

CLAUSES

MAIN CLAUSES (OR INDEPENDENT CLAUSES)

A main clause is a complete sentence.

Main clauses contain a:

1. Subject
2. Verb
3. Sense of completion (expresses one complete thought).

EX:

Jessica loves to run

Notice how JESSICA is the subject. LOVES is the verb. There is a sense of completion to the clause, which lets the reader know that the clause is complete (or that the sentence is complete).

SUBORDINATE CLAUSES (OR DEPENDENT CLAUSES)

A subordinate clause is not a complete sentence but is more or less "subordinate" to (or "dependent" on) a complete sentence for meaning.

Subordinate clauses contain a

1. Subject
2. Verb
3. However, they do not contain a sense of completion (does not express one complete thought).

EX:

When Jessica loves to run

The same subject and verb found in the main clause may also be found in this subordinate clause. However, the inclusion of the word WHEN (a subordinator) keeps the clause from sounding like a complete thought.

Oftentimes, with a subordinate clause, a reader will ask "Then what happened?" If you find yourself asking this question, then you should realize that you are possibly reading a subordinate clause.

4. Subordinate Clauses often rely on Subordinators to exist. Subordinators are words such as: When, after, although, if, while, etc.

EX:

When it is raining, Jessica loves to run.

The word WHEN (a subordinator) allows the clause IT IS RAINING to be connected to the other main clause, JESSICA LOVES TO RUN, to show more details.

Notice how you may sometimes use the subordinators interchangeably in some cases.

Jessica loves to run **when** it is raining.

Jessica loves to run **while** it is raining.

Jessica loves to run **although** it is raining.

A USEFUL ANALOGY FOR CLAUSES

Trying to remember the difference between a main clause (or independent clause) and a subordinate (or dependent clause) can be tedious.

Think of the Main Clause as a manager.

Think of the Subordinate Clauses as workers.

The Subordinates cannot do the work without the Manager's approval (otherwise, chaos ensues).

Thus, any subordinate clause always needs a main clause to manage them.

EX:

When Diego is single, he likes to date different girls
Main

When Diego is single, he likes to date different girls
Subordinate

You could write the sentence with multiple Subordinate Clauses surrounding the Main Clause (again, think of the Main Clause as the manager of the Subordinate Clauses):

When he is single, Diego likes to date different girls, although he eventually settles.
Subordinate Main Subordinate

Remember: When you combine Subordinate Clauses with Main Clauses, the larger sentence becomes one large independent clause.