

# Lesson: Clauses

## Learning Target

- Use different types of clauses to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing.

Sentences are made of clauses. **Clauses** contain subjects and verbs and may contain modifiers, objects, complements, and other sentence parts. Different kinds of sentences contain different numbers and kinds of clauses. You can use various kinds of clauses to express different relationships among ideas, to create a more mature style, and to increase reader or listener interest.

An **independent clause** contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought. It can stand alone as a complete sentence.

**EXAMPLE:** This is an independent clause.

A **dependent** (or **subordinate**) **clause** contains a subject and a verb but does not express a complete thought. It cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.

**EXAMPLE:** because this is a dependent clause

There are different kinds of dependent clauses. Using a variety of dependent clauses can enliven your writing and help you vary syntax.

A **noun clause** can act as a subject, object, appositive, or any other sentence part that a one-word noun can.

**What you see is what you get.** [*What you see* is the subject of the sentence. *What you get* is a predicate nominative.]

I don't know **whether the train is late.** [*Whether the train is late* is the object of the verb *know*.]

An **adjectival clause** (often called a **relative clause**) acts as a modifier of a noun or pronoun.

The paint set **that he donated** is very nice. [The clause modifies *paint set*.]

An **adverbial clause** acts as a modifier of a verb, adjective, or other adverb.

**Although we thought we left early enough,** we still didn't get there in time. [The clause modifies the verb *did get*.]

Hungry **even though we had had a big lunch,** Trevor asked for a snack. [The clause modifies the adjective *hungry*.]

### Check Your Understanding

- A. For each of the following five sentences, identify each of the boldface clauses, and label it *independent* or *dependent*. If the clause is dependent, tell whether it is a *noun clause*, *adjectival (relative) clause*, or *adverbial clause*.
1. **After Tristan woke up**, he went to the kitchen for breakfast. *dependent, adverbial*
  2. The house **that is on the corner** belongs to Nikki. *dependent, adjectival*
  3. Ellie has a pet frog, and **Diego has a dog**. *independent*
  4. **What I heard** is that rehearsal has been canceled. *dependent, noun*
  5. The ice chest, **which is full of ice and water**, is too heavy for me to carry. *dependent, adjectival*
- B. Write a simple sentence, with just one subject and one verb: an independent clause. Then rewrite that sentence, adding at least one adjectival clause. Rewrite the new sentence, adding at least one adverbial clause. Finally, rewrite the sentence to include at least one noun clause. Underline and identify the clauses as shown in the example.

#### EXAMPLE

**Simple sentence (independent clause):** We watched a movie.

**With adjectival clause:** We watched a movie that was about an orphan.

**With adverbial clause:** After we got home, we watched a movie that was about an orphan.

**With noun clause:** After we got home from where we spent the afternoon, we watched a movie that was about an orphan.

**Answers will vary.** Students should write four sentences:

one simple sentence

the same sentence with an adjectival clause added

the same sentence with both an adjectival and an adverbial clause added

the same sentence with an adjectival, adverbial, and noun clause