

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.

<u>Independent Clause (IC)</u>		
The ice cream	melted	in the sun.
<i>Subject</i>	<i>Verb</i>	

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

<u>Independent Clause (IC)</u>		<u>Subordinate Clause (SC)</u>
The ice cream	melted in the sun	so that it ran down my hand.
<i>S</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>Sub. S V</i>

- 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.
Sub. S V

Phrase: Because of my school debt, I have to work extra hours.
Sub. Prep. Phrase

WAYS TO PUNCTUATE CLAUSES:

Independent Clause (IC) + Independent Clause (IC)

- 1) IC. IC.
- 2) IC; IC
- 3) IC, *for/and/nor/or/but/yes/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/yes/so* IC.