

# Dependent and Independent Clauses Join Forces

To understand sentences, you have to understand “clauses.”

Dependent clauses begin with important little words, like *if, because, when, while, as, before, until, after, although, since*, which signal that information is being added to a sentence.

*Because Sarah overslept*, she didn't go to work. She listened to the radio *after she ate some cereal and toast*. *If she calls her friend Doreen at two*, they can make dinner plans.

The clauses in black are independent clauses – they can stand on their own, as a complete sentence.

The clauses in gray are fragments, or dependent clauses. They can't stand by themselves. Attach them to independent clauses to make a grammatically correct sentence.

*Because Sarah overslept* gives the reason **she didn't go to work**.  
*After she ate some cereal and toast* tells when **she listened to the radio**.  
*If she calls her friend Doreen at two* suggests under what condition **they can make dinner plans**. These longer sentences are complete too; they just tell you more.

## TRY IT

Create longer sentences that attach dependent to independent clauses by writing in an independent clause. Then circle the little signal word that begins each dependent clause:

1. If you save enough money, \_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ because he wanted to spend more time with his family.
3. After the class read the story, \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Although she loved him, \_\_\_\_\_.

## A MESSAGE

Now draw a line from each dependent clause to the independent clause it goes with best. On a piece of paper, write out the longer sentences. Capitalize only the first word of each longer sentence. Once you've written out the five expanded sentences, read the message.

### Independent Clauses

- A. there are doors that open and doors that close.
- B. I needed to feel proud of myself and work towards my goal.
- C. I decided to return to school.
- D. they thought I was crazy.
- E. I knew I'd never take responsibility for my dreams.

### Dependent Clauses

1. because I wanted to become a nurse
2. after you make a decision
3. when I told my friends about school
4. if I listened to them
5. although friends were important to me

Answers: Try It: 1. If you save enough money, you can buy all the books you want. Circle if: 2. He refused overtime work because he wanted to spend more time with his family. Circle because: 3. After the class read the story, everyone wrote a paragraph about one of the characters. Circle After: 4. Although she loved him, she couldn't live with him. Circle Although: A Message: 1. C, 2. A, 3. D, 4. E, 5. B. Because I wanted to become a nurse, I decided to return to school. After you make a decision, there are doors that open and doors that close. When I told my friends about school, they thought I was crazy. If I listened to them, I knew I'd never take responsibility for my dreams. Although friends were important to me, I needed to feel proud of myself and work towards my goal.