

# MAIN CLAUSES AND DEPENDENT CLAUSES

## What is a clause?

A clause is a group of words that includes  
a **subject** and a **verb**.

**The grey squirrel** **darted** **up a tree**.



# MAIN/INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

- A clause that can stand alone as a complete sentence because it expresses a complete thought.
- It has:
- A subject (who or what the sentence is about)
- A predicate (a verb and stating something about the subject)

## Examples of main/independent clauses

- ▶ **Mpho loves reading.**
- ▶ Mpho = subject
- ▶ loves reading = predicate
- ▶ **The boys played soccer.**
- ▶ The boys = subject
- ▶ played soccer = predicate
- ▶ **The children listened to the teacher.**
- ▶ The children = subject
- ▶ listened to the teacher = predicate

# DEPENDENT CLAUSE

- ▶ A **dependent (subordinate) clause** cannot stand alone because it does not express a complete thought.
- ▶ It is often introduced by a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun.

## Examples of dependent clauses

- ▶ **Because she loves reading.** (what happened?)

How will it make sense?

- Combine the **dependent clause** with an **independent clause**.
- Example:
- **Mpho is very clever, because she loves reading.**

- ▶ **Although it was raining.** (what happened?)

How will the **dependent clause** make sense?

- Combine the **dependent clause** with an **independent clause**.
- Example:
- **Although it was raining, the boys played soccer.**

- ▶ **Even though they are tired.** (what happened?)

How will it make sense?

- Combine the **dependent clause** with an **independent clause**.
- Example:
- **The children listen to the teacher, even though they are tired.**

# Independent OR Dependent?

▶ We did our homework.

▶ **Independent**

▶ Since you've been gone.

▶ **dependent**

▶ When the mailman arrived.

▶ **Dependent**

▶ She went to the park.

▶ **Independent**

# CLAUSES

@THEBEEBOXCT

THE PART OF SENTENCE  
THAT TELLS YOU SOMETHING

@THEBEEBOXCT

**INDEPENDENT CLAUSE**  
MAIN CLAUSE

@THEBEEBOXCT

**DEPENDENT CLAUSE**  
EXTRA INFORMATION

@THEBEEBOXCT

CAN STAND ON ITS OWN

@THEBEEBOXCT

CANNOT STAND ON ITS  
OWN

@THEBEEBOXCT

SUBJECT + VERB + OBJECT

@THEBEEBOXCT

SUBJECT + VERB

@THEBEEBOXCT

**SIMPLE SENTENCE**

@THEBEEBOXCT

ADDS TO THE VERB OR NOUN  
IN THE SENTENCE

@THEBEEBOXCT

USES CONJUNCTIONS  
FOR, AND, NOR, BUT, YET ,SO

@THEBEEBOXCT

USES SUBORDINATING  
CONJUNCTIONS  
(COMMA)

@THEBEEBOXCT

THE LITTLE BOY PLAYED IN THE  
PARK AND HE FELL IN THE SAND.

@THEBEEBOXCT

THE LITTLE BOY, WHO PLAYED IN  
THE PARK, FELL IN THE SAND.

@THEBEEBOXCT

## Quick Tip:

- ▶ If a clause **makes sense** as a full sentence, it is a **main/independent clause**.
- ▶ If it leaves you asking "What happened?" it is **dependent**.

# Activity:

**Underline the main clause and circle the dependent clause.**

1. Because I studied hard, I passed the test.
2. The teacher smiled when the learners completed their work.
3. Before the bell rang, everyone packed their bags.
4. We stayed inside because it was cold.
5. Although she was tired, she finished her homework.
6. If you practise every day, you will improve.
7. Since the power went out, we used candles.
8. The baby cried until her mother arrived.
9. After the game ended, the players celebrated.
10. I will call you when I get home.

**Identify the Main/Dependent Clause. Write M if the clause is a Main Clause or D if it is a Dependent Clause.**

1. Although it was late \_\_\_\_\_
2. We enjoyed the picnic \_\_\_\_\_
3. If you work hard \_\_\_\_\_
4. The dog barked loudly \_\_\_\_\_
5. Because she was ill \_\_\_\_\_
6. The children played outside \_\_\_\_\_
7. When the rain stopped \_\_\_\_\_
8. My father cooked dinner \_\_\_\_\_
9. Since the shop was closed \_\_\_\_\_
10. They watched a movie \_\_\_\_\_

Complete each sentence by adding a suitable **main clause** or **dependent clause**.

1. Although it was raining, \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ because I forgot my homework.
3. If you listen carefully, \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ when the teacher entered the classroom.
5. Since the holidays have started, \_\_\_\_\_.

# Memorandum:

**Underline the main clause and circle the dependent clause.**

1. **Dependent:** Because I studied hard | **Main:** I passed the test.
2. **Main:** The teacher smiled | **Dependent:** when the learners completed their work.
3. **Dependent:** Before the bell rang | **Main:** everyone packed their bags.
4. **Main:** We stayed inside | **Dependent:** because it was cold.
5. **Dependent:** Although she was tired | **Main:** she finished her homework.
6. **Dependent:** If you practise every day | **Main:** you will improve.
7. **Dependent:** Since the power went out | **Main:** we used candles.
8. **Main:** The baby cried | **Dependent:** until her mother arrived.
9. **Dependent:** After the game ended | **Main:** the players celebrated.
10. **Main:** I will call you | **Dependent:** when I get home.

**Identify the Main/Dependent Clause. Write M if the clause is a Main Clause or D if it is a Dependent Clause.**

1. D
2. M
3. D
4. M
5. D
6. M
7. D
8. M
9. D
10. M

Complete each sentence by adding a suitable **main clause** or **dependent clause**. (Possible Answers)

1. Although it was raining, **we continued with the match.**
2. **I apologised to the teacher** because I forgot my homework.
3. If you listen carefully, **you will understand the lesson.**
4. **The learners became quiet** when the teacher entered the classroom.
5. Since the holidays have started, **my family is spending more time together.**