



# Dependent Clauses

A *dependent clause* is also known as a *subordinate clause*. A dependent clause cannot stand as a complete sentence on its own. When standing alone, it is just considered a sentence fragment. It “depends” on an independent clause to complete its meaning. The following are examples of dependent clauses:

**Before I left the house this morning,** I ate breakfast.

**When I arrived at the building,** I noticed that no one was there yet.

- Here is an example of a dependent clause found at the end of a sentence:

I always enjoy munching on popcorn **while I am at the movies.**

Note: Often dependent clauses will start with the following words: after, although, as, because, before, even though, if, though, unless, until, when, whenever, and while.

**There are three ways to connect independent clauses:**

## 1. Comma + Conjunction

- Combine two independent clauses by using a comma before a coordinating conjunction. The seven coordinating conjunctions are: *and*, *but*, *for*, *or*, *nor*, *so*, and *yet*.

Mary went to the grocery store this afternoon **, and** she purchased food for tonight’s dinner.

Tom didn’t have enough time to finish his exam **, for** his class was only an hour long.

## Semicolon 2.

Combine two independent clauses by using a semicolon between them.

**Mary went to the grocery store this afternoon; she purchased food for tonight's dinner.**

**Tom didn't have enough time to finish his exam; his class was only an hour long.**

## 3. Two Sentences

Combine two independent clauses by creating two separate sentences.

**Mary went to the grocery store this afternoon. She purchased food for tonight's dinner.**

**Tom didn't have enough time to finish his exam. His class was only an hour long.**

### There are two ways to form complex sentences:

- ◆ To connect a dependent clause to the beginning of a sentence, just add a comma before the independent clause:

During the semester, I always have several papers to write.

Knowing that she didn't have time to go, she kindly declined the invitation.

- ◆ To connect a dependent clause to the end of the sentence, just add it on after the independent clause without a comma:

My mom always hangs her keys by the door when she gets home.

I always enjoy munching on popcorn while I'm at the movies.