

Clause Case Files

Sort clauses by whether they can stand alone.

12.LU.1.A “Use various clauses (independent, dependent, noun, relative, adverbial) to infuse sentence variety, add interest, and enhance meaning and purpose.”

NAME _____ DATE _____

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE

A main clause has a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought. It can stand alone as a sentence.

A violinist tuned the instrument.

DEPENDENT CLAUSE

A dependent clause has a subject and verb but does not express a complete thought by itself. It often begins with a subordinating word or a relative pronoun.

unless the ferry arrives late

1 SORT _____ 8 items

Circle MAIN or DEPENDENT for each clause, then choose two items and explain what makes each one able or unable to stand alone.

1. The committee revised its proposal.

MAINDEPENDENT
2. because the deadline changed

MAINDEPENDENT
3. After the storm passed

MAINDEPENDENT
4. The museum extended its hours.

MAINDEPENDENT
5. Our neighbors planted native grasses.

MAINDEPENDENT
6. which the engineer designed

MAINDEPENDENT
7. if the data supports the claim

MAINDEPENDENT
8. The debate ended early.

MAINDEPENDENT

2 PROVE IT Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

ITEM # _____ HOW I KNEW _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN One of each

Write one new main clause and one new dependent clause.

MAIN _____

DEPENDENT _____

CHALLENGE

Begin a sentence with a new dependent clause, use a comma, and finish with a new main clause.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The committee revised its proposal.	MAIN	It has a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought.
2	because the deadline changed	DEPENDENT	The subordinating word because makes the clause incomplete by itself.
3	After the storm passed	DEPENDENT	The subordinating word after makes the clause incomplete by itself.
4	The museum extended its hours.	MAIN	It has a subject and verb and can stand as a sentence.
5	Our neighbors planted native grasses.	MAIN	It expresses a complete thought with a subject and verb.
6	which the engineer designed	DEPENDENT	The relative pronoun which introduces a clause that needs an antecedent.
7	if the data supports the claim	DEPENDENT	The subordinating word if makes the clause incomplete by itself.
8	The debate ended early.	MAIN	It has a subject and verb and expresses a complete thought.

PART 2 • PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 • MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **MAIN:** The biologist recorded each observation.
- **DEPENDENT:** when the laboratory lights dimmed

Challenge: Because the soil remained frozen, the gardeners delayed planting.

For Part 2, students should identify a complete thought in a main clause or point to a subordinating word or relative pronoun that makes a dependent clause incomplete. Accept varied original responses that meet the clause requirements.