

Adverb Clauses

Dependent clauses that function as adverbs are usually easy to spot because they are introduced by special words called **subordinating conjunctions**. Listed below are some common subordinating conjunctions that introduce adverb clauses. For a complete list, see Chapter 16.

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|---------|----------|
| after | before | so that | when |
| although | if | than | whenever |
| as (as if, as though) | once | unless | wherever |
| because | since | until | while |



A word can function as more than one part of speech. Many words can be subordinating conjunctions or prepositions, depending upon how they are used in a sentence. A preposition is followed by its object—a noun or pronoun and any modifiers. A subordinating conjunction is followed by a clause—a subject and a verb.

prepositional phrase

I studied *until dawn*.

clause

I studied *until the sun rose*.

Adverb clauses function like single-word adverbs. They usually modify verbs, but they can also modify adjectives and adverbs.

Adverb clause modifying the verb:

adverb clause → verb

Since the chairman was absent, I ran the meeting.

Adverb clause modifying an adjective:

adjective adverb clause

Hungry *because we hadn't eaten since breakfast,* we stopped at the roadside diner.

Adverb clause modifying an adverb:

adverb adverb clause

My brother works harder *than I do.*

Adverb clauses can appear at the beginning or end of a sentence, and they tell the following:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| When: | <i>While Lucy cleared the table,</i> Danny washed the dishes. |
| Where: | <i>Wherever you lead,</i> I will follow. |
| Why: | I stayed late <i>because he needed my help.</i> |
| How: | He cried <i>as though his heart would break.</i> |
| To what degree: | He ran <i>as far as he could.</i> |

Adverb clauses exhibit two important characteristics:

- Adverb clauses always begin with a subordinating conjunction.

SC

Because I am tired, I cannot think clearly.

- Adverb clauses can usually change position in a sentence without changing the meaning.

AC

When I saw his face, I wept with joy.

AC

I wept with joy *when I saw his face.*

PRACTICE SET 7-1

Directions: In the sentences below, underline the adverb clauses.

Example: If you follow the map, you will find the buried treasure.

1. Crystal did not slow down although the light had turned yellow.
2. Reuben runs faster than I do.
3. Because the fire continued to burn, the firefighters had to call for assistance.

4. He stared at me as if he knew me.
5. I will not answer him until he puts the question in writing.
6. Our sales are sure to decline because the interest rates have risen so quickly.
7. When the stock market crashed, many wealthy people experienced poverty for the first time.
8. Worried because I had not heard from him, I tried to reach him on his cell phone.
9. The Civil War began after the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter in 1861.
10. J. K. Rowling was on welfare before she published the first Harry Potter book.

PRACTICE SET 7-2

Directions: Indicate whether the words in boldface are prepositional phrases or clauses.

Examples:

After the race, the runners needed water.

prepositional phrase

After Marnie left, we all voted on the issue.

clause

1. You must turn in your work **before you leave class.** _____
2. You must turn in your work **before Monday.** _____
3. She has been unemployed **since June.** _____
4. She has been unemployed **since she lost her sales job.** _____
5. **Until I got my test results,** I was worried about my health. _____
6. **Until last week,** I was worried about my health. _____
7. I will meet you **after the ceremony.** _____
8. I will meet you **after the ceremony ends.** _____
9. **Before the movie,** we went out to dinner. _____
10. **Before we went to the movie,** we went out to dinner. _____