

Clause

Definition: A clause consists of a subject and a verb and is the smallest grammatical unit that expresses a thought.

What is a Clause in a Sentence?

In its simplest form, a clause in grammar is a subject plus a verb. The subject is the entity “doing” the action of the sentence and the verb is the action that subject completes. A clause creates a complete thought (an idea or a statement that can stand alone).

A complete thought is also called a main clause or independent clause (IC).

What is an Independent Clause?

Independent clause definition: An independent clause can stand alone in a sentence. It contains a subject and a verb in its smallest form. A clause may also include modifiers and a verb predicate. It is a complete thought and the smallest unit of grammar that is syntactically accurate.

Example of Independent Clauses:

What is a Dependent Clauses?

Dependent clause definition: Dependent clauses contain a subject and verb. However, they cannot stand alone as an independent thought. They must be joined with an independent clause to be grammatically correct.

Example of Dependent Clause:

Every night before I go to bed, I eat cookies.

This example contains the IC, “I eat bananas.” However, a dependent clause now opens the sentence. While the dependent clause contains a subject and a verb (“I go”), the dependent clause itself cannot stand alone a complete thought.

Example of Dependent Clause:

Every night before I go to bed.....

This is not a complete thought and therefore not a sentence in English.

Every night before I go to bed...what happens? This idea must be joined with an independent clause to be grammatically correct.

What is a Noun Clause?

Noun clause definition: A noun clause is a type of dependent clause that acts as a noun in the sentence. A noun clause will always contain a subject and a verb. However, it cannot stand alone as a complete thought.

Example of Noun Clause:

I remember what you said yesterday.

Here, the underlined portion is the independent clause that can stand alone. The italicized words, “what you said yesterday,” serve as a dependent noun clause. The noun clause is acting as the object of the sentence. In the noun clause

“you said” is a subject plus a verb. This creates the clause (a subject plus a verb). However, “what you said yesterday” cannot stand alone and therefore must be paired with an independent clause.

Additional noun clause examples:

I thought what she wore was so chic.

Whoever you confide in is a person you can trust.

What is an Adjective Clause? (Also called Relative Clause)

Adjective clause definition: An adjective clause is a type of dependent clause that acts as an adjective in the sentence. An adjective clause will always contain a subject and a verb. However, it cannot stand alone as a complete thought.

An adjective clause will always begin with one of the following words:

Relative Pronouns List:

That
where
who
whom
which

Relative Adverbs List:

When
where
why

Example of Adjective Clause:

The man whom you saw at the store committed a robbery.

The adjective clause is acting as an adjective in this sentence. The adjective clause describes the boy. It contains a subject and a verb, "you saw." However, it cannot stand alone as a complete thought "Who you saw at the robbery" is not a complete statement.

Additional adjective clause examples:

1. The store that the boy robbed is on the corner.
2. The corner of the street where my family lives is surrounded by investigators.

What is an Adverbial Clause?

Adverbial clause definition: An adverbial clause is a type of dependent clause that acts as an adverb in the sentence. An adverbial clause will always contain a subject and a verb. However, it cannot stand alone as a complete thought.

Example of Adverbial Clause:

You will continue driving north until you see a stop sign.

The adverbial clause is acting as an adverb in this sentence. The adverbial clause modifies how you will drive. The adverbial clause contains a subject and verb, "you will continue." However, it cannot stand alone as a complete thought. "Until you see a stop sign" is not a complete statement.

Additional adverbial clause examples:

1. After the movie ended, we ate ice cream.
2. Beth visits her grandfather whenever she is in town.

What is a Gerund Phrase?

A gerund phrase is created when a gerund – a verb that takes an -ing form and functions as a noun – has a modifier, object or both. That sounds quite technical, so let's break it down for a simple explanation of a gerund phrase:

First, here is an example of a gerund phrase in a sentence

Eating a slice of pie quickly is a recipe for disaster.

So, we can breakdown the gerund phrase like so:

The gerund in the sentence is eating. (Remember, a gerund is a noun that is formed by adding the -ing suffix to a verb.) The Gerund phrase object in the sentence (the thing being acted upon, in this case by eating) is a slice of pie. The modifier in the sentence is quickly.

A gerund phrase will follow these rules, which can help you identify a gerund phrase in a sentence:

- The phrase will always start with a gerund.
- The gerund phrase will either have a modifier, an object or both.
- The entire phrase will function as a noun.
- The phrase will have singular agreement with a verb.

Look at these examples with the gerund phrases used in different ways:

1. Reading books quietly is my favorite pastime.
2. My favorite pastime is reading books quietly
3. I recommend reading books quietly to pass the time.

Exercise

Direction (1-30) Choose the right kind of clauses from the following.

1. My friend helped me when I was in danger.
(a) Adjective clause
(b) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(d) None of the above
2. We believe in democracy though it has its shortcomings.
(a) Adjective clause
(b) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(d) None of the above
3. My parents were happy because I won the first prize.
(a) Adjective clause
(b) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(d) None of the above
4. This is the girl who talked to me yesterday.
(a) Adjective clause
(b) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(d) None of the above
5. I have lost the tickets which I bought.
(a) Adjective clause
(b) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(d) None of the above
6. He could not answer any of the uestions that I asked him.
(a) Adjective clause
(b) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(d) None of the above
7. Although he is very rich, he is a miser.
(a) Adjective clause
(b) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(d) None of the above
8. Everybody admits that he is a brave man.
(a) Adjective clause
(b) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(d) No Improvement
9. We knew that he was guilty.
(a) Adjective clause
(b) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(d) None of the above

10. What he told me was a lie.
(a) Adjective clause
(c) Noun clause
(b) Adverb clause
(d) None of the above
11. He gave me everything that I asked for.
(a) Adjective clause
(c) Noun clause
(b) Adverb clause
(d) None of the above
12. Your statement that you lost the money cannot be believed.
(a) Adjective clause
(c) Noun clause
(b) Adverb clause
(d) None of the above
13. They told us why they are doing that.
(a) Noun clause
(c) Adverb clause
(b) Adjective clause
(d) wh-clause
14. They left early.
(a) Noun clause
(c) Adjective clause
(b) Declarative clause
(d) Adverb clause
15. The time when they left early
(a) Noun clause
(c) Adjective clause
(b) Relative clause
(d) Adverb clause
16. The claim that he expressed
(a) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(c) Adjective clause
(b) Relative clause
(d) Adverb clause
17. We like the music that you brought.
(a) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(c) Adjective clause
(b) Relative clause
(d) Adverb clause
18. That was when they laughed
(a) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(c) Adjective clause
(b) Relative clause
(d) Predicative SV-clause
19. Bill stopping the project was a big disappointment.
(a) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(c) Adjective clause
(b) Relative clause
(d) Non-finite gerund clause
20. I asked him when he would go there.
(a) Noun clause
(c) Relative clause
(b) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(d) Adjective clause
21. I shall not tell you where he lives.
(a) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(c) Relative clause
(b) Noun clause
(d) Adjective clause
22. I do not know if he will come.
(a) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(b) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(d) Relative clause
23. I do not know who came here last night.
(a) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(b) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(d) Relative clause
24. I cannot say whose book is this?
(a) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(b) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(d) Relative clause
25. Do you know which house is this?
(a) Adverb clause
(c) Noun clause
(b) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(d) Relative clause

26. I know that he will come.
(a) Noun clause
(c) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(b) Adverb clause
(d) Relative clause
27. We come here that we may study.
(a) Noun clause
(c) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(b) Adverb clause
(d) Relative clause
28. He is so weak that he cannot run.
(a) Noun clause
(c) Relative clause
(b) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(d) Adverb clause
29. He is such a weak boy that he cannot run.
(a) Noun clause
(c) Relative clause
(b) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(d) Adverb clause
30. He is such a boy as does not help anybody.
(a) Adjective clause
(c) Relative clause
(b) Adjunct clause (relative clause)
(d) Adverb clause

Solutions

1.	b	2.	b	3.	b	4.	a	5.	a	6.	a	7.	b	8.	c	9.	c	10.	c
11.	a	12.	c	13.	d	14.	b	15.	b	16.	a	17.	a	18.	d	19.	d	20.	a
21.	b	22.	c	23.	c	24.	c	25.	c	26.	a	27.	b	28.	d	29.	d	30.	a

