

Dependent and Independent Clauses Join Forces

To understand sentences, you have to understand “clauses.”

Dependent clauses begin with important little words, like *if, because, when, while, as, before, until, after, although, since*, which signal that information is being added to a sentence.

Because Sarah overslept, she didn't go to work. She listened to the radio *after she ate some cereal and toast*. *If she calls her friend Doreen at two*, they can make dinner plans.

The clauses in black are independent clauses – they can stand on their own, as a complete sentence.

The clauses in gray are fragments, or dependent clauses. They can't stand by themselves. Attach them to independent clauses to make a grammatically correct sentence.

Because Sarah overslept gives the reason **she didn't go to work**.
After she ate some cereal and toast tells when **she listened to the radio**.
If she calls her friend Doreen at two suggests under what condition **they can make dinner plans**. These longer sentences are complete too; they just tell you more.

TRY IT

Create longer sentences that attach dependent to independent clauses by writing in an independent clause. Then circle the little signal word that begins each dependent clause:

1. If you save enough money, _____.
2. _____ because he wanted to spend more time with his family.
3. After the class read the story, _____.
4. Although she loved him, _____.

A MESSAGE

Now draw a line from each dependent clause to the independent clause it goes with best. On a piece of paper, write out the longer sentences. Capitalize only the first word of each longer sentence. Once you've written out the five expanded sentences, read the message.

Independent Clauses

- A. there are doors that open and doors that close.
- B. I needed to feel proud of myself and work towards my goal.
- C. I decided to return to school.
- D. they thought I was crazy.
- E. I knew I'd never take responsibility for my dreams.

Dependent Clauses

1. because I wanted to become a nurse
2. after you make a decision
3. when I told my friends about school
4. if I listened to them
5. although friends were important to me

Answers: Try It 1. If you save enough money, you can buy all the books you want. Circle if 2. He refused overtime work because he wanted to spend more time with his family. Circle because. 3. After the class read the story, everyone wrote a paragraph about one of the characters. Circle After. 4. Although she loved him, she couldn't live with him. Circle Although. A Message: 1. C, 2. A, 3. D, 4. E, 5. B. Because I wanted to become a nurse, I decided to return to school. After you make a decision, there are doors that open and doors that close. When I told my friends about school, they thought I was crazy. If I listened to them, I knew I'd never take responsibility for my dreams. Although friends were important to me, I needed to feel proud of myself and work towards my goal.