

Dependent Clauses

A *dependent clause* is also known as a *subordinate clause*. A dependent clause cannot stand as a complete sentence on its own. When standing alone, it is just considered a sentence fragment. It “depends” on an independent clause to complete its meaning. The following are examples of dependent clauses:

Before I left the house this morning, I ate breakfast.

When I arrived at the building, I noticed that no one was there yet.

- Here is an example of a dependent clause found at the end of a sentence:

I always enjoy munching on popcorn while I am at the movies.

Note: Often dependent clauses will start with the following words: after, although, as, because, before, even though, if, though, unless, until, when, whenever, and while.

There are three ways to connect independent clauses:

1. Comma + Conjunction

- Combine two independent clauses by using a comma before a coordinating conjunction. The seven coordinating conjunctions are: *and*, *but*, *for*, *or*, *nor*, *so*, and *yet*.

Mary went to the grocery store this afternoon, and she purchased food for tonight’s dinner.

Tom didn’t have enough time to finish his exam, for his class was only an hour long.

Semicolon 2.

Combine two independent clauses by using a semicolon between them.

Mary went to the grocery store this afternoon; she purchased food for tonight's dinner.

Tom didn't have enough time to finish his exam; his class was only an hour long.

3. Two Sentences

Combine two independent clauses by creating two separate sentences.

Mary went to the grocery store this afternoon. She purchased food for tonight's dinner.

Tom didn't have enough time to finish his exam. His class was only an hour long.

There are two ways to form complex sentences:

- ◆ To connect a dependent clause to the beginning of a sentence, just add a comma before the independent clause:

During the semester, I always have several papers to write.

Knowing that she didn't have time to go, she kindly declined the invitation.

- ◆ To connect a dependent clause to the end of the sentence, just add it on after the independent clause without a comma:

My mom always hangs her keys by the door when she gets home.

I always enjoy munching on popcorn while I'm at the movies.