

Clause Structure Review: Subjects and Verbs

(especially helpful for avoiding sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences)

Clause: a group of words

Independent Clause: a group of words with a **subject** and **verb** that **can stand alone** as a sentence. Example: *Dill pickles taste better than sweet pickles.*

Dependent Clause: a group of words with a **subject** and **verb** that **cannot stand alone** as a complete sentence because it includes a word that signals “I need another clause to make sense!”

Example: *When I’m forced to eat a sweet pickle* (*when* tells me there’s more information coming)

Subjects:

- “Who” or “what” the sentence is about
- Come first in an independent clause. *Dill pickles are better than sweet pickles.*
- Are nouns or noun phrases (more than one word). *Pickles—Dill pickles—The difference between dill pickle and sweet pickles—Your favorite shoes—The day you’ll graduate—The book on the shelf—Whatever she says—Cupcakes—The stuff on my desk*

FIND THE SUBJECT: A quick subject test that usually works...

If it fits in the blank, it’s a **noun phrase** and can be a **subject**. “People talk about _____”

Verbs/verb phrases (more than one word):

- **What the subject does or is.** *Pickles come in several varieties—Dill pickles taste better than sweet pickles.—The difference between dill pickles and sweet pickles should not be minimized.—Your favorite shoes fit well.—The day you graduate will be joyful.—The book on the shelf wants me to read it.—Whatever she says makes sense—Cupcakes delight most people who like sweets.—The stuff on my desk needs straightening up.*
- **The action of the subject**, but not always an active-sounding word. *Is-are-might-should-will-may* and many other inactive-sounding words are verbs.

FIND THE VERB/VERB PHRASE: first find the subject, then ask...

What about it? Or What about them?

Cupcakes delight most people who like sweets .

Subject: *Cupcakes*. What about them? They delight most people who like sweets. (note that “like” is a verb but it’s not the action of the subject (cupcakes).

Clause Structure Review: Problems and Fixes

(especially helpful for avoiding sentence fragments, comma splices, and run-on sentences)

**If you have a subject and a verb phrase for it, you have an independent clause
(a complete thought, can be a complete sentence)**

↓↓↓Unless there's a word that signals "I need another clause to make sense" ↓ ↓ ↓

If you see one of these words starting the clause, you probably have a dependent clause:

A clause with one of these words needs an independent clause to make the sentence make sense! Two clauses total!

After	Although	As	As if	Because	Before
Even if	Even though	If	In order to	Since	Though
Unless	Until	When	Whenever	Whether	While

<p>Sentence Fragments * = ungrammatical</p> <p>*The dream I had about a cat. *When I'm sixty-four. *Running all over the place like a crazy person. *Whether you ate breakfast or not. *Because I enjoy running barefoot. *Even if it's Monday.</p>	<p>PROBLEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not have both a subject and verb • May be a dependent clause on its own. <p>FIXES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check for subject and verb. • Check for dependent marker words. Remove the marker word or complete the thought with an independent clause.
<p>Comma Splices</p> <p>*You may use Turabian instead of Chicago style, Turabian is a simpler version of Chicago. *Different kinds of sources require different citations, a website would have a different citation than a book or article.</p>	<p>PROBLEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two independent clauses separated by only a comma <p>FIXES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make two separate sentences (still independent clauses) • Use a conjunction after the comma: FOR - AND - NOR - BUT - OR - YET - SO • Change the comma to a semicolon.
<p>Run-on sentences</p> <p>*Run-on sentences are also called fused sentences they are independent clauses joined together incorrectly. *I have a trick to finding run-on sentences just read one out loud and where you naturally pause that's a place that needs a period or comma plus conjunction. *That last sentence was poorly phrased but had a good idea some sentences have great ideas but grammar that makes them hard to understand.</p>	<p>PROBLEMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or more independent clauses with no separation (no words, no punctuation) <p>FIXES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use periods to make independent clauses into separate sentences. • Use commas and conjunctions to separate the clauses in the sentence. FOR - AND - NOR - BUT - OR - YET - SO • Separate the independent clauses with a semicolon.

