

# Main and Subordinate Clauses

also known as

## Independent and Dependent Clauses

### MAIN/INDEPENDENT CLAUSE (MC)

**Definition:** A clause that is grammatically complete and can stand alone as a single sentence. It follows the basic pattern of Subject + Verb.

The ice cream    melted    in the sun.  
*Subject*                      *Verb*

### SUBORDINATE/DEPENDENT CLAUSE (SC)

**Definition:** A clause that cannot stand alone; it has to connect to an independent clause (IC) to form a grammatically complete sentence. It follows the pattern of Subordinating Conjunction + Subject (S) + Verb (V).

<i>Main Clause (MC)</i>	<i>Subordinate Clause (SC)</i>
The ice cream melted in the sun	so that    it ran down my hand.
<i>S</i> <i>V</i>	<i>Sub.</i> <i>S</i> <i>V</i>

**Subordinating Conjunctions (Sub.):** after, although, as, as if, because, before, even though, if, in order that, rather than, since, so that, than, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whether, while

- Note: As you can see, "so that it ran down my hand" is not a sentence on its own even though it contains a subject and verb. The subordinating conjunction makes it a subordinate clause.
- Do not confuse subordinate clauses with phrases that begin with subordinate conjunctions. A clause has a subject and a verb. A phrase does not have a subject and verb together. Note the differences below:

**Subordinate Clause:** Because I love swimming, I swim every day.  
*Sub.*    *S*    *V*

**Phrase:** Because of my school debt, I have to work extra hours.  
*Sub.*                      *Prep. Phrase*