

Unit 4: Clauses and Sentence Structure

Lesson 23

Main and Subordinate Clauses

A **main clause** is a group of words that contains a complete subject and a complete predicate. Also known as an **independent clause**, a main clause can stand alone as a complete sentence.

Tyler read the morning paper. (main clause)

A **subordinate clause** also contains a subject and a predicate, but it cannot stand alone. Because it depends on a main clause to make sense, it is also known as a **dependent clause**. A subordinate clause usually begins with a **subordinating conjunction**.

While he ate his toast [subordinate clause], Tyler read the morning paper.

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

Time: after, as, as soon as, before, since, until, when, whenever, while
 Place: where, wherever
 Manner: as, as if, as though
 Cause: a, because, inasmuch as, since, so that
 Concession: although, even though, though
 Condition: if, unless

A subordinate clause may also begin with a relative pronoun (such as *who*, *whose*, *whom*, *which*, *that*, or *what*). In some subordinate clauses, the connecting word also serves as the subject of the clause.

► **Exercise 1** Check (✓) the blank before each sentence that contains a subordinate clause.

- ✓ _____ Louis Braille (1809–1852) lost his sight in an accident when he was three years old.
- _____ 1. When he was fourteen, he invented today’s most common system of writing for the blind.
- _____ 2. As an adult, he became a teacher of the blind.
- _____ 3. In the Braille system, letters, numbers, and punctuation marks—even musical notes—are written in units called Braille “cells.”
- _____ 4. Each cell contains between one and six raised dots.
- _____ 5. Visually impaired people who have been taught Braille can read these raised dots with their fingertips.
- _____ 6. Because sixty-three unique combinations of dots are possible, Braille is quite flexible.
- _____ 7. Louis Braille determined that these raised dots can be interpreted much faster than raised lettering.

- _____ 8. Even though it is more practical than raised lettering, the Braille system was not used widely until more than a century after its invention.
- _____ 9. The six positions in a cell are arranged in two vertical columns of three positions each.
- _____ 10. Each position in a cell is identified by a number.
- _____ 11. For example, the number one position is the upper left-hand corner of the cell.
- _____ 12. Immediately beneath it is the number two position.
- _____ 13. When a single raised dot appears in the number one position, the cell represents the letter *a*.
- _____ 14. When both the number one and number two positions contain dots, the cell represents the letter *b*.
- _____ 15. Special signs are used to precede numbers and capital letters.
- _____ 16. The number sign is a cell with dots in positions 3, 4, 5, and 6.
- _____ 17. The first ten letters of the alphabet represent numerals if they are preceded by the number sign.
- _____ 18. For example, a cell that would otherwise represent the letter *a* represents the Arabic numeral *1* if it is preceded by a number sign.
- _____ 19. Similarly, whenever a cell with a single dot in position 6 appears, the reader knows that the next letter is a capital.
- _____ 20. Braille can be written by manual or mechanical means.
- _____ 21. A Braille writing machine is similar to a typewriter except that it has only six keys, one corresponding to each dot in the Braille cell.
- _____ 22. An ordinary personal computer can convert printed material to Braille by using a special device that embosses dots on paper.
- _____ 23. Another method of writing Braille involves using a slate and stylus to form raised dots on paper.
- _____ 24. Although Braille provides visually impaired individuals with access to important information found in books, its usefulness doesn't stop there.
- _____ 25. Because writing is such an intrinsic part of everyday life, Braille's most important role may be furnishing visually impaired people with a medium for letters, grocery lists, and phone messages.

► **Writing Link** Write a brief paragraph about the reading and writing you do in the course of an ordinary day. Use at least two subordinate clauses.

Lesson 24

Simple and Compound Sentences

A **simple sentence** has one complete subject and one complete predicate. The subject, the predicate, or both may be compound.

SUBJECT
Most dogs
They

PREDICATE
are pets
provide pleasure and companionship.
(compound predicate)

Seeing Eye® dogs and other assistance dogs give the gift of independence.
(compound subject)

Two or more simple sentences, each considered a main clause, may be combined to form a **compound sentence**. Main clauses can be joined to build a compound sentence by using a comma followed by a conjunction, such as *or*, *and*, or *but*. However, a conjunction is not necessary to form a compound sentence. A semicolon may be used to join two main clauses without a conjunction. A semicolon is also used before a conjunctive adverb, such as *however*.

Laura can't hear the alarm clock, **and** her dog wakes her.
 Laura can't hear the alarm clock; her dog wakes her.
 Laura can't hear the alarm clock; **however**, her dog wakes her.

► **Exercise 1** Write in the blank whether the sentence is *simple* or *compound*.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>_____ compound</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> | <p>Assistance dogs offer disabled people companionship, but they also play a more important role.</p> <p>1. A trained dog's help could make independent living possible for a disabled person.</p> <p>2. Someone in a wheelchair can't reach a light switch, and a deaf person can't hear a smoke alarm.</p> <p>3. Dogs can help in many everyday situations.</p> <p>4. Labrador retrievers open refrigerators, and Border collies nudge people awake.</p> <p>5. Assistance dogs push elevator buttons and pick up telephones.</p> <p>6. An assistance dog performs many duties, and these duties could change from one day to the next.</p> <p>7. Some dogs go to work or school, and others help with child care or housework.</p> <p>8. One dog might signal the whistle of a teakettle or the beep of a microwave oven.</p> <p>9. Assistance dogs serve as eyes, ears, legs, or arms; they empower those they help.</p> |
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- _____ 10. Many breeds become assistance dogs, but a few seem particularly well suited to the role.
- _____ 11. Labrador retrievers, golden retrievers, Welsh corgis, and Border collies generally respond well to training.
- _____ 12. These dogs are eager to please; praise and affection are their primary rewards.
- _____ 13. Assistance dogs face unfamiliar situations daily; thus, the single most important job qualification is a calm disposition.
- _____ 14. A dog might have to navigate a crowded bus or a noisy restaurant.
- _____ 15. Assistance dogs regularly encounter strangers; therefore, they should not be apprehensive.
- _____ 16. Nervous and excitable dogs might become frightened, and their unexpected moves could prove dangerous.
- _____ 17. Assistance dogs play another important role, and that is the part of social ice-breaker.
- _____ 18. Disabled people sometimes feel “invisible,” but dogs make them very hard to ignore.
- _____ 19. Children especially are attracted to dogs; thus, assistance dogs are often included in disability awareness programs.
- _____ 20. The position of teacher can be added to the assistance dogs’ long list of jobs.

► **Exercise 2 Underline each main clause. If there is more than one main clause in a sentence, add a comma or a semicolon as needed.**

Time was flying by, and the day of the wedding was fast approaching.

1. Both of the sofas arrived but neither fit through the doorway.
2. Green is Angie’s favorite color but her new coat is blue.
3. This is a great car and it gets good gas mileage.
4. The first game will be this Thursday at five.
5. I like skiing and Maria likes skating.
6. We don’t order dessert when we eat out.
7. Martin expected bad weather therefore, he brought an umbrella.
8. This quilt might look old but my grandmother made it last year.
9. I’ll call you when I get home from work.
10. We will sell tickets tomorrow or you may buy them at the door.

Lesson 25

Complex and Compound-Complex Sentences

A **complex sentence** contains a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

MAIN CLAUSE

We ate popcorn

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

while we watched the movie.

Do not be confused by the phrase *we watched the movie*, which is a complete sentence. The complete subordinate clause is *while we watched the movie*, which cannot stand alone as a sentence.

A **compound-complex sentence** has more than one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

MAIN CLAUSE

I was in the back yard

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE

when Tony called,

MAIN CLAUSE

and I didn't hear the phone ring.

► **Exercise 1** Draw one line under the main clause and two lines under the subordinate clause. Write *C* in the blank if the sentence is complex and *CC* if it is compound-complex.

 C Whenever I work at this computer, I get a stiff neck.

- _____ 1. After I had searched everywhere, I found my ring, and I put it in my jewelry box.
- _____ 2. Julia cooked the lasagna yesterday, because she wouldn't have time today.
- _____ 3. As long as you're driving that way, could you stop at the post office for me?
- _____ 4. While thinking of an answer, Jason stared at his feet.
- _____ 5. Tillie paused for a moment when she reached the landing, and then she continued up the stairs.
- _____ 6. Terese apologized because she had lost her temper.
- _____ 7. I gave him a pen so that he could write down the phone number.
- _____ 8. I wrote a letter to the owner because the restaurant was filthy, and I'm waiting for a reply.
- _____ 9. She did not have the shoes that I wanted to buy; however, she is ordering them for me.
- _____ 10. The kite didn't fly because there wasn't enough wind.
- _____ 11. I met Dr. Wolfe while I was attending college, and now I work in her office.
- _____ 12. Mary never called because she got home too late.
- _____ 13. When the weather is hot, gardening can be drudgery.
- _____ 14. He didn't raise his voice, but we knew that he meant business, and we got back to work.
- _____ 15. As long as you're calling, ask her for the salsa recipe.

- _____ 16. Lee is worried, and I agree that we should take the cat to the vet.
- _____ 17. Because it was directed at toddlers, the program had to be brief.
- _____ 18. As he described his trip to sunny Puerto Rico, the rain continued to fall.
- _____ 19. Even though I was scheduled to leave early, I'll stay until closing, and then I'll make the bank deposit.
- _____ 20. When small children need sleep, they become short-tempered.
- _____ 21. My sister is moving because she got a new job.
- _____ 22. Although I promised I'd be there, I couldn't make it because my car wouldn't start.
- _____ 23. Even if you mail the card today, it won't arrive until after her birthday, and you will have to call anyway.
- _____ 24. If this snow continues, school will be canceled, and we'll have to stay home.
- _____ 25. The snack bar, which is open all year, is behind the boathouse.
- _____ 26. Angela called while you were out, but she didn't leave a message.
- _____ 27. Even though Carey is gone for the weekend, the cat sleeps on her bed, and the dog sleeps in her doorway.
- _____ 28. Unless it rains, she will take her binoculars and go birdwatching.
- _____ 29. Will the person who lost a pearl necklace please come to the front desk?
- _____ 30. If you simply paint over them, the cracks will return, and you'll have to paint again.

► **Writing Link** Write a brief paragraph about a book you have read. Use at least two complex sentences and one compound-complex sentence.
