

Clauses are the building blocks of sentences. A clause must have at least two things:

- a subject – the topic of the sentence; often, the person or thing doing the action
- a verb – a word that describes an activity, movement, or state of being

e.g. Odysseus travelled to Ithaca

S V

e.g. so that sales would increase

S V

Although all clauses have a subject and a verb, they usually contain a lot of other descriptive words, too. There are 2 types of clauses:

Independent Clauses

vs

Dependent Clauses

- express a full thought
- are complete by themselves, i.e. they are **simple sentences**

e.g. Peanut butter is high in protein.

e.g. Salt raises the melting point of ice.

e.g. Lemurs are native to Madagascar.

- express only part of a thought
- are incomplete by themselves, i.e. they are sentence fragments (errors)
- begin with subordinators like *because, while, although, after, which, whereas, since, when, before, after, wherever, until, how, what, whose, if, as, that, whether, unless, so that, in order*

e.g. unless they can secure funding

e.g. because the economy is unstable

e.g. although the UN Security Council passed the resolution

When these clauses are combined in a sentence, dependent clauses provide more information about **independent clauses**. They often tell us when, why, where, or how the action in the independent clause took place.

e.g. **The bodies were well preserved** because they had been buried in sub-zero temperatures.

e.g. When King George VI died in 1952, **Elizabeth II assumed the throne.**

Dependent clauses can also give us more information about the subject in an independent clause.

e.g. **The word “aboriginal,”** which refers First Nations, Inuit, and Metis, **is widely used today.**

As these examples show, dependent clauses can appear before, after, or in the middle of independent clauses.