

CLAUSES

There are two types of clauses:

- A **main** (independent) clause: stands alone as a complete sentence, for example 'Rick came first'. However, an independent clause may be joined to other independent clauses with a conjunction (and, but, nor, or, yet) to result in a compound sentence, for example, when joined to 'He was exhausted' the compound sentence is, *Rick came first but he was exhausted*.
- A **subordinate** clause (also known as a dependent clause) is a group of words that cannot stand alone or make complete sense on its own. It needs to be combined with a main clause and joined using a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun to form a complete sentence. Subordinate clauses will usually be **adverbial** or **adjectival** clauses.
 - **Adverbial clauses** start with a subordinating conjunction.
 - **Adjectival clauses** add extra information to a noun or pronoun and start with a relative pronoun: who, whoever, whose, whom, whomever, which, that. In certain situations, "what," "when," and "where" can function as relative pronouns.
 - The person *who* has the winning number wins the jackpot.
 - This is the cake *that* Elizabeth baked.
 - My cousin, *whose* child you just met, is a dentist.
 - The teacher asked the students *whom* she believed to be the most reliable and talented to audition.
 - The car, *which* was a little red Corvette, tooted its horn.
 - **NB:** In the following sentence whichever acts as a determiner identifying the letter:
 - I will open *whichever* letter arrives first.
 - **Verbless clauses** have the verb (usually a form of 'to be') implied but not stated. These clauses are usually adverbial. For example: Anthony believes *the prisoner innocent*. (Anthony believes that the prisoner is innocent.)
 - **Non-finite verb clauses** start with a **present participle** or contain an **infinitive**. They do not show a distinction in tense.
 - The main types of **non-finite verbs** are
 - **infinitives** (the infinitive of a verb is its basic form with *to* ('to do'))
 - **-ing forms**, also known as **present participles** which complete progressive verbs, for example: Adolescents like *to play on computers*. *Playing on computers*, they spent the day engrossed. *Having played on computers all day*, they were hungry and tired.
 - **NB:** Verbs ending in -ing can also act as gerunds which function as nouns either as a subject, direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions, for example, Dancing is fun, I am watching boxing, He started with *training*.
 - **Embedded clauses** are clauses inside other clauses in a complex sentence. Embedded clauses are included in sentences to ensure brevity and to embellish the information in the main part of the sentence by clarifying information, giving examples or providing information which it is not essential. This linguistic complexity challenge is particularly found in technical and scientific writing. Embedded clauses challenge the reader to stop, mid-sentence, realise there is 'extra information', then understand how it is relevant to the main sentence and, finally, finish the sentence by connecting the first clause and the final clause or clauses.
The following examples are colour coded as follows:
Part of the independent clause, **dependent clause**, **final part of the independent clause**
 - **The boy**, **who was only seven**, **could play the piano**.
 - **Most cells**, **including plant cells**, **have a nucleus, a cell wall and cytoplasm**.
 - **Electricity travels from the power source**, **which is a battery**, **around a series of conductors, back to the power source**.

NB: In the following sentence *whoever* is a pronoun. *Whoever spilled milk* is an embedded noun clause, which acts as a participant in the main clause, rather than a dependent clause.

- *Whoever spilled milk* will have to clean it up.