Subordination

Subordination in English grammar is the process of linking two [clauses](https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-clause-grammar-1689850) in a sentence so that one clause is dependent on (or subordinate to) another. Clauses joined by coordination are called [main clauses](https://www.thoughtco.com/main-clause-grammar-term-1691584) or [independent clauses](https://www.thoughtco.com/independent-clause-grammar-1691159). This is in contrast to subordination, in which a subordinate clause (for example, an adverb clause or an adjective clause) is attached to the main clause.

Clausal subordination is often (but not always) indicated by a [subordinating conjunction](https://www.thoughtco.com/subordinating-conjunction-1692154) in the case of adverb clauses or a [relative pronoun](https://www.thoughtco.com/relative-pronoun-1692043) in the case of adjective clauses.

Definition of Subordination

For a clear and complete definition of subordination and how it allows readers to connect ideas, read this excerpt from Sonia Cristofaro's book, *Subordination.*"[T]he notion of subordination will be defined here exclusively in functional terms. Subordination will be regarded as a particular way to construe the cognitive relation between two events, such that one of them (which will be called the dependent event) lacks an autonomous profile, and is construed in the perspective of the other event (which will be called the main event).

## Adverbial Clauses

An adverbial clause is a group of words that plays the role of an adverb. (Like all clauses, an adverbial clause will contain a subject and a verb.)

Here is an easy example of an adverbial clause:

* Keep hitting the gong until I tell you to stop.

Compare the example above with the similar sentence below, which features an example with a normal adverb.

* Keep hitting the gong **hourly**.

(This bold text is a normal adverb, not an adverbial clause.)

In the two examples above, the adverbial clause and the normal adverb both tell us **when** the gong is to be hit. Therefore, they are both adverbs of time.

**Adverbs of Time (When?)**

An adverb of time states when something happens or how often. An adverb of time often starts with one of the following [subordinating conjunctions](https://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/subordinating_conjunctions.htm): "after," "as," "as long as," "as soon as," "before," "no sooner than," "since," "until," "when," or "while."  
  
Here are some examples:

* After the game has finished, the king and pawn go into the same box. (Italian Proverb)
* I stopped believing in Santa Claus when my mother took me to see him in a department store, and he asked for my autograph. (Actress Shirley Temple)
* As soon as you trust yourself, you will know how to live. (Writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

**Adverbs of Place (Where?)**

An adverb of place states where something happens. An adverb of place often starts with a preposition (e.g., "in," "on," "near") or one of the following subordinating conjunctions: "anywhere," "everywhere," "where," or "wherever."  
  
Here are some examples:

* In a world where there is so much to be done, I felt strongly impressed that there must be something for me to do. (Lobbyist Dorothea Dix)
* I am not afraid of the pen, the scaffold, or the sword. I will tell the truth wherever I please. (Lobbyist Mother Jones)

**Adverbs of Manner (How?)**

An adverb of manner states how something is done. An adverb of manner often starts with one of the following subordinating conjunctions: "as," "like," or "the way."  
  
Here are some examples:

* He acts like it is a joke.
* We don't have conversations. You talk at me the way a teacher talks to a naughty student.
* Except for an occasional heart attack, I feel as young as I ever did. (Comedian Robert Benchley)

**Adverbs of Degree or Comparison (To What Degree?)**

An adverb of degree states to what degree something is done or offers a comparison. An adverb of degree often starts with one of the following subordinating conjunctions: "than," "as...as," "so...as," or "the...the."  
  
Here are some examples:

* A vacuum is a hell of a lot better than some of the stuff that nature replaces it with. (Playwright Tennessee Williams)
* He is as smart as he is tall.
* She is not so bright as she thinks she is.

Sometimes, the verb in an adverb of degree is understood (i.e., not present). For example:

* You are taller than I. https://www.grammar-monster.com/images/tick.png

(In this example, the verb "am" has been omitted. This is permissible.)

* You are taller than I am. https://www.grammar-monster.com/images/tick.png

(This is the full version.)

* You are taller than me. https://www.grammar-monster.com/images/tick.png

(This is the colloquial version. This version might irk some of your grammar-savvy readers, but it is acceptable.)

[Read more about choosing between "than I" and "than me."](https://www.grammar-monster.com/lessons/than_I_me_than_he_him.htm)

**Adverbs of Reason (Why?)**

An adverb of reason offers a reason for the main idea. An adverb of reason often starts with one of the following subordinating conjunctions: "as," "because," "given," or "since."  
  
Here are some examples:

* I don't have a bank account, because I don't know my mother's maiden name. (Comedian Paula Poundstone)
* Since you are like no other being ever created since the beginning of time, you are incomparable. (Journalist Brenda Ueland)

**Adverbs of Condition (If, Then)**

An adverb of condition states the condition for the main idea to come into effect. An adverb of condition often starts with "if" or "unless."  
  
Here are some examples:

* If the facts don't fit the theory, change the facts. (Physicist Albert Einstein)
* If the English language made any sense, a catastrophe would be an apostrophe with fur. (Author Doug Larson)
* If all the rich people in the world divided up their money among themselves, there wouldn't be enough to go around. (Novelist Christina Stead)

[Read more about conditional sentences](https://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/conditional_sentences.htm).

**Adverbs of Concession (In spite Of)**

An adverb of concession offers a statement which contrasts with the main idea. An adverb of concession often starts with one of the following subordinating conjunctions: "though," "although," "even though," "while," "whereas," or "even if."  
  
Here are some examples:

* Although golf was originally restricted to wealthy, overweight Protestants, today it's open to anybody who owns hideous clothing. (Author Dave Barry)
* A loud voice cannot compete with a clear voice, even if it's a whisper. (Author Barry Neil Kaufman)

**Properties of an Adverbial Clause**

Here are the properties of an adverbial clause:

* An adverbial clause is an [adjunct](https://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/adjuncts.htm). This means it can be removed without the sentence being grammatically wrong.
* An adverbial clause is a [dependent clause](https://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/dependent_clause.htm). This means it cannot stand alone as meaningful sentence in its own right.
* An adverbial clause usually starts with a [subordinating conjunction](https://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/subordinating_conjunctions.htm) (e.g., "although," "because," "if," "until," "when")
* An adverbial clause will contain a subject and a verb. (This is what makes it a [clause](https://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/clause.htm) as opposed to a [phrase](https://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/phrase.htm).)

**Why Should I Care about Adverbial Clauses?**

There is a great reason to learn about adverbial clauses: comma placement.

**Using commas with adverbial clauses**

When your adverbial clause (or phrase for that matter) is at the front of a sentence (often called a *fronted adverbial*), it is good practice to use a comma afterwards. For example:

* Where there are too many soldiers, there is no peace. Where there are too many lawyers, there is no justice. https://www.grammar-monster.com/images/tick.png (Chinese philosopher Lin Yutang)

When your adverbial clause is at the back, the tendency is to omit the comma. For example:

* There is no peace where there are too many soldiers. There is no justice where there are too many lawyers.

# Adjective Clause

## What is an Adjective Clause?

A dependent, or subordinate, clause contains a subject and a verb or verb phrase but does not express a complete thought. As a result, it cannot stand alone as a sentence. Dependent clauses can function either as a noun clause, adjective clause, or adverb clause.

## What Is an Adjective Clause?

An **adjective clause** is a dependent clause that, like an adjective, modifies a noun or pronoun. An adjective clause begin with words such as that, when, where, who, whom, whose, which, and why.

An essential (or restrictive) adjective clause provides information that is necessary for identifying the word it modifies. A nonessential (or nonrestrictive) adjective clause provides additional information about the word it modifies, but the word’s meaning is already clear. Nonessential clauses are always set off with commas.

When deciding whether to include the word that or which in an adjective clause, remember to use that for essential clauses and which for nonessential clauses:

**Essential clause:**

What is an Adjective Clause?

(That Lucas takes is an essential adjective clause. It contains the subject Lucas and the verb takes. The clause modifies the noun class, providing necessary information about it.)

**Nonessential clause:**

The house on the left, **which belongs to Nicole**, is up for sale.

(Which belongs to Nicole is a nonessential adjective clause. It contains the subject which and the verb belongs. The clause modifies the noun house, providing additional, nonessential information about it.)

## ****Adjective Clause Examples****

Adjective Clause Examples

(That I like the best is an adjective clause. It contains the subject I and the verb like. The clause modifies the noun beach.)

Mr. Jackson is the teacher **who helped me with my math problems**.

(Who helped me with my math problems is an adjective clause. It contains the subject who and the verb helped. The clause modifies the noun teacher.)

The bad weather is the reason **why I decided to drive instead of walk**.

(Why I decided to drive instead of walk is an adjective clause. It contains the subject I and the verb decided. The clause modifies the noun reason.)

Mia is the person **whose family owns a horse ranch**.

(Whose family owns a horse ranch is an adjective clause. It contains the subject family and the verb owns. The clause modifies the noun person.)

This is the park **where we can walk the dogs**.

(Where we can walk the dogs is an adjective clause. It contains the subject we and the verb phrase can walk. The clause modifies the noun park.)

Do you remember the time **when we almost missed the swim meet**?

(When we almost missed the swim meet is an adjective clause. It contains the subject we and the verb missed. The clause modifies the noun time.)

Guillermo went to the studio **where he takes glassblowing lessons**.

(Where he takes glassblowing lessons is an adjective clause. It contains the subject he and the verb takes. The clause modifies the noun studio.)

Max, **who is Marissa’s older brother**, just got back from a trip to Jamaica.

(Who is Marissa’s older brother is an adjective clause. It contains the subject who and the verb is. The clause modifies the noun Max.)

Monday is the day **when I have my doctor’s appointment**.

(When I have my doctor’s appointment is an adjective clause. It contains the subject I and the verb have. The clause modifies the noun day.)

Derek is the sibling **to whom I am closest**.

(To whom I am closest is an adjective clause. It contains the subject I and the verb am. The clause modifies the noun sibling.)