



## Clauses

There are two main types of clauses a sentence can have: independent and dependent.

### Independent Clauses

Independent clauses have a subject and a verb and can stand alone. They make sense by themselves without additional information or clauses.

**Example:** Jim studied in the Sweet Shop for his chemistry quiz.

This is an independent clause because it has both a subject (Jim) and a verb (studied), and it can stand alone without the aid of another clause.

**Example:** I ran.

While short, this is also an independent clause because it has a subject (I) and verb (ran) and can stand alone without the aid of another clause.

### Dependent Clauses

Dependent clauses also contain a subject and verb, but they cannot stand alone. They require additional information to make sense.

**Example:** When Jim studied in the Sweet Shop for his chemistry quiz . . .

What happened when he studied? The thought is incomplete.

### Subordinating Conjunctions

Dependent clauses are indicated by the marker words called subordinating conjunctions that start them. Some common marker words are the following: after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, to, since, though, unless, until, whatever, when, whenever, whether, and while.

### Joining Clauses

Dependent clauses can be added to a sentence using a comma, and multiple dependent clauses can be added to a single independent clause. However, joining two independent clauses requires specific methods.

### Coordinating Conjunctions

Remember the coordinating conjunctions with the acronym FANBOYS: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So. Put one of these words at the beginning of an independent clause to connect it to an independent clause that comes before it.

**Example:** It's nice out right now, but it might get cold later.

**Note:** When connecting two independent clauses, you must place a comma before the coordinating conjunction.

## Semicolons

Independent clauses can also be connected with a semicolon. The semicolon is a punctuation mark that indicates that two complete thoughts are related by topic. Semicolons function in much the same way that coordinating conjunctions do.

**Example:** It's nice out right now; it might get cold later.

Semicolons can also be used in a list that contains commas to help add a sense of clarity. In this context, the semicolon supersedes the commas to break apart the list.

**Example:** I bought shiny, red apples; firm, ripe green pears; and sweet juicy grapes.

Using a variety of independent and dependent clauses in a sentence can add variety and detail to a piece of writing.

## Need more information or assistance?

Schedule an appointment with the [Excel Multiliteracy Center](#). We are here to provide one-on-one and group assistance to any and all UCCS students!