

A complex sentence is a sentence with at least one dependent clause (subordinating clause). The dependent clause is introduced by either a subordinate conjunction such as *although* or *because*, or a relative pronoun such as *who* or *which*.

A dependent clause (also embedded clause, subordinate clause) cannot stand alone as a sentence. A dependent clause is usually attached to an independent clause. Although a dependent clause contains a subject and a predicate, it sounds incomplete when standing alone. Some grammarians use the term *subordinate clause* as a synonym for *dependent clause*, but in the majority of grammars, *subordinate clause* refers only to adverbial dependent clauses.

A conjunction is a part of speech that connects two words, phrases or clauses together. This definition may overlap with that of other parts of speech, so what constitutes a "conjunction" should be defined for each language. In general, a conjunction is an invariable grammatical particle, and it may or may not stand between the items it conjoins. The definition can also be extended to idiomatic phrases that behave as a unit with the same function as a single-word conjunction (*as well as*, *provided that*, etc.).

Subordinating conjunctions, also called subordinators, are conjunctions that introduce a dependent clause. The most common subordinating conjunctions in the English language include the following: *after*, *although*, *as much as*, *as long as*, *as soon as*, *because*, *before*, *if*, *in order that*, *lest*, *since*, *so that*, *than*, *that*, *though*, *unless*, *until*, *when*, *whenever*, *where*, *wherever*, *whether*, and *while*. Complementizers can be considered to be special subordinating conjunctions that introduce complement clauses (e.g., "I wonder *whether* he'll be late. I hope *that* he'll be on time"). Some subordinating conjunctions (*although*, *before*, *until*, *while*), when used to introduce a phrase instead of a full clause, become prepositions with identical meanings.

In many verb-final languages, subordinate clauses *must precede* the main clause on which they depend. the conjunction comes from the Latin root to intervene. The equivalents to the subordinating conjunctions of non-verb-final languages such as English are either

- *clause-final conjunctions* (e.g. in Japanese), or
- *suffixes* attached to the verb and *not* separate words^[2]

Such languages in fact often lack conjunctions as a part of speech because:

1. the form of the verb used is formally nominalised and cannot occur in an independent clause
2. the clause-final conjunction or suffix attached to the verb is actually formally a marker of case and is also used on nouns to indicate certain functions. In this sense, the subordinate clauses of these languages have much in common with postpositional phrases.

Coordinating conjunctions, also called coordinators, are conjunctions that join two or more items of equal syntactic importance. It is often stated that the seven words *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet*, and *so* are the only coordinating conjunctions; however, *for*, *so*, and *yet* are not co-ordinating conjunctions, and various others are used, including *whilst* and *now*.

Here is a quick precis of some of the co-ordinating conjunctions in English:

- **and:** used to connect words, phrases, or clauses
- **but:** indicates a contrast or exception
- **or:** presents opinions, alternates, or substitutes for ideas of equal importance
- **nor:** presents an alternate negative idea

A relative pronoun is a pronoun that marks a relative clause within a larger sentence. It is called a relative pronoun because it relates to the word that it modifies and is not specific . In English, relative pronouns are *who*, *whom*, *which*, *whose*, and *that*.

A relative pronoun links two clauses into a single complex clause. It is similar in function to a subordinating conjunction. Unlike a conjunction, however, a relative pronoun stands in place of a noun. Compare:

(1) *This is a house. Jankie built this house.*

(2) *This is the house that Jankie built.*

Sentence (2) consists of two clauses, a main clause (*This is the house*) and a relative clause (*that Jack built*). The word *that* is a relative pronoun. Within the relative clause, the relative pronoun stands for the noun phrase it references in the main clause

(its antecedent), which is one of the arguments of the verb in the relative clause. In the example, the argument is *the house*, the direct object of *built*. Note the word "that" appears twice in the prior sentence, but the first is a demonstrative pronoun.

Other arguments can be relativised using relative pronouns:

Subject: *Hunter is the boy who kissed Monique.*

Indirect object: *Hunter is the boy to whom Monique gave a gift.*

Adpositional complement: *Jack built the house in which I now live.* (and similarly with prepositions and prepositional phrases in general, eg *These are the walls in between which Jack ran.*)

Possessor: *Jack is the boy whose friend built my house.*

In some languages, such as German and Latin, which have noun declensions, the relative pronoun will often agree with its antecedent in gender and number, while the case may indicate its relationship with the verb in the relative clause. In other languages, the relative pronoun is an invariable word. The words used as relative pronouns are often words which originally had other functions: for example, the English *which* is also an interrogative word. This suggests that relative pronouns might be a fairly late development in many languages. Some languages, like Welsh, do not have relative pronouns. In English, different pronouns are sometimes used if the antecedent is a human being, as opposed to a non-human or an inanimate object (as in *who/that*).

- a. *This is a bank. This bank accepted my identification.*
- b. *She is a bank teller. She helped us open an account.*

With the relative pronouns, sentences (5) and (6) would read like this:

- a. *This is the bank that accepted my identification.*
- b. *She is the bank teller who helped us open an account.*

In sentences (7) and (8), the words *that* and *who* are the relative pronouns. The word *that* is used because the bank is a thing; the word *who* is used because 'she' is a person.

Exercise

Make a complex sentence from each of the following pairs of sentences

1. Moslem cannot eat or drink at all in the day time during Ramadhan.
Moslem practice fasting every year.
2. People cannot eat beef.
People practice the Hindu religion.
3. A story about a deadly Javanese dance.
I read the story in the newspaper.
4. Halley's comet will not return for seventy five years.
The last appearance of it was in 1989.
5. On Thanksgiving people travel great distances to be with their families.
Americans eat the same food that the Pilgrims ate on Thanksgiving.