Types of Clauses

Independent vs. Dependent Clauses

A clause is a group of words containing a subject and verb. There are two types of clauses:

- An independent clause is a simple sentence that can stand on its own.
  *Examples:* She is hungry.
  I am feeling well today.

- A dependent clause cannot stand on its own. It needs an independent clause to complete a sentence. Dependent clauses often begin with such words as *although, since, if, when,* and *because.*
  *Examples:* Although she is hungry ...
  Whoever is hungry ...
  Because I am feeling well ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent</th>
<th>Independent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Although she is hungry,</td>
<td>she will give him some of her food.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whatever they decide,</td>
<td>I will agree to.</td>
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Connecting Independent Clauses

There are two types of words that can be used as connectors at the beginning of an independent clause: coordinating conjunctions and independent marker words.

- **Coordinating conjunctions**
  The seven coordinating conjunctions used as connecting words at the beginning of an independent clause are *and, but, for, or, nor, so,* and *yet.* When the second independent clause in a sentence begins with a coordinating conjunction, a comma is needed before the coordinating conjunction:

  *Jim studied in the Sweet Shop for his chemistry quiz,* **but** *it was hard to concentrate because of the noise.*

- **Independent marker words**
  An independent marker word is a connecting word used at the beginning of an independent clause. *Also, consequently, furthermore, however, moreover, nevertheless,* and *therefore* always begin a sentence that can stand alone. When the second independent clause in a sentence has an independent marker word, a semicolon is needed before the independent marker word:

  *Jim studied in the Sweet Shop for his chemistry quiz; however, it was hard to concentrate because of the noise.*
Practice Exercises

In the blank below the sentence, write whether the underlined clause is independent or dependent.

1. The teacher who lives next door to Rob is Mrs. Johnson.
   __________________________

2. Our dog will run away if the gate is left open.
   __________________________

3. Because the storm knocked out the power, school will be canceled on Thursday.
   __________________________

4. This is the homework assignment that you missed last week.
   __________________________

5. The movie was excellent; moreover, it was just the right length.
   __________________________

6. Victoria heard what her sister said, but she ignored it.
   __________________________

7. The moon shimmered on the ocean when the wind rippled the waves.
   __________________________

8. At the end of his class, Jim walked to his locker where the coach was waiting.
   __________________________

Sources and Further Reading/Practice: