

TYPES OF SUBORDINATE/DEPENDENT CLAUSES

A Subordinate (or Dependent) Clause is a clause which contains a subject (explicit or implied) and a verb, yet it does not contain a sense of completion (the clause cannot stand on its own as a sentence).

The subject can exist as a noun or noun phrase within the clause. The verb included in the subordinate/dependent clause is rarely the main verb of the sentence.

Subordinate/Dependent Clauses can work as nouns, adjectives, or adverbs, and depending on their function are named accordingly.

1) NOUN CLAUSES

Noun Clauses function as nouns in a sentence.

EX:

What we are is the subject of philosophical debate.

[What we are is working as a subject]

The group decided who would be the president.

[who would be the president is working as an object]

2) ADJECTIVE CLAUSES

Adjective Clauses function as adjectives in a sentence. Adjective Clauses tend to modify nouns or noun phrases.

EX:

The man that Mike knew was at the party.

[that Mike knew is working to modify the phrase The man]

The cat who was sick urinated on my jeans.

[who was sick is working to modify the phrase The cat]

3) ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

Adverbial clauses function as adverbs in a sentence.

EX:

We ran while being chased by the skunk.

[while being chased by the skunk shows when/why people were running]

When Harry returns from work we will go to eat ice cream.

[When Harry returns from work indicates when the group will go to eat ice cream]

Note: You can easily recognize adverbial clauses since they often use subordinating conjunctions in the beginning of the clause (e.g. when, while, as, though, before, after, since, etc.).