Clause Toolbox
Student Resource

> A **clause** is a group of related words that contains a subject and a verb.

Independent clause—the same as a simple sentence. It will stand alone as an understandable thought. It has a subject and a predicate (verb). It may also have an object and modifiers, such as adjectives, adverbs, and/or phrases.

> **Example**: The <u>writer</u> <u>spent</u> the day at the computer.
> (subject) (verb)   (object)

Dependent (subordinate) clause—a group of related words that contains a subject and a verb but that cannot stand alone. It requires the addition of an independent clause to make it a complete thought.

> **Example**: Because the <u>writer</u> <u>spent</u> the day at the computer
> (subject)   (verb)   (object)

Though this group of words has a subject and a verb, the thought isn't complete. It leaves us with a question: *What happened BECAUSE the writer spent the day at the computer?*

Because the <u>writer</u> <u>spent</u> the day at the computer, she completed her novel.
(an independent clause)

The second clause describes what happened as a result of the action described in the first clause. "<u>She</u> <u>completed</u> her novel" is an independent clause because it can stand alone.

Types of Dependent (Subordinate) Clauses

Adjective Clauses—dependent clauses that modify nouns and pronouns (just as adjectives do). They come directly after the word they modify. They usually begin with a "**signal word**" called a *relative pronoun.*

Relative Pronouns				
that	*where*	*which*	*who*	*whose*

Adjective clauses add more information about a person, place, or thing.

> **Example**: The <u>writer</u> <u>spent</u> the day at the computer. + The writer's <u>books</u> <u>are</u> on the
> bestseller list.

> combined using an **adjective clause:**
> The <u>writer</u> *whose <u>books</u> <u>are</u> on the bestseller list* <u>spent</u> the day at the computer.
> (subject) (verb)

Adverb clauses—dependent clauses that give more details about the rest of the sentence, such as time, cause and effect, conditions, or contrast. Adverb clauses can occur anywhere in the sentence: at the beginning, between the subject and the verb, or at the end of the sentence. They usually begin with a "**signal word**" called a *subordinating conjunction*:

TIME	CAUSE AND EFFECT	CONDITION	CONTRAST
after		*if*	*although*
before	*because*	*unless*	*even though*
when	*since*	*whether*	*though*
while	*now that*	*even if*	*whereas*
as	*as*	*providing that*	*while*
whenever	*as long as*	*in case (of, that)*	
since	*so*	*in the event (of,*	
until	*so that*	*that)*	
as soon as	*in order that*		
as long as			
once			

Adverb clauses are used to add more information.

> **Example**: The <u>writer</u> <u>spent</u> the day at the computer.

If we want to know more about the **time**, we choose a *subordinating conjunction* from the TIME box above.

> ***After*** the <u>writer</u> <u>spent</u> the day at the computer, <u>she</u> <u>was</u> very tired.

If we want to know more about **a cause and effect**, we choose a *subordinating conjunction* from the CAUSE AND EFFECT box above.

> ***Because*** the <u>writer</u> <u>spent</u> the day at the computer, <u>she</u> <u>finished</u> her novel.

If we want to know more about **a condition**, we choose a *subordinating conjunction* from the CONDITION box above.

> ***Unless*** the <u>writer</u> <u>spent</u> the day at the computer, <u>she</u> <u>would</u>n't <u>be able</u> to finish her novel.

If we want to know more about **a contrast**, we choose a *subordinating conjunction* from the CONTRAST box above.

> ***Although*** the <u>writer</u> <u>spent</u> the day at the computer, <u>she</u> really <u>wanted</u> to be at the park.

Note: Although all of these clauses occur at the beginning of the sentence, they could be moved to the end of the sentence.

Noun clauses—dependent clauses that function like a single noun in a sentence. They can be subjects, objects, or complements. The "**signal words**" for noun clauses are

how	*when*	*who*
however	*whenever*	*whoever*
if	*where*	*whom*
that*	*wherever*	*whomever*
what	*which*	*whose*
whether	*whichever*	*why*
whatever		

Noun clause as the **subject** of a sentence:

<u>**Whatever you want for dinner**</u> <u>is</u> fine with me.

Noun clause as the **object** of a sentence:

<u>John</u> <u>will make</u> **whatever you want for dinner.**

Noun clause as the **object of a preposition**:

I have dinner ready for **whoever wants to eat**.

Noun clauses can also function as: *indirect objects, subject complements, adjective complements.*

*In a noun clause, if the signal word "that" is not the first word of the sentence, it can be omitted.

> *Example:* <u>I</u> <u>see</u> (**that**) <u>you</u> <u>made</u> homemade cookies.
> *(The sentence makes sense with or without "that.")*