Independent and Subordinate Clauses

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE (IC)
Definition: A clause that can stand alone as a single sentence. It follows the basic pattern of Subject + Verb.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Clause (IC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ice cream melted in the sun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE (SC)
Definition: A clause that cannot stand alone; it has to connect to an independent clause (IC) to form a sentence. It follows the pattern of Subordinating Conjunction + Subject (S) + Verb (V).

Subordinating Conjunctions (Sub.): after, although, as, as if, because, before, even though, if, in order that, rather than, since, so that, than, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whether, while

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Clause (IC)</th>
<th>Subordinate Clause (SC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ice cream melted in the sun</td>
<td>so that it ran down my hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S V</td>
<td>Sub. S V</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Note: As you can see, "so that it ran down my hand" is not a sentence on its own even though it contains a subject and verb. It is a subordinate clause.
- Do not confuse subordinate clauses with phrases that begin with subordinate conjunctions. A clause has a subject and a verb. A phrase does not have a subject and verb together; it cannot stand alone as a sentence. Note the differences below:

  Subordinate Clause: Because I love swimming, I swim every day.
  Phrase: Because of my school debt, I have to work extra hours.

WAYS TO PUNCTUATE CLAUSES:
Independent Clause (IC) + Independent Clause (IC)
1) IC; IC.
2) IC; IC
3) IC, for/and/nor/or/but/yet/so IC

Independent Clause (IC) + Subordinate Clause (SC)
1) IC SC. (no comma when SC is after IC)
2) SC, IC.
3) IC SC, for/and/nor/or/but/yet/so IC.