


Unit 6

RELATIVE, ADVERBIAL, AND NOUN CLAUSES

GOALS

- Learn why mastering relative, adverbial, and noun clauses is important in writing
- Understand problems writers commonly encounter with relative, adverbial, and noun clauses
- Form and use relative, adverbial, and noun clauses correctly in exercises and writing assignments



Exercising regularly is one important aspect of good health and fitness. Do you get enough exercise in your life at present? What other factors are important in maintaining good health and fitness?

LEARN WHAT THE ERROR IS

Errors with Relative, Adverbial, and Noun Clauses

A clause error is an error in which the formation of a relative, adverbial, or noun clause is incorrect. These three dependent clauses are treated in this unit. The editing symbol for an error in a dependent clause is *cl*.

Types of Clauses and Their Definitions

All clauses, whether dependent or independent, must have a subject and a verb.

An **independent** or **main clause** can stand alone as a sentence because its meaning is complete.

Example:

Last year, my university had an enrollment of 15,000 students.

A **dependent** or **subordinate clause** cannot stand alone but must work together with an independent clause to complete its meaning.

Example:

Although last year my university had an enrollment of 15,000 students [dependent clause], this year the number of students has increased by ten percent [independent clause].

There are three types of dependent clauses: relative clauses, adverbial clauses, and noun clauses.

Examples:

The student who came late [relative clause] missed an important quiz.

Although living in a foreign country is interesting [adverbial clause], I want to return to Korea after I get my degree.

Melissa thought that she had missed the deadline for her paper [noun clause].

Although sentences marked clause (*cl*) may also have other errors, your instructor may choose not to mark them. In the sentence *There is questions concerning the possible dangers of this machines may cause*, a relative clause is needed after *dangers* (*dangers that this machines may cause*). In addition, the sentence contains a subject-verb agreement error (*there is questions*) and a singular/plural error (*this machines*). However, the most serious problem is the relative-clause error.

The dependent-clause errors covered in this unit are global (more serious) errors. In the sentence *Although my parents expect me to do well in*

school, but I am not always dedicated to my studies, the reader mentally has to delete *but* in order to understand the sentence. The coordinating conjunction *but* is not used after an adverbial clause that starts with the subordinating conjunction *although* or *even though*.

Meaning may also be highly affected by dependent clause errors as in the following sentence: *The doctor examined the patient had a bad headache*. Because the relative pronoun *who* is missing from the dependent clause, the reader is unsure who had the headache, the patient or the doctor.

Readers of formal written English expect writers in the academic and professional worlds to have good control of clauses. Having this control enables the writer to show a relationship between the independent and dependent clause, thus allowing him or her to express complex ideas, such as cause and effect or relationships of time. Therefore, writers who are having difficulty with relative, adverbial, or noun clauses will want to give high priority to reducing these errors in their writing.

Suggestions for Reducing Errors

- Determine whether your errors are with relative, adverbial, or noun clauses by examining your essays or by asking your instructor or a tutor.
- Study specific rules in this unit once you know what your clause errors are.
- Consult an advanced grammar textbook to find a more detailed analysis of dependent clauses if you need a more detailed explanation than this unit provides.
- Read extensively in English. Although you may not notice it at first, reading will help you become more familiar with both independent and dependent clauses and improve your ability to use them correctly in your own writing.

Write answers to the following questions. Share your answers with another student.

1. What are three types of dependent clause errors that writers may make?
2. Why should writers pay particular attention to dependent clause errors?

GRAMMAR JOURNAL ENTRY 6

RELATIVE, ADVERBIAL, AND NOUN CLAUSES

Respond to the following in your grammar journal.

1. What has been your most embarrassing moment? Describe it and explain what made it so painful for you.
2. Scan a magazine or book that you are currently reading. See if you can pick out three dependent clauses on a page. Write them in your grammar journal.

Part A: Relative Clauses

UNDERSTAND COMMON PROBLEMS

This section presents problems that writers commonly encounter with relative clauses. As you study Part A, first take the pre-test to see what you already know. When you finish, check your answers on page 351. Then, carefully study each problem and the examples that illustrate it. Pay particular attention to those problems that correspond to the pre-test questions you had difficulty with. Remember that becoming aware of the types of errors you most often make with relative clauses will increase your chances of avoiding these errors in your writing.

Note: Your instructor may mark this error *rel cl*. Relative clauses are also called adjective clauses.

Pre-test

What Do You Already Know?

Test your ability to recognize and correct errors with relative clauses.

- A** Correct the marked errors. These are examples of the four common problems that are presented in Part A of this unit.

Problem 1 ^{*rel cl*} People live in Florida are used to warm, sunny weather for much of the year.

Problem 2 The students ^{*rel cl*} who their cars were illegally parked will get a ticket.

Problem 3 After college, David wants to find a ^{*rel cl*} job which he will need to use math.

Problem 4 A chemistry experiment ^{rel cl}that I did it in high school gave me the idea that I might want to major in chemistry in college.

B Underline and correct the one relative clause error in each of the following sentences. (The errors are not in any particular order.)

1. The calculus student who her test scores were the highest won a prize.
2. When the semester started, most students did not know the buildings which their classes were located.
3. Students transfer from a two-year college to a university say that it takes time to adjust.
4. One problem that the instructor solved it ended up having several possible answers.

Four Common Problems With Relative Clauses

Incorrect: Feelings of isolation are common among people ^{rel cl}live in new language and cultural environments.

Correct: Feelings of isolation are common among people who (or that) live in new language and cultural environments.

Incorrect: ^{rel cl}There are more than one in three marriages will end in divorce.

Correct: There are more than one in three marriages that (or which) will end in divorce.

Correct: More than one in three marriages will end in divorce.
(No relative clause is needed here.)

Incorrect: I just met the people ^{rel cl}who their house I am planning to rent for the summer.

Correct: I just met the people whose house I am planning to rent for the summer.

Problem 1

The relative clause is missing.

Problem 2

The wrong relative pronoun or the wrong form of it has been used in the relative clause.

Problem 3

The preposition is missing in a relative clause.

Incorrect: Cases have been found ^{rel cl} that even good students resort to cheating in college due to the pressure to get good grades.

Correct: Cases have been found in which even good students resort to cheating in college due to the pressure to get good grades.

Incorrect: Whenever I get into ^{rel cl} a situation which it is hard to make a decision, I try to look at it from different perspectives.

Correct: Whenever I get into a situation in which it is hard to make a decision, I try to look at it from different perspectives.

Correct: Whenever I get into a situation which it is hard to make a decision in, I try to look at it from different perspectives.

Incorrect: The person ^{rel cl} whom I was supposed to return the key is not home.

Correct: The person to whom I was supposed to return the key is not home.

Correct: The person whom I was supposed to return the key to is not home.

Incorrect: The people ^{rel cl} whom I have met them in my class are very friendly.

Correct: The people whom I have met in my class are very friendly.

Incorrect: The schedule ^{rel cl} which I read it online said the train would leave at 8:15.

Correct: The schedule which I read online said the train would leave at 8:15.

Problem 4
A noun or a pronoun has been unnecessarily repeated in a relative clause.

REVIEW GRAMMAR SOLUTIONS FOR RELATIVE CLAUSE ERRORS

Relative clauses are adjective clauses formed with the relative pronouns *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, or *that* or with the relative adverbs *when*, *where*, or *why*. To use relative pronouns correctly, you need to be aware of how they function in a relative clause.

1. *Who*, *that*, and *which* can function as the subject of a relative clause. *Who* refers to people, *that* refers to people and things, and *which* refers only to things.

Examples:

The teacher called out the names of those students who (or that) were absent. (*Who* [or *that*] refers to students and is the subject of the relative clause.)

The book that (or which) was left on the table is no longer there. (*That* [or *which*] refers to the book and is the subject of the relative clause.)

2. *Whom, that, and which* can function as a direct object in a relative clause. *Whom* refers to people, *that* refers to people and things, and *which* refers only to things.

Examples:

The student whom (or that) they have chosen to be editor of the class newspaper does not want the job. (*Whom* [or *that*] refers to the student and is the direct object of *have chosen* in the relative clause. In spoken English, *who* can be used, but it should not be used in formal, written English.)

The gift that (or which) I found will please Samuel. (*That* [or *which*] is the object of *found* and refers to the gift.)

Notes:

- *Whom, that, and which* may be omitted when they function as direct objects if the writer wishes to do so. (The gift I found will please Samuel.)
- In the relative clauses in rules 1 and 2 above, *that* is preferable to *which* in current American English.

3. *Whom and which* can function as the object of a preposition in a relative clause. *Whom* refers to persons and *which* refers to things.

Examples:

The person for whom these theater tickets were reserved never picked them up. (*Whom* is the object of the preposition *for* and refers to the person.)

The history class in which Adela is enrolled requires a term paper. (*Which* is the object of the preposition *in* and refers to the history class.)

4. *Whose* functions as a possessive pronoun in a relative clause and refers to people or things.

Examples:

The person whose books are on the table will be back soon. (*Whose* shows that the books belong to the person.)

Eric fixed my car as well as the car whose transmission was broken. (*Whose* shows that the transmission belongs to the car.)

5. Relative clauses can also be connected to the nouns they modify with the relative adverbs *when, where, and why*.

Examples:

The restaurant where we ate is only open for dinner.

Tell me the reason why you had so much difficulty with the exam.

I will never forget the time when the teacher got mad at us in class.

In the example sentences given so far in this section, the information added to the sentence by the relative clause is essential, meaning that it is necessary to identify the noun or to distinguish the noun from others of the same type. However, if the relative clause adds additional or extra information to the sentence, it is set off by commas. The first is called a **restrictive** relative clause and the second a **nonrestrictive** relative clause. The sentences below contain nonrestrictive relative clauses. In nonrestrictive relative clauses, *that* is not interchangeable with *who*, *whom*, or *which*. Note that sometimes a restrictive relative clause is called *essential*, and a nonrestrictive relative clause is called *nonessential*.

Examples:

My mother, who is 91 years old, lives in a retirement community.

The University of California, which is a public school, has ten campuses.

My math professor, who loves to cook, invited us all to dinner at his house.

Thomas Jefferson, whose home was in Virginia, always loved to return there.

Pepe's restaurant, where we often eat, has an excellent buffet.

My fall schedule, which I arranged very carefully, is not working.

IMPROVE YOUR WRITING STYLE

REDUCING RELATIVE CLAUSES

In rule 2 in this section, you learned that whom, that, and which can be omitted if they function as direct objects. If who, that, or which is a subject and the main verb is to be, the relative clause can be reduced as follows:

1. To a past participle

Long form: The book that was left on the table is no longer there.

Reduced: The book left on the table is no longer there.

2. To a noun

Long form: My math professor, who is a Harvard graduate, is a very strict teacher.

Reduced: My math professor, a Harvard graduate, is a very strict teacher.

3. To a prepositional phrase

Long form: The woman who is in the red car is not wearing a seat belt.

Reduced: The woman in the red car is not wearing a seat belt.

4. To an infinitive

Long form: The packages that are to be sent are on the table.

Reduced: The packages to be sent are on the table.

5. To a participial phrase

Long form: The revised lab manual, which includes six new experiments, has come in.

Reduced: The revised lab manual, including six new experiments, has come in.

Part B: Adverbial Clauses

UNDERSTAND COMMON PROBLEMS

This section presents problems that writers commonly encounter with adverbial clauses. As you study Part B, first take the pre-test to see what you already know. When you finish, check your answers on page 351. Then, carefully study each problem and the examples that illustrate it. Pay particular attention to those problems that correspond to the pre-test questions you had difficulty with. Remember that becoming aware of the types of errors you most often make with adverbial clauses will increase your chances of avoiding these errors in your writing.

Note: Your instructor may mark this error *adv cl.*

Pre-test**What Do You Already Know?**

Test your ability to recognize and correct errors with adverbial clauses.

- A** Correct the marked errors. These are examples of the seven common problems that are presented in Part B of this unit.

Problem 1 Although Henry hates grammar, but he studies it anyway. *adv cl*

Problem 2 We have purchased one of those pens while we like them. *adv cl*

Problem 3 Because of the rain has stopped, we can go on our picnic. *adv cl*

Problem 4 Especially I see shoes, I want to buy them. *adv cl*

Problem 5 While you were at the movies, Alexander called to ask about the weekend. *adv cl*

Problem 6 Some travelers fly business class, because they like the wider seats. *adv cl*

Problem 7 While he will be working in Australia, we will visit him. *adv cl*

- B** Underline and correct the error in each of the following sentences. (The errors are not in any particular order.)

1. While children do not exercise enough, obesity in children has increased.
2. We will text you as soon as we will arrive in town.
3. The man was not allowed to board the plane because of his passport had expired.
4. Matthew promised to complete his part of the group project. As soon as he could.
5. Even though Ron is not a vegetarian, but he prefers not to eat meat.
6. Although the weather has been cool in the past few days hotter weather is expected.
7. Especially Alison enjoys the outdoors, she goes hiking frequently.

Seven Common Problems with Adverbial Clauses

Problem 1

An adverbial clause is connected to an independent clause with both a subordinating conjunction and a coordinating conjunction.

Problem 2

A subordinating conjunction with the wrong meaning has been used in an adverbial clause.

Problem 3

A prepositional phrase has been used instead of a subordinating conjunction in an adverbial clause.

Problem 4

An adverb has been used instead of a subordinating conjunction in an adverbial clause.

Incorrect: ^{adv cl} Even though my mother wants to learn English, but she finds studying it difficult.

Correct: Even though my mother wants to learn English, she finds studying it difficult.

Correct: My mother wants to learn English, but she finds studying it difficult.

Note: In the preceding corrected sentences, note that you have the option of using either a subordinating or a coordinating conjunction but not *both*.

Incorrect: Bob refuses to wear a tie ^{adv cl} while the restaurant requires one.

Correct: Bob refuses to wear a tie even though the restaurant requires one. (In the incorrect sentence, subordinating conjunction of contrast has been used where a subordinating conjunction of concession is needed.)

SELF-HELP STRATEGY: Make sure that the connector you have chosen gives the correct meaning to the sentence. Refer to Item 3 on page 135.

Incorrect: Pierre could not travel to Mexico ^{adv cl} because of his passport had expired.

Correct: Pierre could not travel to Mexico because his passport had expired.

Note: *Because of* is a prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase cannot be used in place of a conjunction to connect two clauses, but it can function as a transition to link one sentence to another. Prepositional phrases commonly used as transitional words are *in addition to*, *because of*, *in spite of*, *in contrast with*, *in contrast to*, and *in comparison with*.

Example:

Dimitri broke his leg while skiing. Because of his accident, he has to use crutches. (*Because of his accident* connects the information in the first sentence to the new information in the following sentence.)

Incorrect: ^{adv cl} Especially my aunt likes hamburgers, we always buy one for her.

Correct: Because my aunt likes hamburgers, we always buy one for her.

Note: *Especially* is an adverb. (*I am especially tired.*)

Problem 5

An adverbial clause
is a fragment.

Problem 6

The adverbial clause
is not followed
by a comma or a
comma has been
used where it is not
needed.

Problem 7

The future tense
has been used in an
adverbial clause
of time.

Incorrect: ^{*adv cl*} While the store was still open, Harriet bought some soft drinks.

Correct: While the store was still open, Harriet bought some soft drinks.
(An adverbial clause is dependent and cannot stand alone as a sentence.)

Incorrect: ^{*adv cl*} While we were on vacation my brother stayed in our house.

Correct: While we were on vacation, my brother stayed in our house.

Incorrect: Marjorie likes Davis, ^{*adv cl*} because it is a small university town.

Correct: Marjorie likes Davis because it is a small university town.

Note: See Grammar Solutions, item 2 for exceptions, such as *although*.

Incorrect: ^{*adv cl*} When we will get home, we will call you.

Correct: When we get home, we will call you.

Incorrect: ^{*adv cl*} After we will have finished dinner, we will go for a drive.

Correct: After we have finished dinner, we will go for a drive.

Note: The future tense is not used in adverbial clauses of time. It can only be used in the independent clause.

REVIEW GRAMMAR SOLUTIONS FOR ADVERBIAL CLAUSE ERRORS

Adverbial clauses are dependent clauses that begin with a subordinating conjunction and show a relationship to the independent (main) clause, such as reason (*because*), concession (*although, even though*), or time (*as, while, when*). *If*-clauses are treated separately in Unit 4, "Conditional Sentences."

- 1. An adverbial clause can be placed before or after the independent clause, usually without changing the meaning of the whole sentence.**

Examples:

Because Kanya is interested in protecting the environment, she recycles paper, plastic, glass, and aluminum.

Kanya recycles paper, plastic, glass, and aluminum because she is interested in protecting the environment.

When the end of the semester is near, students and teachers often begin to feel nervous about final exams.

Students and teachers often begin to feel nervous about final exams when the end of the semester is near.

- 2. Put a comma after a subordinate clause that introduces a sentence.** Do not use a comma before a subordinate clause that follows the independent clause. (Exceptions: *While*, *whereas*, *although*, *even though*, and *though* are usually separated from the independent clause with a comma.)

Examples:

While I was busy registering for my classes and buying my books, my friend Kerry was enjoying her vacation in Canada.

The dog finally stopped barking after his owner came home and fed him.

Our town voted not to ban plastic bags, whereas some towns in our area already have regulations against them.

When I was particularly tired one day, I got angry at my boss.

- 3. Subordinating conjunctions are used according to the meaning the writer wants to convey.**

concession	<i>although, even though, despite the fact that</i>	<u>Although</u> the building looks safe, it has not been checked by the building inspector.
condition	<i>if, even if, unless, when, whenever</i>	<u>If</u> you study hard enough, you should pass the test.
contrast	<i>while, whereas</i>	Some people like coffee, <u>while</u> others prefer tea.
place	<i>where, wherever</i>	<u>Wherever</u> I travel, I usually meet someone who can speak English.
purpose	<i>so that, in order to</i>	My brother booked his flight early <u>so that</u> he could get a good price.
reason	<i>because, since</i>	Jason got a parking ticket <u>because</u> the time on the meter had expired.
result	<i>so . . . that</i>	Hiroshi is <u>so</u> happy about his grade <u>that</u> he is telling everyone.
time or order	<i>after, as soon as, before, when, while, until, whenever, as, as long as</i>	<u>While</u> my sister was working outside, someone called her. The teacher will return our essays <u>as soon as</u> she finishes correcting them.

IMPROVE YOUR WRITING STYLE

CHANGING AND REDUCING ADVERBIAL CLAUSES

You can reduce adverbial clauses to add variety to your sentences.

1. *An adverbial clause beginning with so that or because can be changed to an infinitive phrase when it has the same subject as the independent clause.*

Example:

Maren took good notes so that she could share them with her sick roommate.

Maren took good notes to share them with her sick roommate.

2. *An adverbial clause can be reduced to a participial phrase when it has the same subject as the independent clause.*

Example:

While she was studying, Amy discovered she had not yet read an assigned chapter.

While studying, Amy discovered she had not yet read an assigned chapter.

3. *An adverbial clause can be reduced to a prepositional phrase or an absolute phrase. (An absolute phrase = a noun or pronoun + a present or past participle.)*

Example:

After he finished his lecture, the professor encouraged the students to ask questions.

His lecture finished, the professor encouraged the students to ask questions.

Note: *Do not reduce every adverbial clause but rather use some reduced and some full-length adverbial clauses to provide sentence variety.*

Part C: Noun Clauses

UNDERSTAND COMMON PROBLEMS

This section presents problems that writers commonly encounter with noun clauses. As you study Part C, first take the pre-test to see what you already know. When you finish, check your answers on page 351. Then, carefully study each problem and the examples that illustrate it. Pay particular attention to those problems that correspond to the pre-test

questions you had difficulty with. Remember that becoming aware of the types of errors you most often make with noun clauses will increase your chances of avoiding these errors in your writing.

Note: Your instructor may mark this error *n cl*.

Pre-test

What Do You Already Know?

Test your ability to recognize and correct noun clause errors.

- A** Correct the marked errors. These are examples of the seven common problems that are presented in Part C of this unit.

Problem 1 She got a job ^{*n cl*} so quickly is amazing.

Problem 2 Barry needs ^{*n cl*} to find out his supervisor wants him to proceed on the project.

Problem 3 Christy needs ^{*n cl*} to face up to that she is not prepared for the exam.

Problem 4 Matthew promised ^{*n cl*} that he go to the potluck.

Problem 5 Marcel is not sure ^{*n cl*} what is the assignment for tomorrow.

Problem 6 Her professor prefers ^{*n cl*} that Marta writes a thesis.

Problem 7 The students were surprised. ^{*n cl*} That the exam was going to be on Monday.

- B** Underline and correct the one error in each of the following sentences. (The errors are not in any particular order.)

1. I cannot agree with you just said.
2. Jill wonders what will the next chapter cover.
3. What the question says. The students cannot understand.
4. The researcher said the experiment is a success.
5. He received a scholarship is good news.
6. The professor insists that Paul gets his essay finished by Monday.
7. We are very concerned about that the test yesterday was so difficult.

Problem 1

A noun clause has not been used as a subject of a sentence or as an adjective complement where it is needed.

Problem 2

A noun clause has not been used as an object of a verb or a preposition.

Seven Common Problems with Noun Clauses

An **adjective complement** is a “that” clause which follows a phrase such as “it is necessary, it is unfair, it is common” or a “that” clause which follows an adjective, as in *The mother felt embarrassed that her child was screaming during the movie.*

Incorrect: Famous athletes and entertainers ^{n cl} earn millions of dollars a year seems unfair.

Correct: That famous athletes and entertainers earn millions of dollars a year seems unfair. (Here the noun clause is used as a subject.)

Correct: It seems unfair that athletes and entertainers earn millions of dollars a year. (Here the noun clause is used as an adjective complement and the dummy subject “it” is used as the subject.)

Incorrect: Karen is afraid ^{n cl} lose money in the stock market.

Correct: Karen is afraid that she will lose money in the stock market.
(Also correct: Karen is afraid of losing money in the stock market.)

Incorrect: I dreamed ^{n cl} the midterm difficult.

Correct: I dreamed (that) the midterm would be difficult.

Incorrect: I wonder ^{n cl} this airport provides free Internet access.

Correct: I wonder whether this airport provides free Internet access.

Incorrect: Helen did not agree with ^{n cl} they said.

Correct: Helen did not agree with what they said.

Problem 3

A noun phrase like "the possibility that," "the idea that," or "the fact that" has not been used where it is needed with a noun clause.

a. A noun phrase after a phrasal verb

A **phrasal verb** is a verb plus a preposition or an adverb.

Incorrect: We are concerned about that there will be a food shortage.

Correct: We are concerned about the possibility that there will be a food shortage.

Incorrect: We will just have to put up with that this apartment is noisy.

Correct: We will just have to put up with the reality that this apartment is noisy.

b. A noun phrase when a main verb or an adjective with a preposition requires it

Incorrect: Franklin D. Roosevelt concealed that he could not walk without support.

Correct: Franklin D. Roosevelt concealed the fact that he could not walk without support.

Incorrect: We can no longer dispute that the earth is round.

Correct: We can no longer dispute the theory that the earth is round.

Incorrect: Our teacher is unhappy about that the textbook has not arrived.

Correct: Our teacher is unhappy about the fact that the textbook has not arrived.

Incorrect: She said she is going to Hawaii for spring break.

Correct: She said (that) she was going to Hawaii for spring break.

Correct: She said (that) she would go to Hawaii for spring break.

Incorrect: The author stated she has worked in Mexico City as a nurse ten years ago.

Correct: The author stated (that) she had worked in Mexico City as a nurse ten years ago.

Problem 4

The verb tense in a noun clause in reported speech is incorrect.

Problem 5

A noun clause that is a reported question has been incorrectly formed because either the wrong connecting word or incorrect word order has been used.

Problem 6

The subjunctive form of the verb (base form) has not been used in a noun clause that expresses a demand, recommendation, requirement, advice, or expectation.

Problem 7

The noun clause is a fragment.

a. Errors with the wrong connecting word

Incorrect: The researcher hopes to discover that the function of this chemical is.

Correct: The researcher hopes to discover what the function of this chemical is.

b. Word order errors

Incorrect: The researcher hopes to discover what is the function of this chemical.

Correct: The researcher hopes to discover what the function of this chemical is.

Note: This error is also covered in Unit 8, "Word Order."

Incorrect: His friends recommended John to take the course.

Incorrect: His friends recommended that John takes the course.

Correct: His friends recommended (that) John take the course.

Correct: His friend recommended (that) John should take the course.

Note: The use of "should" in this situation is optional and is more common in British English than in American English.

Incorrect: Pat already told his boss. That the report would be a little late.

Correct: Pat already told his boss (that) the report would be a little late.

Note: Fragments are also covered in Unit 7, "Sentence Structure."

REVIEW GRAMMAR SOLUTIONS FOR NOUN CLAUSE ERRORS

1. Like all clauses, noun clauses contain a subject and a verb. Noun clauses, like single-word nouns or noun phrases, function as subjects of sentences or as objects of verbs or prepositions. They are introduced by the connecting word *that*, or if they are derived from information questions, are introduced by connecting words such as *what*, *why*, *where*, *whether*, or *how*. *Whatever*, *whether*, *how long*, and *how often* are examples of other connecting words.

Examples of noun clauses as subjects:

That calcium strengthens bones is a scientific fact.

That you have graduated makes the whole family proud.

How the experiment was done confuses me.

Examples of noun clauses as objects:

The students have been complaining (that) the room is too cold.

She asked me where I lived.

I am not sure how the experiment was done.

The professor cannot understand why the students failed the test.

The tutor looked at what I had written and made some suggestions.

2. A noun clause can follow an adjective. These structures are called adjective complements.**Examples of adjective complements:**

It is obvious (that) John did not prepare for the meeting.

It was necessary (that) we attend the meeting.

(In the above two examples, the noun clause can also be used as a subject as in *That we attend the meeting was necessary*.)

I am sure (that) you were invited to the party.

3. The connecting word *that* can be omitted when the noun clause is in the object position. Note that omitting *that* may make your writing seem less formal.**Examples:**

On New Year's Eve, the couple announced (that) they were getting married.

I doubt (that) the experiment has been properly designed.

4. Phrasal verbs as well as adjectives that take prepositions must be followed by a noun phrase + *that*, such as *the fact that*, *the idea that*, *the possibility that*, *the notion that*.**Examples:**

The tourists complained about the fact that the tour bus was not air-conditioned.

The mayor is worried about the fact that so many homeless are in her city.

5. Certain verbs must also be followed by a noun phrase + *that*. Such verbs include *accept*, *conceal*, *discuss*, *dispute*, *disregard*, *overlook*, *hide*, and *support*.**Examples:**

The employees resented the fact that their vacation time was cut.

The hikers disregarded the possibility that it might snow.

6. Two main groups of verbs—verbs of indirect speech and verbs of mental activity—are frequently followed by noun clauses.

Common verbs of indirect speech: *admit, announce, claim, complain, confess, declare, explain, hint, inform, mention, tell, remark, report, say, state, swear.*

Common verbs of mental activity: *assume, believe, conclude, decide, discover, doubt, dream, feel, find out, forget, guess, hope, hear, imagine, indicate, know, learn, notice, pretend, question, realize, recall, regret, remember, think, understand.*

a. Noun clauses used with verbs of indirect speech

Examples:

The witness reported (that) he had seen two people.

The professor explained (that) he wanted the report done by May 1.

Note: Some verbs of indirect speech must be followed by an indirect object before the noun clause as in the following examples:

Examples:

The president informed his staff (that) he would be out of town for a week.

She told me (that) she needed help moving into her new apartment.

b. Noun clauses used with verbs of mental activity

Examples:

I have always believed (that) it is beneficial to think positively.

Amir doubts (that) he will be admitted to Harvard Medical School.

7. In noun clauses following verbs of indirect speech, the verb tense in the noun clause changes to past time when the tense of the main verb changes to past.

Examples:

She says (that) she will go to the party.

She said (that) she would go to the party.

Mark says (that) the plane took off ten minutes ago.

Mark said (that) the plane had taken off ten minutes previously.

8. Noun clauses in reported questions are common and may be introduced with question-word, connecting words, such as *who, where, whether, or how*. Note that the word order in these noun clauses is: connecting word + subject + verb. See Unit 8, "Word Order," for a more detailed explanation.

Examples:

She asked me where I lived.

She asked me whether I had Tom's e-mail address.

I do not know what the answer is.

I wonder what the next lecture will cover.

- 9. The base form of the verb is used in a noun clause after verbs expressing an idea, such as a demand, recommendation, requirement, advice, or explanation.** The base form is not affected by tense or number.

Common verbs followed by noun clauses: *ask, advise, beg, demand, forbid, insist, order, prefer, propose, require, recommend, request, suggest, urge.*

Examples:

The board recommended (that) he resign.

The board recommended (that) he should resign. (The use of *should* is more common in British than in American English.)

We suggest (that) Alex be the chairman.

We suggested (that) Alex be the chairman.

IMPROVE YOUR WRITING STYLE

USING *THAT* IN A NOUN CLAUSE

It helps your reader if you include the word that in noun clauses even when technically it is not needed to make the sentence grammatically correct. Note that including the word that is especially helpful in situations in which the noun following the initial verb could also possibly be an object of the verb.

Acceptable: We concluded the experimental design was flawed.

Better: We concluded that the experimental design was flawed.

Acceptable: They found out the problem with the computer was solved.

Better: They found out that the problem with the computer was solved.

Note: For details on omitting *that*, see item 3 on page 141.

Continued on page 144.

IMPROVE YOUR WRITING STYLE (CONT.)

VARIATIONS ON NOUN CLAUSES

Improve your writing style by using variations on noun clauses.

A noun clause used as a subject:

Example:

That he can walk again after his accident is a miracle.

Variation: His being able to walk again after his accident is a miracle.

Variation: For him to be able to walk again after his accident is a miracle.

Variation: His ability to walk again after his accident is a miracle.

A noun clause used as an adjective complement:

Example:

Charles is afraid that he will lose his money.

Variation: Charles is afraid of losing his money.

SO ... THAT, SO MANY ... THAT, AND SO MUCH ... THAT FOR EMPHASIS

To emphasize an adjective or adverb, use so + adjective or adverb. Then add that.

Examples:

Our teacher was so exhausted (adjective) last night that she could not grade our tests.

My new yoga class lasts an hour and a half, but the time passed by so quickly (adverb) that the class was over before I knew it.

To emphasize quantity with a noun, use so many or so much + noun. Then, add that.

Examples:

Biochemistry 17 has so many difficult labs (emphasizes quantity and is used with plural nouns) that students are often reluctant to take the course.

My roommate has so much reading (emphasizes quantity and is used with uncountable nouns) to catch up on that he is going to cancel all social activities for a week.

Be aware of common errors like the following with this construction.

Incorrect: My chemistry book is heavy that I cannot carry it in my backpack.

Incorrect: My chemistry book is heavy in that I cannot carry it in my backpack.

Incorrect: My chemistry book is heavy so that I cannot carry it in my backpack.

Correct: My chemistry book is so heavy that I cannot carry it in my backpack.

PRACTICE WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED

PART A: Relative Clauses

EXERCISE 1

Directions: Fill in each blank with the correct relative pronoun *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which*, or *that*. In some cases, more than one answer is possible.

1. Mark thanked the tutor _____ had worked with him for the whole semester.
2. Dr. Ruiz is the professor _____ economics course I am planning to take next semester.
3. The person with _____ I share a locker is over there.
4. The backpack _____ is on the chair is mine.
5. New York is a city _____ residents tend to be always in a rush.

EXERCISE 2

Directions: Combine each pair of sentences into one sentence, using a relative clause.

Example: The trail guide stayed behind with the hikers. Those hikers were too tired to hike any farther.

The trail guide stayed behind with those hikers who were too tired to hike any farther.

1. Phonetics is a branch of linguistics. It focuses on the sounds of languages.

2. Mark knows the artist. The artist's painting received first prize in the art show.

3. The people were late. We were waiting for them.

4. She borrowed a bicycle. Its tires were slightly flat.

5. Today, Michael plans to do the recording. He was unable to do the recording last week.

6. The student was asked to give a speech at the graduation ceremony. The student got the highest grades in the class.

7. Some bike riders do not stop at stop signs. These bikers may be given either a warning or a ticket.

EXERCISE 3

Directions: Decide if the relative clauses in the following sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I). If the relative clause is incorrect, correct the error.

- I 1. The person ^{with} whom I went to the movies fell asleep during the film.
2. A student who plagiarizes on a paper will get an F on the paper and possibly in the whole course which he wrote the paper.
3. The man whom I met last night and who immigrated to the United States a year ago speaks English well.
4. I wrote a thank-you note to the people whom I visited their home over the holidays.
5. The instructor teaches that course is very well organized.

PART B: Adverbial Clauses

EXERCISE 4

Directions: Fill in the blanks with subordinating conjunctions from the list to create correct adverbial clauses. You may need to use a specific conjunction more than once, and you will not use all of the conjunctions in the list.

after as soon as even though when whereas
 although because so that whenever while

1. The day _____ I received my first midterm back in math, I decided that I had to improve my study habits _____ I would not fail the class.
2. One of the reasons I feel I did poorly, _____ I had studied, was that my roommates had a big, noisy party the night before the exam _____ I was in my room trying to prepare for it.

3. Unfortunately, I joined them. However, _____ the party was over, I tried to study but I really needed more time than I had.
4. The serious students did very well, _____ my friends and I, who had partied too much, placed way below the average on the exam.
5. _____ the final exam counts for 50 percent of the grade and I have only a C average so far, I think I will have to move into the library so that I can stay away from parties.

EXERCISE 5

Directions: Find the adverbial clause error in each of the following sentences and correct it. The first one has been done for you.

1. When my parents ~~will~~ buy me a car, I will not have to ask for rides from my friends.
2. Beverly did not ask her tutor for help. Although she needed it.
3. Even though I like to watch television, but I only watch the news during the week.
4. She cannot get good grades whereas she does not study.
5. Especially I have been attending college, I have become more independent.
6. My car often breaks down, when I really need it.
7. After Roger has cleaned his apartment he will go play tennis.

PART C: Noun Clauses

EXERCISE 6

Directions: Complete the following sentences with a noun clause or adjective complement.

1. The doctor suggested that _____.
2. The instructor observed that _____.
3. I did not understand what _____.
4. Peter's teacher recommended that _____.
5. It is obvious to everyone that _____.
6. _____ bothers me.
7. The department requires that _____.
8. The committee does not know whether _____.
9. The researcher explained that _____.
10. The news reporter stated that _____.

EXERCISE 7

Directions: Decide whether the following sentences are correct (C) or incorrect (I). If a sentence is incorrect, find the error and correct it.

- ___ 1. That the potluck dinner was already over. We were disappointed.
- ___ 2. The school requires that every student takes 15 credits each semester.
- ___ 3. Elizabeth hopes that her grant will be approved soon.
- ___ 4. What are you doing is not my business.
- ___ 5. The magicians did so many tricks amazed the audience.
- ___ 6. Mr. Smith's manager knows him one of the best workers.
- ___ 7. The young mother worries her child get lost.
- ___ 8. Many residents feel that the city has grown too quickly.

___ 9. The students had no idea the answer.

___ 10. The study group could not determine what was the answer.

PART D: Adjective, Noun, and Adverbial Clauses

EXERCISE 8

Directions: Examine the six clause errors that are marked with a star (*) in the following student paragraph. Rewrite each incorrect sentence correctly below the paragraph. The first one has been done for you.

*Some couples are childless have made a decision not to have children. It is clear that this type of family is rapidly growing in the United States. These couples choose to be childless for various reasons. *However, I personally have a hard time understanding people choose to live without children.

Many couples think that today's society is not "a good environment" for children to grow up in. *Other couples think they not have enough time and money to raise children. Still others want to focus on developing their careers rather than on raising children.

For me, having children is one of the most essential parts of life. *Because I have always wanted children. It would be hard for me to view a career as being more important than having a family. I am sure I would feel disappointed with my life when I got older if I did not have children or grandchildren. I understand that the world is overpopulated, but having children is one of our basic instincts. *Although I do not want many children, but I certainly hope to have one or two of my own. I believe that children are our future. Although I recognize that having children is not for everyone, *I recommend that everyone who wants to has children.

1. Some couples who (or that) are childless have made a decision not to have children.

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

EXERCISE 9

Directions: Combine each pair of sentences into one sentence using a relative, noun, or adverbial clause. Follow the example. Note that in some cases more than one correct answer is possible.

Example:

No notes will be allowed during the examination.
 This announcement surprised the students.

The announcement that no notes will be allowed during the examination surprised the students.

OR

The students were surprised that no notes would be allowed during the examination.

OR

Although the announcement surprised the students, no notes will be allowed on the examination.

1. Mark is currently taking chemistry.
 Chemistry is not a requirement for his major.

2. Her grandfather is in a nursing care facility and often gets lonely.
 She tries to visit him at least once a week.

3. Her skis are bright yellow with a purple design.
She just bought them this season.

4. Jackson gets very stressed out at work.
He sometimes asks for a day off to calm down.

5. London is a very old city.
This fact attracts many visitors.

Post-test**What Do You Know Now?**

A Fill in each blank with the correct relative pronoun.

1. On our campus, the student recreation center is the place _____ students like to go to work out.
2. The reason _____ I was late to class was that I missed the bus.
3. The group _____ I worked with on our project met for six hours straight.
4. The student _____ I borrowed the practice test from got an A on the midterm, and I only got a B.
5. The author _____ novel we chose to read in our book club will be visiting our town next month.

6. Former President Bill Clinton, _____ served for two terms, became active in humanitarian issues.
7. There are certain majors _____ are more popular than others.
8. The professor has set new office hours for the times _____ we can go to get help with assignments.

B Find and correct the mistake with the adverbial clause in each sentence.

1. When more Americans can speak Chinese.
2. Many high school students are studying foreign languages; because they can see the benefit of doing so.
3. Although many immigrants would like to learn English, but it is difficult for them to do so if they are working seven days a week.
4. When we will have more adult classes, more parents will start learning English.
5. Especially it is hard for older adults to learn a new language, they often prefer to speak their first language.
6. Because of he wants to get a better job, my neighbor, Mr. Chan, is going to adult school to learn English.

C Underline and correct the one error with a noun clause in each sentence.

1. I wonder what will the instructor cover in the next lecture.
2. The store manager said that she will give me a refund for my defective ink cartridge.
3. The pharmacist advises that Steven takes the medicine with a glass of water.
4. The teacher could not find he was looking for.
5. We cannot forget about that we have to attend Sheila's going-away party.

D Fill in each blank with the correct connecting word for a noun clause.

1. When my roommate called, my mother could not understand _____ she was saying because she talked so fast.
2. _____ he lives in the mountains is a very beautiful, quiet place.
3. It is common knowledge _____ good students like to get good grades.
4. Even though he did so poorly on his presentation, the student did want to know _____ he could do to improve.
5. Carl never thinks about _____ he will pay his bills.
6. Some teachers are convinced _____ students never study.
7. His roommate is uncertain about _____ to go home or stay in town over the holidays.
8. It is necessary _____ we decide very soon when to work on our team project.
9. _____ Einstein was considered a genius has never been questioned.
10. My mechanic recommends _____ I change the oil in my car more often.

E Fill in each blank with a connector to create correct relative, adverbial, or noun clauses. Choose from the list below.

when for example that (3 times) even though because
as which before what

The most difficult class _____⁽¹⁾ I am enrolled in this semester is Japanese 4, the intermediate level. _____⁽²⁾ makes this class particularly hard is the fact that the professor, Dr. Fujimoto, gives so many long homework assignments. _____⁽³⁾, he assigns us 30 new vocabulary words to memorize _____⁽⁴⁾ each class session meets. We also must do the exercises _____⁽⁵⁾ he hands out. As if

that were not enough, to finish the lab assignment, most students must spend three to four hours in the language lab each week, _____⁽⁶⁾ he has not put the lab assignments online. _____⁽⁷⁾ the homework is so time-consuming, many students find that they cannot finish it _____⁽⁸⁾ they have to study for tests in their other classes. However, _____⁽⁹⁾ this class is so difficult, most students realize _____⁽¹⁰⁾ it is an investment upon _____⁽¹¹⁾ advancement in their future careers may well depend.

APPLY WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED TO WRITING

Select a writing topic and follow the steps in Appendix A on page 337.

Topic 1:

Many people believe in the connection between what we eat and our health, as indicated in the often-heard statement, "You are what you eat." Write about one or more foods that you believe are particularly healthful to eat. Then, comment on what you think is important, overall, in maintaining a diet that is good for one's health.



Topic 2:

Write about a current news event. First, summarize the news item. Then, explain why it is interesting or particularly important to you.



Topic 3:

Choose a problem currently facing society that you are interested in, such as homelessness, gangs, drugs, or school stress. Explain what the problem is and its possible causes. Then, suggest some possible solutions.

