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Clause islands

Find the subject, verb and object, and spot clauses that make sense on their own.

1 Learn



An **independent clause** is like an island: it stands on its own and makes sense. It has a **subject** and a **verb**, and often an **object**.

The dog
subject: who does it

chased
verb: the action

the ball.
object: what it's done to

The dog chased the ball.

Worked example: which clause can stand alone?

When the bell rang, the children lined up.

1. Find the verbs: **rang** and **lined up**. Two verbs, so two clauses.
2. *When the bell rang* starts with **when**. On its own it leaves you waiting: "When the bell rang… what?" It can't stand alone.
3. *the children lined up* makes sense on its own. It's the **independent clause**.

Flip's tip: clauses that start with **because**, **when**, **if** or **although** usually can't stand alone. They need an independent clause to lean on.

Warm up: write **S** under the subject, **V** under the verb and **O** under the object.

Mia kicked the ball.

The cat ate my sandwich.

Grown-ups: ask "Who is doing it?" (subject) and "What is it being done to?" (object). Not every clause has an object: "Sam laughed" is still complete.

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2 Try it together a child and a grown-up, about 10 minutes



Act it out

You need: a few soft toys or everyday things (a sock, a cushion, a spoon), this sheet and a pencil.

1. The grown-up acts out a short sentence with the toys and says it: *"Teddy pushes the cushion."*
2. The child points to who does it (the **subject**) and what it's done to (the **object**), and says the verb.
3. Swap roles. Then write your three best sentences in the table.

Sentence	Subject	Verb	Object

Grown-ups: try swapping the subject and object ("The cushion pushes Teddy!"). It shows how the meaning changes.

3 Practise

A. Underline the **subject**, ring the **verb** and draw a box round the **object**.

1. Leo painted the fence.
2. The wind shook the windows.
3. My sister reads comics.
4. Our class planted three trees.

B. Tick the clauses that can stand on their own.

because it was raining	☐	The river flooded.	☐
when we got home	☐	Sam laughed.	☐
if you finish early	☐	The owl hooted loudly.	☐

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C. Each line has two independent clauses run together. Draw a line **/** where the first clause ends.

1. The sun came out we went to the beach.
2. Ava found a shell it was shaped like a spiral.
3. The bus was late Leo missed the start of the film.

D. Swap the subject and the object. Write the new sentence, then say how the meaning changes.

1. The dog chased the cat.

2. The goalkeeper caught the ball.

Challenge

Sam says, "*Because the shop was closed.* is a full sentence. It has a subject (the shop) and a verb (was)." Is he right? Explain, and make it into a full sentence.

I can... Tick when you can.

- [ ] find the subject, verb and object
- [ ] tell if a clause makes sense on its own
- [ ] find where one clause ends and the next begins