

Forms and Functions of Clauses in English

Clauses are defined as grammatical structures that contain a subject and a predicate. The English language has three forms of clauses:

1. **Noun clause**
2. **Adjective clause**
3. **Adverb clause**

Each grammatical form of clause in English performs distinct grammatical functions.

Noun Clauses

Noun clauses are defined as **subordinate clauses** formed by a subordinating conjunction followed by a clause. The subordinating conjunctions in English that introduce noun clauses are *that*, \emptyset , *if*, *whether*, *wh-* words, and *wh-ever* words. For example, the following italicized clauses are examples of noun clauses:

- The library will send a bill to *whoever damaged this book*.
- *Whether you will pay for the damage* is not even a question.
- The judge has given *that you behaved well after your arrest* some consideration.

Noun clauses perform nominal functions, or functions prototypically performed by noun phrases. The nine main **functions of noun clauses** in English grammar are:

1. **Subject**
2. **Subject complement**
3. **Direct object**
4. **Object complement**
5. **Indirect object**
6. **Prepositional complement**
7. **Adjective phrase complement**
8. **Noun phrase complement**
9. **Appositive**

Noun clauses are also referred to as content clauses.

Adjective Clauses

Adjective clauses are defined as **subordinate clauses** formed by a subordinating conjunction followed by a clause. The subordinating conjunctions in English that introduce adjective clauses are *who*, *whom*, *that*, \emptyset , *which*, *whose*, *when*, and *where*. For example, the following italicized clauses are examples of adjective clauses:

- The woman *that works in the bakery* is my neighbor.
- The car *you hit* belongs to the man *whose daughter is my classmate*.
- The restaurant *where you left your purse* is known for its unique pasta dishes.

The primary **grammatical function of adjective clauses** is **noun phrase modifier**. **Noun phrase modifiers** are defined as words, phrases, and clauses that describe or modify a noun

phrase. Adjective clauses may also, although rarely, function as **verb phrase modifiers**, **prepositional phrase modifiers**, and **noun clause modifiers**.

Adjective clauses are also referred to as relative clauses. The subordinating conjunctions that introduce adjective clauses are also called **relative pronouns**.

Adverb Clauses

Adverb clauses are defined as **subordinate clauses** formed by a subordinating conjunction followed by a clause. Some of the more common subordinating conjunctions in English that introduce adverb clauses include:

- after
- although
- because
- before
- even though
- if
- once
- since
- so that
- though
- unless
- until
- when
- whereas
- while

For example, the following italicized clauses are examples of adverb clauses:

- *After she gave the baby a bath*, she decided to take a nap.
- The girl cannot usually eat beef stew *because she is allergic to carrots*.
- The couple has been saving money *so that they can go on a vacation*.

All adverb clauses perform the grammatical function of **adjunct adverbial**. Adjunct adverbials are words, phrases, and clauses that modify or describe an entire clause by providing additional information about time, place, manner, condition, purpose, reason, result, and concession.

The three forms of clauses in English are: noun clause, adjective clause, and adverb clause. Noun clauses perform nine functions: subject, subject complement, direct object, object complement, indirect object, prepositional complement, adjective phrase complement, noun phrase complement, and appositive. Adjective clauses primarily perform the single function of noun phrase modifier but can also function as verb phrase modifiers, prepositional phrase modifiers, and noun clause modifiers. Adverbs perform the single function of adverbial.

Reference: <http://www.linguisticgirl.com/forms-functions-clauses-english/>