

When we subordinate, we make one thing dependent upon another; when writing, that means we create a sentence with an independent section and a dependent section.

Clause = a group of related words with its own subject and verb

Gwelma was elated whenever she went to the movies.

Gwelma was elated = independent clause [with a period, the independent clause would make a clear sentence]

whenever she went to the movies = dependent clause [the dependent clause does not make sense by itself; it depends upon—or is subordinate to—the independent clause for its meaning]

Whenever Gwelma went to the movies, she was elated. If the sentence begins with the dependent clause, we normally place a comma at the end of it.

Actually, there are **three types of dependent clauses**:

Adjective clauses (aka, “who, which, that”):

- A group of words usually beginning with who, which, or that; modifies the noun just before it.

The fellow **who is standing next to the laminating machine** might be Gwelma’s father.

Gwelma, **who used to remind me of Freddy or Jason**, is now a model citizen.

These are the times **that try men’s souls**.

—Thomas Paine

The Head Nurse, **who was standing by a switchboard at the other end of the room**, pressed down a little lever.

—Aldous Huxley

Here are the most common connectives (aka, relative pronouns) used to form adjective clauses:

that	what	whatever	which	whichever
who	whoever	whom	whomever	whose

* If the adjective clause is essential information—in order to identify the subject—we call it a “restrictive adjective clause” and we don’t use commas to set it off from the rest of the sentence; if the adjective clause isn’t essential information, then we call it a “non-restrictive adjective clause” and we use commas to set it off . . . note the first two sentences above.

Adverb clauses (aka, “because, although, when”):

- A group of words beginning with connectives such as because, when, and although; often modifies the verb near it.

When Gwelma made faces, I ran away.

The two teams continued to play **until the referee blew her whistle**.

He looked me over **as though he were examining a prize poodle**.

—Richard Wright

Although Guido was expelled from pre-school, he did not become a criminal.

Here are some of the connectives used to form adverb clauses:

after	although	as
as if	as long as	as though
because	before	even if
even though	if	if only
in order that	now that	once
rather than	since	so that
than	that	though
till	unless	until
when	whenever	where
whereas	wherever	while

Noun clauses (aka, “it substitution”):

- A group of words beginning with connectives such as whoever, whatever, or that; acts like a giant noun and can be substituted with “it”.
- Most of us are less familiar with noun clauses, so here is a trick: start the sentence with “The fact that”

The fact that it took me three hours to complete the assignment made no difference to Mom.

That my family life is difficult did not soften my teacher’s attitude.

We can take **whatever Gwelma dishes out**.

Whoever ate Gordy’s birthday cake will spend time in prison.

I can dance **whatever you can dance**.

I got **what I wanted from Gordy’s birthday cake**.

Here are the most common connectives used to form noun clauses:

that	what	whatever	whoever
the fact that	how	why	whomever

*Beware of “that”

Gwelma needs to ride *that* bicycle. [pointing pronoun]

Gwelma now rides the bicycle *that her brother worships*. [adjective clause]

Guido is furious *that his sister has stolen his prize bicycle*. [adverb clause]

That his sister has expropriated his prize bicycle infuriates Guido. [noun clause]

Subordinating connectives listed by function:

1) Specifying Location

where wherever

2) Indicating Time Relationships

after before until
as once when
as long as since whenever
as soon as till while

3) Showing Manner, Degree, or Similarity

as insofar as more . . . than
as . . . as less than not so . . . as
as if less . . . than so . . . (that)
as though like than
inasmuch as more than to the extent that

4) Revealing Cause and Result

as in order that so . . . that since
because now that so (that)
considering that once in that

5) Stating Conditions

assuming that provided (that) provided that
if unless
lest whether or not

6) Making Contrasts

albeit however whatever
although no matter how whereas
even though no matter what while
even if though