Subordinate Conjunctions

Most of you have had your teachers tell you NEVER to begin a sentence with words like because, if, and when. This is because these words and words like them are commonly used as the first word in a dependent clause, and dependent clauses CANNOT stand alone as complete sentence. Dependent clauses are FRAGMENTS unless they are adjoined to an independent clause.

The job or function of a subordinate conjunction is to create a relationship between the dependent clause and the independent clause. A sentence containing both a dependent clause and an independent clause is called a complex sentence.

Commonly Used Subordinate Conjunctions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>after</th>
<th>although</th>
<th>as</th>
<th>as if</th>
<th>as long as</th>
<th>as soon as</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>as</td>
<td>because</td>
<td>before</td>
<td>even though</td>
<td>if</td>
<td>since</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so that</td>
<td>than</td>
<td>though</td>
<td>unless</td>
<td>until</td>
<td>when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whenever</td>
<td>where</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A complex sentence may begin with an independent clause followed by a dependent clause.

Example: I will go to the football game if it’s not raining.

Sometimes the dependent clause will be followed by the independent clause. Try constructing your complex sentences both ways to add variety to your writing. However, if you begin your sentence with a dependent clause, an independent clause MUST follow it. Otherwise, it will be a sentence fragment!!!

Example: If it’s not raining, I will go to the football game.

A. Guided Practice. Underline the independent clause once and the dependent clause twice.

1. After Gene and Kyle attended the football game, they went to McDonald’s for a hamburger.
2. Belle’s mom said she could spend the night with her best friend if she cleaned her room first.
3. Whenever the band performs at halftime on Friday nights, it can be heard all over town.
4. As soon as Brad gets his braces off, he’s going to celebrate by eating sticky, crunchy foods.
5. My dog barks like crazy unless she gets her way.
6. Until Devon finally tried sushi, she thought it sounded gross and disgusting.
7. Students are not allowed to watch videos unless they have completed all their class work.
8. As long as students put forth their best efforts, they should do well in school.
9. When you create an Animoto video, it’s important to plan first!
10. As long as there is chocolate in the world, many people will be happy!
B. More Guided Practice. Combine the following simple sentences to form a complex sentence. Use the list of subordinate conjunctions to help you.

11. Bailey will go skiing this year at Christmas. Her family has rented a cabin.

12. Being involved in school activities is important. It gives students a sense of belonging.

13. Jonathan has decided to try out for the school basketball team. Basketball is his favorite sport.

14. Garrett will clean the fish he caught today. We can eat them for dinner tonight.

15. Gigi will go to the mall. She has finished all her chores.

C. Choose the subordinate conjunction that creates the best relationship between the independent clause and the dependent clause.

16. (As long as, Though) Cole gets his hunting license this month, he will go deer hunting on opening weekend.

17. Most of Eric’s favorite football teams won this past weekend (even though, because) they played very well.

18. Susie goes shopping (whenever, so that) she gets the opportunity.

19. (Unless, As soon as) it rains all day today, the Montgomery Bears will play football tonight.

20. Donna is going to her grandmother’s house this weekend (as if, so that) she can interview her for her history project.
Subordinate Conjunction Quiz

A. Underline the independent clause once and the dependent clause twice.

1. Allison and her family were on the lake in their boat when the thunderstorm hit.
2. Because he didn’t know the paint was wet, Ethan sat down on the bench.
3. When it’s foggy, driving is very dangerous.
4. Chelsea agreed to help Alejandro with his homework since he helped her clean up her parents’ yard.
5. If our football team wins tonight, everyone will celebrate!

B. Choose the subordinate conjunction that creates the best relationship between the independent clause and the dependent clause.

6. (Whenever, Where) the wind blows the trees against the windows, the dog howls.
7. Conner felt responsible for the missing book (because, though) it was not his fault.
8. Nicole stared at me (as if, even though) she had seen a ghost.
9. (Since, Although, ) it rained all day, we enjoyed the field trip.
10. Sydney was upset (as if, because) her beloved cat had run away.