



CHECKPOINT ENGLISH -1

Good writers will make sure that their writing contains a mixture of sentence types that are appropriate to the tone and purpose of their writing.

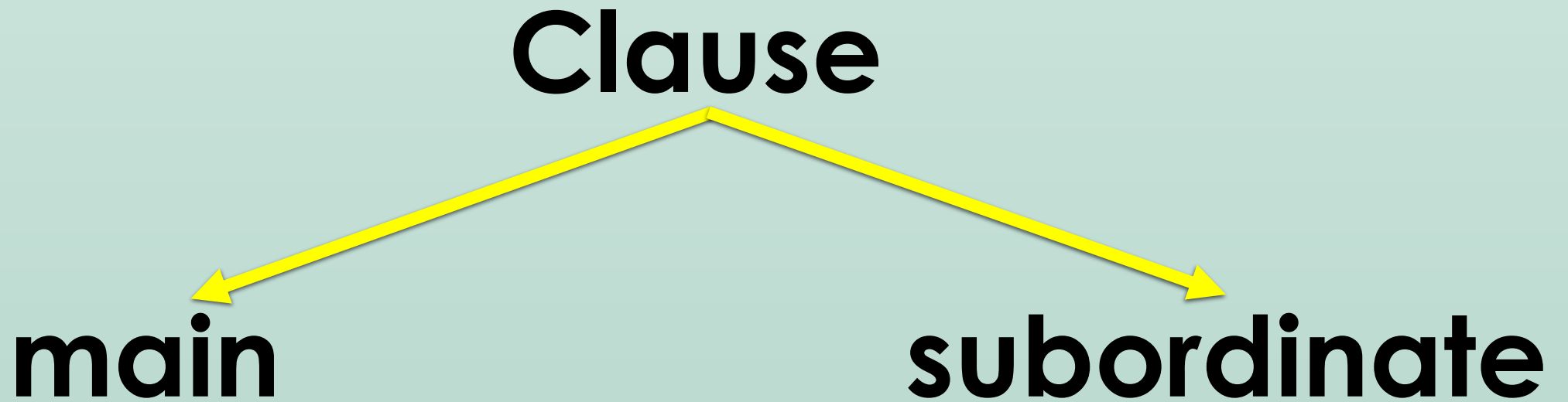
Phrase

- A phrase is a group of words which does not contain a finite or main verb;

Example;

- The lion, *lying quietly in the bushes*, seemed completely harmless.
- The words in italics are phrase which describes the lion.
- However, they would not make complete sense if used on their own.

Clause: is a group of words which does contain a *finite verb*.



Main clause: is a single unit which can stand on its own and make complete sense.

- Juan hurried to school.

Subordinate clause: does not make complete sense on its own.

- because he had overslept and missed his bus
- Juan hurried to school because he had overslept and missed his bus.
- In this sentence, although the subordinate clause provides further information about why Juan was hurrying it does not make a sense to a reader without the main clause which comes before it.

Simple sentence

- A sentence that contains just **one main clause** is known as a simple sentence.

Compound clause

- A sentence containing two or more main clauses joined by a conjunction is known as a compound sentence.
- Example: Juan overslept and then he missed his bus to school.

Complex sentence

- A sentence which contains mixture of **main** and **subordinate** clauses is known as a complex sentence.
- Example;
- **Juan missed the bus**, which he hoped to catch to bus, and then had to run all the way to get there before the bell rang.
- Usually, complex sentences need conjunctions to link the different clauses together.

Forming complex sentences

Read and consider the following sentences.

- 1 *Amber was late for school because she had forgotten to set her alarm clock.*

In this sentence, the main clause is *Amber was late for school* and the subordinate clause is *she had forgotten to set her alarm clock* (the subordinate clause does not make sense on its own as it is **dependent** on the main clause). The word *because* is a conjunction that joins the two clauses together.

- 2 *The chest, which contained all the pirates' gold, was buried beneath the tallest tree on the island.*

In this sentence, the main clause is *The chest ... was buried beneath the tallest tree on the island* and the subordinate clause is *which contained all the pirates' gold*. This is joined to the main clause by the relative pronoun *which*.

Remember: clauses are joined by **conjunctions** and **relative pronouns** (such as *who, that, which*) – they are *not* joined by putting a comma between them. This is not one of the functions of a comma!

In your own writing, you should try to vary the types of sentences you use in order to give variety to your expression – too many simple sentences soon become monotonous. As a general rule, the more complicated your ideas are, the more you are likely to use lengthy sentences. However, short sentences can be very effective as a way to make or emphasise a point. Good writers will make sure that their writing contains a mixture of sentence types that are appropriate to the tone and purpose of their writing.

Exercise: Joining sentences

In each of the five examples that follow, combine the pairs or groups of short sentences into one longer sentence. You can leave out words and alter the wording where necessary. Try not to rely too much on using simple conjunctions such as *and*.

- 1 One morning I went for a walk. It had rained hard earlier. There were deep puddles in the roads. The traffic was moving very slowly.
- 2 My school is to be found in the busiest part of the town. It is a brand new building with a lot of windows. It is a very attractive building.
- 3 My mother works very hard. She gets up very early in the morning. She makes breakfast for all the family. She goes to work when she has done this.
- 4 We had been walking for the whole day. It seemed as if our hike was never going to end. The forest became thicker and thicker. At last we saw the campsite in a clearing ahead of us.
- 5 Maria left home very early in the morning. She drove her car as quickly as she could. She had a very long way to travel. Her best friend's wedding was taking place that afternoon.