



Independent
vs.
Dependent
Clauses

Review: Phrase vs. Clause

A phrase lacks a **subject-verb** combination.

- ... in a blaze of red and orange rays

A clause contains a **subject-verb** combination.

- The **sun sank** in a blaze of red and orange rays.

New Concepts and Learning Objectives

- To define an dependent clause.
- To define a independent clause.
- To distinguish between dependent and independent clauses.

Independent Clauses

An independent clause can be a complete sentence because it expresses a complete thought.

- Her **advice was** not very helpful.
- The home-cooked **food tasted** delicious.
- **I lost** my keys.

Dependent Clauses

A dependent clause cannot stand alone as a sentence because it needs more information and fails to express a complete thought.

- Because her advice was not very helpful...
- Although the home-cooked food tasted delicious...
- After I lost my keys ...

Do note, though....

... that a dependent clause is still a clause. It still has a subject paired to a verb, or has a **subject-verb** combination.

Here are the examples you just saw on the previous slide:

- Because her **advice was** not very helpful...
- Although the home-cooked **food tasted** delicious...
- After **I lost** my keys ...

So what's the difference?

An independent clause expresses a complete thought, and needs no other explanation.

EX:

- I lost my keys.
 - *OK, that's pretty plain – I lost my keys.*

A dependent clause does not express a complete thought, however, and does require additional explanation.

EX:

- After I lost my keys ...
 - *Well, what? What did I do after I lost my keys?*

What makes the difference?

Look carefully at the following clauses

Independent:

- Her advice was not very helpful.
- The home-cooked food tasted delicious.
- I lost my keys.

Dependent:

- **Because** her advice was not very helpful...
- **Although** the home-cooked food tasted delicious...
- **After** I lost my keys ...

What's in a Word?

- Hopefully, you noticed that each of the dependent clauses began with a word that the independent clauses lacked.
- If you missed this, go back to the previous slide and compare the clauses again. Look for the word in **brown font**.

Subordinating Conjunctions

- The word at the beginning of the dependent clause is called a **subordinating conjunction**.
- **Subordinating conjunctions** turn a complete thought into an incomplete thought.
- In other words, **subordinating conjunctions** make an independent clause into a dependent clause.

Conjunctions and Clauses

The reason why a dependent clause cannot stand on its own is that it begins with a **subordinating conjunction**. The subordinating conjunction makes the clause unable to express a complete thought. If this subordinating conjunction were removed, the clause would be independent once more.

Example:

The doctor explained the symptoms. (Independent)

When the doctor explained the symptoms . . .(Dependent)

Common Subordinating Conjunctions

There are many different kinds of conjunctions, which we'll learn more about in the coming weeks. Below are some of the most common **subordinating** conjunctions:

Common Subordinating Conjunctions:

After
Although
As
Before
Even though
If
Until
When
Whenever

Distinguishing Clauses

Which of the following clauses are independent? Which are dependent? (Hint: Look for the **subordinating conjunctions**).

1. He ran.
2. **Because** I woke up late this morning.
3. I was late to work.
4. **When** we arrived in class.

Final Notes

Sentence Fragment:

When an author tries to make a dependent clause into a sentence, it is called a **sentence fragment**.

To fix a sentence fragment,

1) Eliminate the subordinating conjunction at the beginning

OR

2) Join the dependent clause to an independent clause

Fix-a-Fragment I

Fix the following sentence fragments by mentally removing the subordinating conjunction.

- **After** the Braves won the world series ...
- ... **because** the jewelry store didn't have security cameras.
- **Although** I thought I was adequately prepared ...

Fix-a-Fragment II

This time, fix the fragments by merging them with the appropriate independent clause (not in order):

- After the Braves won the World Series ...
- ... because the jewelry store didn't have security cameras.
- Although I thought I was adequately prepared ...

- The diamond thieves got away scot free.
- The name "Chipper Jones" became a household word for Atlanta residents.
- Running the marathon was tougher than I expected.