

## Dependent Clauses

Unlike an independent clause, a **dependent clause**, isn't a complete sentence on its own. It has to be added to an independent clause, which is what gives it its other name - **the subordinate clause** - because it's subordinate to the independent (or main) clause. It, too, has a subject and a verb. Take this example:

*I love you because I am blind.*

The dependent clause here is 'because I am blind.' The verb is 'am' and the subject is 'I,' but 'because I am blind' cannot function as an independent sentence. Thus, it is subordinate to our independent clause, 'I love you.' 'Because' connects the dependent clause to the independent clause and is called a **subordinating conjunction**. (Subordinating conjunctions can also connect to independent clauses, but we'll get to that later.)

Here are a couple of other examples of sentences comprised of an independent and dependent clause linked by a subordinate conjunction. (A full list of all the subordinate conjunctions is at the end of the text of this lesson.)

*I survived the shipwreck, although I lost all my luggage.*

*I survived the shipwreck, as I am Aquaman.*

You can see how 'I survived the shipwreck' is the most important idea in the sentence, and yet they each change the meaning of the sentence in slightly different ways. Neither dependent clause - 'as I am Aquaman' or 'although I lost all my luggage' can stand on its own. (Even if he is Aquaman.)

One important thing to note here is that the dependent clause doesn't always have to follow the independent clause - it can precede it too. For instance:

*As I am Aquaman, I survived the shipwreck.*

That's still a valid sentence, but the dependent clause comes first. But again, crucially, it couldn't be there by itself. It still needs the independent clause to complete it.

Dependent clauses can also be connected by **relative pronouns**. Your relative pronouns are who, whom, whoever, whomever, whose, that, which, whichever, and whoseever. For instance:

*The man who was in jail confessed.*

In this case, 'who was in jail' is the dependent clause - a kind called an **adjective clause** because it functions like an adjective. 'The man confessed' would be the independent clause here, while 'who was in jail' adds describing detail. Adding describing detail is what adjectives do, after all. So, that's to say: What kind of man is this? It's the man who was in jail.