

## CLAUSES

### What are Clauses?

A clause is a phrase that includes both a subject and a predicate. In other words, a clause contains the noun and the action that the noun takes. There are two types of clauses, independent and dependent. The simplest form of a clause is a noun and a verb, but clauses can become longer and more complex:

“She ate.”

Subject: She

Predicate: ate

“While the little cat slept soundly on the chair.”

Subject: the little cat

Predicate: slept soundly on the chair

### What is the Difference between Independent and Dependent Clauses?

*Independent Clause:* **An independent clause** can stand alone as a sentence. A single independent clause forms a simple sentence containing a subject and a predicate, and expresses a complete idea, whether a statement, exclamation, or question. Sentences can be more complicated than a single independent clause, but all sentences contain at least one independent clause.

Example: “**She ate her lunch**”; “**The little cat slept soundly on the chair**”

*Dependent Clause:* **A dependent clause** can NOT stand alone as a sentence and must be attached to an independent clause. Dependent clauses usually add to or modify the information contained in the independent clause that they are attached to, and the first word of the dependent clause communicates its relationship to the independent clause, usually as a conjunction.

Example: “**Although she ate her lunch**, (she was still hungry)”; “(Ousmane cleaned the floors) **after the big dog finished running around the house**”

### How to Combine Clauses

*Combining Independent Clauses:* Independent clauses are combined to make more complex sentences and connect related ideas. Coordinating conjunctions (ex. for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so), conjunctive adverbs (ex. however, therefore, thus, consequently, finally, nevertheless), and semicolons are used to combine independent clauses. Combining independent clauses using a conjunction, adverb, or a semicolon communicates different information about the relationship between the clauses, so it is important to be familiar with all three.

Example: “She ate her lunch, **and** he went to class.”

“She ate her lunch **while** he went to class.”

“She ate her lunch**;** he went to class.”

*Combining Independent and Dependent Clauses:* Combining an independent and dependent clause can add more information to a sentence or fix a sentence fragment. Independent and dependent clauses are combined by placing a subordinating conjunction (ex. after, before, until, while) at the beginning of the dependent clause. The order of the clauses does not matter; either can come first, but if the dependent clause is first, it must be followed by a comma.

Example: “The little cat slept on the chair **after** the big dog finished running around the house.”

“**After** the big dog finished running around the house, the little cat slept on the chair.”