

# 18 Multi-clause sentences: Complex

## What are complex sentences?

Some multi-clause sentences contain one main clause and at least one subordinate clause. These are also known as complex sentences.

The main clause and subordinate clause in complex sentences are joined together by subordinating conjunctions, such as: **after, although, because, before, if, since, as, unless, when, whether, until, though** and **whereas**.

Some subordinating conjunctions are more than one word, such as: **as soon as, so that, as long as, in order to** and **provided that**.

## How do they work?

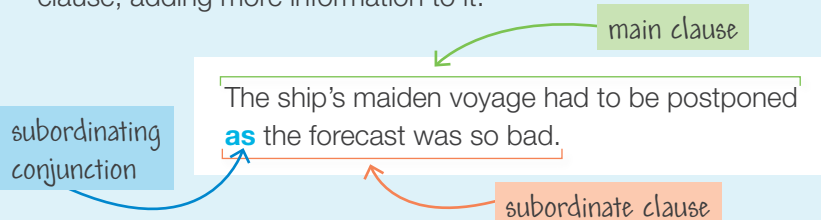
Main clauses can make sense on their own. Remember a clause is a group of words that work together as a unit with a verb as its headword.

The ship's maiden voyage had to be postponed

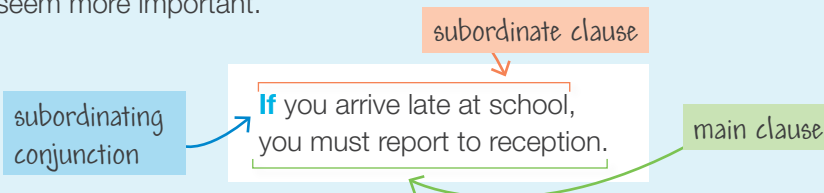
A subordinate clause does not make sense on its own.

as the forecast was so bad.

However, when put together, the subordinate clause supports the main clause, adding more information to it.



In some multi-clause sentences, the subordinate clause comes before the main clause. This can make the information in the subordinate clause seem more important.



Betty could see the boat in the distance, although it didn't seem to be getting any nearer.

 Activity 1

Look at the clauses in the table below. Decide whether each is a main clause or a subordinate clause and tick the correct box. The first one has been done for you.

	Main clause	Subordinate clause
you can't see that film at the cinema	✓	
provided that we have enough time		
since you're both still far too young		
Victoria drank her coffee carefully		
in order to avoid her sensitive tooth		

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 Activity 2

Complete the sentences below by writing a subordinate clause after the main clause. Remember that the subordinate clause should start with a subordinating conjunction. The first one has been done for you.

- a) You need to put the car in the garage since it might rain this afternoon.
- b) Do please invite your friends round to tea .....
- c) Of course you can go to the bowling alley tomorrow .....
- d) Adjoa loved that film .....

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 Activity 3

A subordinate clause can go at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a sentence. Write a subordinate clause in the gap in each of these sentences.

- a) When Grandpa comes to stay, \_\_\_\_\_,  
we will make him welcome.
- b) \_\_\_\_\_,  
do remember to tell him to wipe his feet.
- c) You can certainly go out to play soccer \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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