.  
 = Please tell me **who to apply to** for a loan.
  - ✓ We have not decided **where we will go** after this location.  
 = We have not decided **where to go** after this location.

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## REPORTED SPEECH

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- We use reported speech when we want to report someone's words and sentences to someone else.
  - ✓ ARTHUR: I will not have a holiday this year.
  - MARGE : Arthur said he **would not have** a holiday that/this year.
- Almost all reported speech sentences are actually noun clauses, so need to think of «Reported speech» sentences as noun clauses.

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## REPORTED SPEECH

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- **MAIN RULE:** If our main verb is in any of the Present Tenses, then the reported sentence can be in any tense. There is no limitation.
- But, if our main verb is in any of the Past Tenses, then the reported sentence (Noun clause part) needs to be in the most relevant Past Tense, too.
- «Tense Relations in Noun Clauses».

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## REPORTED SPEECH

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1. Main verb; Present Tenses: Noun Clause can be in ANY tense (no limitation)

✓

Our professor	<u>tells</u>	universities <b>have changed</b> a lot.
	<u>says</u>	she <b>was not</b> very successful back in college.
	<u>warns</u>	we <b>have to study</b> daily.
	<u>has realized</u>	some students <b>are</b> always late.
	<u>will soon notice</u>	you <b>are</b> one of the best in class.

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## REPORTED SPEECH

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2. Main verb; *Past Tenses*: Noun Clause can be *only in Past Tenses*:

✓

Our professor	<u>told</u> (us)	universities <b>had changed</b> a lot.
	<u>said</u>	she <b>had not been</b> very successful back in college.
	<u>warned</u>	we <b>had to study</b> daily.
	<u>realized</u>	some students <b>were</b> always late.
	<u>noticed</u>	you <b>were</b> one of the best in class.

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## REPORTED SPEECH

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- When one sentence is reported to someone else, the tense in the original sentence turns into one time past.
- Henry: I **will come** two weeks later.  
Sam : Henry **said** he **would come** two weeks later.
- Pamela: What do I have to do?  
Oliver : Pamela **asked** what she **had to do**.  
OR  
She **didn't know** what she **had to do**.

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## REPORTED SPEECH

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- More examples
- Lorraine : I **walked** home all the way from the campus.  
Sam : Lorraine **told** me that she **had walked** home all the way from campus.
- Ian : Where have I left my sunglasses?  
Oliver : Ian **wondered** where he **had left** his sunglasses.

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## «-EVER» WORDS IN NOUN CLAUSES

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- Using «*Wh- noun clauses*» with «*-ever*» words gives the meaning of «**any**» or «**it does not matter**».
- **whatever; wherever; whenever; whoever; however**, etc.  
(wherever; any place; it does not matter where)  
(whenever; any time; it does not matter when, etc.)
  - ✓ You can visit me **whenever you want**.  
(= You can visit me **any time you want**.)
  - ✓ I will give the reward to **whomever reads the poem best**.
  - ✓ Children will find something to play with **wherever they are**.
- *A MOVIE Clip: The Dark Knight (2012)*

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## «-EVER» WORDS IN NOUN CLAUSES

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The Dark Knight (2012)

« I believe **whatever** doesn't kill you simply makes you...  
stranger. »

## -EVER WORDS

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- «**-ever**» words can also be used *as linkers*.
  - ✓ **Wherever he hides** doesn't matter to them. (As noun clause; in the Subject position)  
VERSUS
  - ✓ **Wherever he hides**, they will find him. (As a linker)
  - ✓ She is not pleased with **whatever I do for her**. (As a noun clause; in the object position)  
VERSUS
  - ✓ **Whatever I do for her**, she does not seem to be pleased. (As a linker)

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## -EVER WORDS

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- «**However**» has two different meanings. 1. «it does not matter how» 2. «but; still; nevertheless»
  - ✓ **However you design his room**, the boss will find something negative to tell you.  
(It does not matter how you design his room, ...)
  - ✓ **However nicely I speak to him**, he feels a little offended.  
(It does not matter how nicely I speak to him, he... )
  - ✓ I designed his room very carefully. **However**, the boss still found one or two negative things to tell me. (... , but ...)
  - ✓ Julian speaks nicely to Ellie. **However**, she finds his words quite offending. (... , but... )

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## -EVER WORDS

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- When «**-ever**» words are used as linkers, they express the same meaning with the linker «**no matter**».
- *whatever = no matter what... // wherever = no matter where... // whoever = no matter who; etc.*
- By itself, «**no matter**» has no meaning. It is always used with «**wh-**» noun clauses.
- That is: « **No matter + WH-** »
- e.g. **No matter what** I do, all I think about is you.  
= **Whatever I do**, all I think about is you.

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## -EVER WORDS

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- Examples:
  - ✓ **Whatever** I tell him, he cannot be convinced.  
= **No matter what** I tell him, he cannot be convinced.
  - ✓ **Whichever** company you choose, you will be really happy.  
= **No matter which** company you choose, you will be really happy.

Please Note: This grammar point will be revisited under «**Linkers**» part.

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## SUBJUNCTIVES

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- In grammar books, «**Subjunctives**» are given as part of «**noun clauses**». However, it is an advanced grammar point, so we will cover this grammar point in the «Advanced English Grammar» course.
- Just two examples:
  - ✓ I **recommend** that he **see** a doctor.
  - ✓ I **insisted** that he **study** very carefully.

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# THANK YOU...

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## & EXERCISE TIME!!!

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