



Independent Clause

To create an independent sentence, we need two main elements- the subject and the verb. The subject is the doer of the action, whom we are talking about. The subject must answer the question: “who or what is doing the action?”

The dog chased the cat.

subject verb object

What is chasing the cat? The dog

My friend ran.

subject verb

Who ran? My friend

The verb tells us what the subject is doing. They answer the questions: “what did/will the subject do? What about the subject?” There are two main types of verbs transitive and intransitive verbs. Intransitive verbs don’t need an object to make a complete idea. They can stand alone. In the sentence:

My friend ran.

subject verb

What did my friend do? She ran.

In this example, the verb is intransitive and doesn’t need anything else to make a complete idea. This sentence, although small, is an independent sentence.

On the contrary, transitional verbs always need an object in order to present a complete idea.

The dog chased the cat.

subject verb object

What did the dog do? The dog chased What did the dog chase? The cat

Writing:

*The dog chased.

Although this example has a subject and a transitive verb, it is not an independent sentence. To be a complete sentence, we need to add an object to the transitive verb. Therefore, sentence with a transitive verb would look like this:

The dog chased the cat.

subject verb object

Another example is:

The instructor abandoned the project.

subject verb object

Dependent clauses (Subordinate clause)

These clauses cannot stand on their own. Just like the independent clauses, they have a subject and a predicate, but the idea they present is incomplete.



Dependent clauses have words called subordinate conjunctionsⁱ or relative pronounsⁱⁱ at the beginning of the sentence. These words indicate that the statement they are providing is just extra information that can help the reader understand the independent clause better.

Example of dependent clauses:

*When I was living in San Antonio

*Which is very famous

These two examples are dependent clauses. They do not convey a complete idea. Therefore, they cannot stand on their own.

Dependent clauses can go before or after the independent clause. If the dependent clause starts with a subordinate conjunction, a comma is inserted before the independent clause. If they go after the independent clause, no punctuation is necessary in between.

Examples of a dependent clause and an independent clause together:

After it stopped raining, the sun came out.
subordinate conjunction subject predicate comma subject predicate

In the previous example, the sentence starts with a subordinate conjunction. Therefore, there is a comma between the dependent clause and the independent clause.

The sun came out after it stopped raining.
subject predicate subordinate conjunction subject predicate

In this example, the independent clause begins the sentence. Thus there's no need to add a comma in between the independent clause and the dependent clause.

Dependent clauses begin with a relative pronoun, they are used to give more information about a word (usually a noun) in the independent clause. When an independent clause has a dependent clause that starts with a relative pronoun, it goes next to the word it is describing.

My friend, who lives in Hawaii, is coming to visit this weekend.
subject dependent clause with relative pronoun predicate

ⁱ after, although, as, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order that, once, provided that, rather than, since, so that, than, that, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, whereas, wherever, whether, while, why
ⁱⁱ that, which, whichever, who, whoever, whom, whose, whomever

* Incorrect sentences since they are not complete

Sources: <http://www.chompchomp.com/terms/subordinateclause.htm>; http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/dependent_clause.htm