Clauses and Sentence Types Resource Sheet

A clause is a group of words that has both a **subject** and a **verb** that agree. Every complete sentence is made up of at least one clause.

> *-**Michael bought** a new computer (One sentence, one clause)*
> *-**Michael bought** a new computer, but **he** still **has** the old one. (One sentence, two clauses)*
> *-Although **he** still **has** his old one, **Michael** now **has** a new computer. (One sentence, two clauses [one dependent, one independent])*

Independent Clause:

An **independent clause** is composed of both a subject and a verb and makes sense by itself. It expresses a complete thought.

> *-**Michael bought a new computer.** (One independent clause)*
> *-**Michael bought a new computer**, but **he still has the old one.** (Two independent clauses [Coordinating conjunctions don't count as part of the clause.])*
> *-Although he still has his old one, **Michael now has a new computer**. (Only the second clause is independent. The first one is dependent. What's that? Keep reading!)*

Dependent (or Subordinate) Clause:

A **dependent clause** is composed of both a subject and a verb but does not make sense by itself. It does not express a complete thought because it has a <u>subordinator</u>.

> *-<u>**Although**</u> **he still has his old one** (Without the independent clause, a dependent clause is a sentence fragment.)*

A **dependent clause** usually begins with a subordinating conjunction, a relative pronoun, or some other word that <u>causes it to become dependent</u>. A dependent clause will make sense only when attached to an independent clause.

> *-**Although he still has his old one** (**Although** is a subordinating conjunction.)*
> *-He still has his old one. (Without the conjunction, the clause becomes independent.)*
> *-Michael now has a new computer **although he still has his old one**. (Combined with an independent clause, the dependent clause makes sense.)*

Dependent clauses can come after, before, or in the middle of the independent clause.

> *-Michael now has a new computer **although he still has his old one**. (Dependent clause after an independent clause)*
> *-**Although he still has his old one**, Michael now has a new computer. (Dependent clause before the independent clause)*
> *-Michael, **although he still has his old one**, now has a new computer. (Dependent clause inside the independent clause)*

How does a clause differ from a phrase?

A **phrase** is a group of words *without a subject-verb* component, used as a single part of speech.

> -*Under the bed* = prepositional phrase working as an adverb
> -*Eating ice cream* = gerund phrase working as a noun
> -*To build a fire* = infinitive phrase working as a noun

*Just remember phrases don't have a subject and verb while clauses always do.

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Simple, Compound, Complex and Compound-Complex Sentences

Now, you can vary your sentence structure (syntax) for more expressive and purposeful writing, using simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

Simple = 1 independent

Compound = 2 independent (joined by a comma and conjunction)

Complex = 1 independent and 1(or more) dependent

Compound-Complex = 2(or more) independent (joined by a comma and conjunction) and 1(or more) dependent

Example Sentences:

> **Simple Sentence** (one independent clause):
>
> > -*We might go to New Orleans on our Christmas vacation.*
>
> **Compound Sentence** (two independent clauses joined by a comma and conjunction):
>
> > -*We might go to New Orleans on our Christmas vacation, but we will definitely go to the Cape this summer.*
>
> **Complex Sentence** (one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses):
>
> > - *We might go to New Orleans on our Christmas vacation because we love to travel.*
>
> ***Compound-Complex Sentence*** *(two independent clauses joined by a comma and a conjunction and one or more dependent clauses) :*
>
> > -*We might go to New Orleans on our Christmas vacation, but we will definitely go to the Cape this summer because we love to travel.*