Main and subordinate clauses

Or, independent and dependent clauses

# Explanation

A **main clause** is a group of words that includes a **subject** and a **verb**. Main clauses are sentences that make sense on their own, which is why they are also referred to as **independent clauses**.

*Example:* Amelia loves grapefruit.

Many sentences are comprised of both a **main/independent clause** and a **subordinate/dependent clause**. A subordinate clause also includes a subject and a verb, but it must be attached to the main clause because it will not make sense on its own.

Subordinate clauses begin with words such as *after, although, that, before, even though, if, since, so, when,* and *while.* Starting a sentence with a subordinate clause without attaching it to a main clause will result in a **fragment**, or an incomplete sentence.

# Examples

The **subordinate**/**dependent** clauses below **are fragments because they are not attached to a main clause, so the reader is left confused and wondering what more the writer meant to say.**

* After the thesis statement. (*…What then?)*
* If we continue to ignore climate change (*…What will happen?)*
* When election season began *(…What did you do?)*

In order for the subordinate clause to make sense, it must be attached to the front or the back of the main clause.

* After the thesis statement is written (*subordinate clause*), your body paragraphs will follow (*main clause*).
* The planet will be unrecognizable (*main clause*), if we continue to ignore climate change (*subordinate clause*).
* *When* election season began (*subordinate clause*), we watched the debates (*main clause*).

# Exercises *Complete the sentences below by adding a main clause so the fragment makes sense.*

When we go to the beach, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Since it will rain today, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ after we got home.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ even though I was tired.