

OVERVIEW OF CLAUSES

A clause is a group of words with its own subject and verb. Clauses allow you to combine ideas to show their relationship. This adds logic and cohesion to your speech and writing.

There are two types of clauses: **independent clauses** (main clauses) and **dependent clauses** (subordinate clauses and relative clauses).

- **An independent clause** is a complete sentence because it has its own subject and verb and expresses a complete thought.
- **A dependent clause** is part of a sentence, so it cannot stand alone.

Example: He had no qualification; **however** he got the job.

Independent clause

Dependent clause

Although the dependent clause shown on the previous example has a subject and a verb, it does not express **a complete thought**. As a result, it **cannot stand alone**.

A dependent clause often starts with a word that makes the clause unable to stand alone; **for example, however**. These words are **subordinating conjunctions**.

Subordinating conjunctions link an independent clause to a dependent clause. Each subordinating conjunction expresses a relationship between the dependent clause and the independent clause.

Types of sentences

There are four types of sentences:

1. **Simple sentences:** A simple sentence contains a subject and a verb, and it may also have an object and modifiers. However, it contains only one independent clause.

E.g. Some students like to study in the mornings.

2. **Compound sentences:** A compound sentence contains at least two independent clauses. These two independent clauses can be combined with a comma and a coordinating conjunction or with a semicolon. The coordinators are as follows: **for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so.**

- I tried to speak Spanish, **and** my friend tried to speak English.
- Sami played football, **so** Maria went shopping.
- Sami played football, **for** Maria went shopping.

3. **Complex sentences:** A complex sentence contains at least one independent clause and at least one dependent clause. Dependent clauses can refer to the subject (who, which) the sequence/time (since, while), or the causal elements (because, if) of the independent clause.

If a sentence begins with a dependent clause, note the comma after this clause. If, on the other hand, the sentence begins with an independent clause, there is not a comma separating the two clauses.

- The students are studying **because** they have a test tomorrow.
- **After** they finished studying, Juan and Maria went to the movies

4. **Compound-complex sentences:** Sentence types can also be combined. A compound-complex sentence contains at least two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.