**Written Expression**

**Lesson : Clauses and their Functions 1st year English**

A **clause** is a group of related words; but unlike a phrase, a clause has a subject and verb. Clauses are building blocks of sentences. A clause is a group of words that contain (at least) a subject and a verb. A **clause** is a part of a sentence that contains a complete subject and a complete **predicate** (what the subject says or does or what is done to it). The two types of clauses are independent clauses and dependent clauses.

These are clauses: these are not clauses:

Ecology is a science to protect the environment

Because pollution cause cancer after working all day.

**1. Independent Clauses**

An **independent clause** expresses a complete thought and has a subject and a verb. It is the main thought of the sentence and can stand alone correctly as a simple sentence without anything attached to it. Here are some examples:

Eg: A rainy spring caused major flooding, which delayed the planting of crops.

**A rainy spring caused major flooding**—independent clause. It is the main idea of the sentence and can be used alone as a simple sentence.

All residents were evacuated before the river crested.

**All residents were evacuated**—independent clause. It is the main idea of the sentence and can be used alone as a simple sentence.

**2. Dependent Clauses**

Dependent clauses are introduced by subordinating conjunctions. They usually modify verbs, but sometimes adjectives or other adverbs, by answering a question like how, where, when, why, to what extent, or under what conditions. Since the dependent clause begins with a subordinator, it does not express a complete thought and cannot stand alone as a sentence by itself. A dependent clause is formed with **subordinator + subject+ verb (+ complement)**. In what follows some examples:

Eg: Since the school offers paralegal training, Megan applied for admission.

**Since the school offers paralegal training**—dependent clause introduced by the subordinating conjunction since. It modifies the verb applied and it is an adverbial clause.

Eg: They waited until the tide came in.

**until the tide came in**—dependent clause introduced by the subordinating conjunction until. It modifies the verb waited and it is an adverbial clause.

The starting salary was lower than he had thought.

**than he had thought**—dependent clause introduced by the subordinating conjunction than. It modifies the adjective lower and it is an adverbial clause.

There are different types of dependent clauses: noun clause, adjective clause and adverbial clause.

**2.1. Noun Clause**

It is a dependent clause that functions like a noun. It can be a subject, object, or subject complement. There are three types of noun clauses: that clauses, wh-word clauses, and if/whether clauses.

**- That clauses** are introduced by the subordinator **that**.

Eg: The bulletin states that science courses require a laboratory period.

It also points out **that lab attendance is mandatory.**

The word **that** is often omitted if the meaning is clear without it. That clause is composed of that **+ subject + verb + complement.**

**Eg: ....** that the language center of the brain differs in each person.

.... that different aspects of language, such as nouns and verbs, are processed in different areas of the brain.

**- Wh- word clause**

It is a dependent clause in which the subordinate is a wh-word. It is formed from wh questions and is a wh introduced by wh- words such as: who, whoever, what, whatever, where, wherever, when, which, how, how much, how many, etc. A wh-word clause is composed of either: **wh-word + subject+ verb+ complemen**t.

**Eg:** .... who the president of South Africa is.

How many citizens voted in the last election.

Wh-word + verb + complement

**Eg:** ... who made the error.

... what happened at the student body meeting.

The word order in a noun clause is just like a statement not like a question. The order should be SV statement word order and the auxiliaries do, does, or did should be deleted.

**- If/ Whether - Clause**

If/ Whether clauses are dependent noun clauses that are formed from yes/ no questions and are introduced by subordinator whether or if. An if/whether clause is composed of: whether/ if + subject+ verb+ complement.

**Eg**: ... whether the president will win reelection.

... if the airplane landed safely.

**2.2. Adverbial Clauses**

An adverbial clause is a dependent clause introduced by an adverbial subordinator. It functions like an adverb. It is used to modify the verb of the independent clause and tells when ( time), where (place), why (reason), for what purpose, how, how long, or how far. It is also used to show contrast: concession (unexpected result) and direct opposition.

Adverbial clauses are composed of:

**Subordinator + subject+ verb + complement.**

**Eg:** because scientists are interested in the planes...

....so that humans can learn more about the universe.

There are a lot of kinds of adverbial clauses:

- **Time** like when, whenever, while, as soon as, after, since, as, before, until

Eg: **When people had to hunt for food**, they had continuous moderate exercise.

People were eating a lot of protein **while they were living in farms.**

**After people moved to urban areas** they had less protein in their diet.

Our eating habits changed **as soon as food processing methods improved.**

An adverbial time clause tells when the action described by the independent clause verb took place. The action or situation in a time clause can occur at the same time or at different time, as a part of a sequence of events.

- **Place** as where, anywhere, wherever, everywhere

Eg: Most people prefer to shop **where they can be sure of quality.**

Consumers usually prefer to do business **wherever credit cards are accepted.**

**Everywhere I shop,** I use my credit cards.

I usually stop for lunch **anywhere that is handy.**

An adverb place clause tells where the action described by the main verb took place.

- **Distance/ frequency** such as: as adverb as.

Eg: Pat jogs on the beach **as far as she can (distance).**

She jogs on the beach **as often as she can (frequency).**

Adverbial clauses of distance answer the question how far?

Adverbial clauses of frequency answer the question how often?

- **Manner** for instance: as , as if, since -Result for example: so + adjective + that

So + adv + that

Such a (n) + noun phrase + that

So much/ many/little/few + noun phrase + that

Eg: The demonstrators left **as the police had ordered** (manner).

Kathleen spoke **as if ( as though) she were an authority on the subject (manner).**

The student completed the experiment **as quickly as they could** (manner).

Adverbial clauses of manner answer the question how?

- Result for example: so + adjective/adverb + that

such a (n)+ noun+ that

so much/little + noun + that

So many/few + noun + that

Eg: New textbooks are **so** expensive **that many students buy used ones.**

The cost of education is rising **so** rapidly **that students are looking for ways to cut costs.**

The library is **such** a big place **that I couldn´t find the book I needed.**

There is always **so much** noise in the dormitory **that I can´t study there.**

There were **so many** students waiting in line to register for classes **that I decided to come back later.**

An adverbial result clause expresses the result of what is stated in the independent clause.

**- Purpose** like so that, in order that

Eg: Farmers use chemical pesticides **so that they can grow bigger harvests.**

Farmers also spray their fields **in order that consumers might enjoy unblemished fruits and vegetables.**

An adverbial purpose clause states the purpose of the action in the dependent clause. When the subjects of the two clauses are the same, purpose is often expressed by an infinitive phrase. ( to grow bigger harvest), or by an infinitive phrase with in order to ( in order to grow bigger harvests), instead by an adverbial clause. The structure is possible in the first example but not the second.

- **Concession (unexpected result)** as in although, even though, though

Eg: **Although I studied all night**, I failed the test.

I failed the test although I studied all night.

Because the weather was cold, I didn´t go swimming ( expected result)

Even though the weather was cold, I went swimming. (unexpected result)

There is a difference between because and even though. Adverbial clauses of concession are used to express ideas or actions that are not expected. The information in the independent clause indicates a concession or unexpected results of something described in the dependent clause.

- **Contrast** such as while, whereas

Eg: San Francisco is very good during the summer, **whereas San Juan is extremely hot.**

**While San Juan is extremely hot during the summer**, San Francisco is very cool.

In this type of clauses, the information in the first clause is the direct opposite of the information in the second clause of the sentence.

- Adverbial Relative Clause.: using when and where

Eg: The lives of thousands of Germans changed, **when East German soldiers began building the Berlin Wall.**

**2.3. A Relative Clause**

It is a dependent clause that functions like an adjective; it modifies a noun or pronoun. A relative clause is also called adjective clause.

Eg: Everyone **who studied for the exam** passed it easily.

A relative clause begins with a relative pronoun like who, whom, whose, that, which, that, whose. Those pronouns refer to humans, nonhuman, and things. A relative clause begins with relative adverbs like when and where to refer to time and place.

The relative clause is placed after its antecedent as close to it as possible to avoid confusion.

Eg: He left the gift in his friend’s car **that he had just bought.**

(It is not clear whether the relative clause modifies car or gift).

He left the gift **that he had just bought** in his friend’s car.

( the relative clause clearly modifies gift).

Occasionally, a prepositional phrase comes between the antecedent and the relative clause.

Eg: Try writing a sentence of your own **that contains a relative clause.**