

**Independent & Dependent Clauses**

A clause is a group of words containing a subject and a verb. Often, we use both dependent (subordinate) and independent (main) clauses in sentences, making them more complex.

**Independent Clauses**

An independent clause can stand alone as a sentence. It contains a subject, a verb, and often an object or complement.

Examples: The eggs are rotten.

 They were left out in the hot sun.

**Dependent Clauses**

A dependent clause cannot stand alone as a sentence; it must be accompanied by an independent clause. To join a dependent and independent clause in a sentence, a subordinating conjunction must be used.

*Subordinating*

*Conjunction*

Examples: Because they were left out in the hot sun, the eggs are rotten.

 *Dependent Clause Independent Clause*

*Subordinating*

*Conjunction*

 Although the eggs are rotten, Howard boiled them.

 *Dependent Clause Independent Clause*

**Variations**

The examples above show dependent clauses placed in front of independent clauses with a subordinating conjunction (S.C.) linking the two at the beginning of the sentence. However, dependent clauses can also be placed *after* independent clauses in a sentence.

Example:

 The eggs are rotten because they were left out in the hot sun.

 *Independent Clause S. C. Dependent Clause*

Placing the independent clause at the beginning makes the subject clear for the reader, and the sentence is simpler and more straightforward.

**Common Subordinating Conjunctions**

The following chart is adapted from Fowler & Aaron (2010, p. 251).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cause/Effect | Condition | Comparison /Contrast | Purpose | Concession | Space or Time |
| AsBecauseIn order thatSinceSo that | Even ifIfIf onlyProvidedUnless | WheneverSinceWhenWhether | AsAs ifAs thoughRather thanWhileWhether | In order thatSo thatThat | AlthoughAs ifEven ifThoughEven though | AfterAs long asBeforeNow thatOnceSince | UntilWhenWheneverWhereWhereverwhile |

The information for this handout was compiled from the following sources:

Steer, J. M., & Carlisi, K. A. (1998). *The advanced grammar book* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Fowler, H. R., & Aaron, J. E. (2010). *The little, brown handbook* (11th ed.). New York, NY: Longman.