

Lesson 2.3 Subordinate Clauses

key words: clause, subordinate clause, subordinating preposition, subordinating conjunction, dependent clause

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.1h Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/3/1/h>

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.1e Form and use prepositional phrases.

<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/4/1/e>

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.1f Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons. <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/4/1/f>

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.1a Explain the function of conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections in general and their function in particular sentences. <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/L/5/1/a>

The independent clauses, introduced in 2.1, are clauses that are not dependent on some other part of a sentence. Both of the following are independent clauses.

She likes eggplant.

The girl with the striped pants who I met yesterday adores eggplant fresh from the garden.

In Lesson 5.3 and 5.4, you can learn more about combining such clauses into coordinated clauses, and the varied ways such clauses can be punctuated.

But here, let's examine when one clause is **subordinate** to or **dependent** on another clause.

So take the clause

She likes eggplant.

and you can attach it to

I think that....

to make

I think that she likes eggplant.

Here, *she likes eggplant* is subordinate to or depends on the first part of the sentence, *I think that*. We see that the **subordinator** *that* above links the subordinate clause to the main clause. *Whether* and *if* can do this too. Also, there is a subtype of prepositions called **subordinating prepositions** that introduce subordinate clauses. (Sometimes these are called subordinating conjunctions, but they don't conjoin similar kinds of clauses, and they are a subtype of preposition. See the *Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* for a discussion.)

although, because, before, even though, since, when, while,

If a subordinate clause is not connected to its main clause, it is considered a **fragment**. These are quite common in speech, but in most writing, the extra information needs to be filled in. See Lessons 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

Because she is tired.

That she likes eggplant.

Use each of these subordinating prepositions to adjoin a subordinate clause to a main clause. Here are some introductory pieces of sentences to get you started.

She wants to swim

My uncle ate a squid

I want to shower

The dog rolled in the mud

The whole team is really tired

Now use the subordinators (also called complementizers) to make complete sentences from the following:

I know that...

She wonders whether...

Do you know if...