

## Dependent Clauses and Noun Clauses

**Review:** Remember, there are **two** main types of clauses:

- An **independent clause**, which has a subject and a verb and can stand alone in a sentence. It contains a complete thought. **Example:** *Stephanie locked the door quickly.* (“Stephanie” is the subject and “locked” is the verb)
- A **dependent clause**, which also has a subject and a verb, but cannot stand alone in a sentence. It contains only a partial thought so is therefore, a sentence fragment that either needs an independent clause to complete a thought, or it needs to be turned into an independent clause. **Example:** *When she was 12 years old* (“she” is the subject and “was” is the verb). Add “*she lived with her grandmother*” to complete the thought, OR eliminate “When” to create the short independent clause, *She was 12 years old.*

**There are 2 types of Dependent Clauses:**

**1. Adjective (Relative) Clauses** are dependent clauses which modify (i.e., describe or give more information about) a noun or pronoun in the independent clause. **Relative pronouns** (*who, whose, whom, which, and that*) are used to introduce adjective clauses. Also, the adverbs, *where* and *when* also introduce adjective clauses.

- My grandparents, *who were born in France*, speak little English. [“*who*” introduces “*were born in France*” and modifies the noun, “*grandparents*” in the independent clause, “My grandparents speak little English”. Notice how the adjective clause splits the independent clause; they often do this. Marie’s dog, *which is a collie*, ran to school.]
- The day *when we were engaged* is getting closer. [“*When*” introduces “*we were engaged*” and modifies the noun “*day*” which is found in the independent clause, “*The day is getting closer.*” The shop *where he practically lives* is on 5<sup>th</sup> street.]

**2. Adverb (Subordinate) Clauses** are dependent clauses which modify a verb, adjective, or another adverb. Every adverb clause is introduced by a **subordinate conjunction** such as *after, before, once, since, until, when, while, as, because, so, if, even if, unless, although, though, where, wherever, than, whether*, etc. Adverb clauses can be found at the beginning (introductory adverbial clause) or end of sentence.

- Mark will go *wherever there is beer*. [The subordinating conjunction, “*wherever*” introduces “*there is beer*” and modifies the verb “*go*”. ]
- *Because you are so stressed*, I will take care of it.

**3. Noun (Nominal) Clauses** function as subjects, objects, or complements. A noun clause may be introduced by a relative pronoun or by *whether, when, where, why* or *how*.

- *What is promised* is not always delivered. [noun clause being used as a subject]
- *What you see* is *what you get*. [noun clauses being used as a subject]
- *Who sent this package* is a mystery. [noun clause being used as a subject]
- I know *that they like her*. [noun clause being used as an object]

*See Next page for important information...*

**IMPORTANT:**

Noun clauses and adjective clauses are often confused with each other because they are introduced with similar words, particularly relative pronouns. To tell them apart, see if the word starting the sentence has an antecedent; if it does, the clause is an adjective clause. The word starting a noun clause is never an antecedent.

- Effective salesmen understand *whom they must respond to*.  
This is a noun clause because *whom* does not have an antecedent.
- Effective salesmen *who respond to customer needs* are respected.  
This is an adjective clause because “*salesmen*” is the antecedent for “*who*”

There are also clauses known as **elliptical clauses** that have one or more words left out for conciseness.

- Political Science is one major [*that*] she would consider. [*that* is functioning as a relative pronoun and eliminated from an adjective clause]
- It was decided [*that*] she would rather major in English. [*that*] is functioning as a conjunction, eliminated between clauses.