

# Year 6 Grammar Revision

*Main and  
Subordinate  
Clauses*



# Main Clauses: The Rules

A main clause is a group of words that contains a **verb** and a **subject** which makes complete sense on its own. Main clauses could also be called **simple sentences**.

Can you spot the **verbs** and **subjects** in these main clauses?

**Karina** **swam** fifty lengths.

The **classroom** **was** empty.

The **family** **were** trekking.



# Subordinate Clauses: The Rules

A subordinate clause is a group of words that is dependent on the main clause because it doesn't make sense on its own. When main clauses and subordinate clauses are used together to form a sentence, it is called a complex sentence.

Can you spot the **main clauses** and **subordinate clauses**?

**The girls fed the ducks**  
**before they walked around the lake.**

**The windmill sails turned quickly**  
**because it is very windy today.**



# Subordinate Clauses: The Rules

Subordinate clauses can often start with a subordinating conjunction

after

though

because

so that

before

until

while

provided

if

since

once

even though

whether

unless

although

when

as



# Subordinate Clauses: The Rules

*Where in a sentence?*

In the sentences we've looked at so far, the subordinate clauses have been after the main clause e.g.

The snow was thick on the ground  
because it had snowed heavily.

The children laughed happily as snowballs flew.

Subordinate clauses don't always have to be after the main clause.



# Subordinate Clauses: The Rules

*Where in a sentence?*

Look at these sentences where the subordinate clause ~~comes~~ **before** the main clause...

Although she hated them,  
Jenny ate the sprouts.

Before the campfire was lit,  
the children were shivering in the cold.

When we use a subordinate clause at the beginning of a sentence  
we must add a comma ~~before~~ **before** the main clause.



# Subordinate Clauses: The Rules

## *Fronted Adverbials*

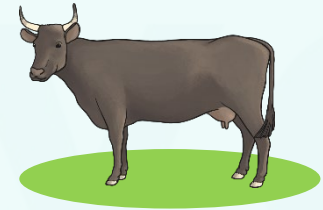
Subordinate clauses used at the beginning of a sentence can also be called **fronted adverbials**. Fronted adverbials can start in many ways including with **subordinating conjunctions**, **prepositions**, **-ing verbs** or **-ed verbs**.

As the sun shone, the cows ate the grass.

Out in the field grazing, they mooed happily.

Lying down in the sun, the cows began to snooze.

Summoned by the farmer, Daisy walked towards the milking shed.



The fronted adverbial subordinate clause will always need to be followed by a **comma** to separate it from the main clause.

# Subordinate Clauses: The Tricky Bits

Subordinate clauses can also split the main clause. This is also called an **embedded clause** or (if the clause starts with a relative pronoun) a **relative clause**.  
Look at these examples...

The Eiffel Tower, **which is in Paris**, is one of the busiest tourist attractions in the world.

*Which* is a **relative pronoun** so this subordinate clause can also be called a **relative clause**. It contains **non-essential** information so needs demarcating with commas.

Billy, **gasping for air**, tried to run from the charging bull.

This subordinate clause could also be called an **embedded clause**. Embedded means 'in the middle of' as it is in the middle of the main clause. It also contains non-essential information so needs demarcating with commas.



# Quiz! Part 1

Put a tick in the correct column to show whether each group of highlighted words is a **main clause** or a **subordinate clause**.

	Main Clause	Subordinate Clause
If it starts to rain, you can wear your new wellington boots.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Neil gasped for breath before setting off again.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The koala, which is native to Australia, is a mammal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

## Quiz! Part 2

Rewrite this sentence with the subordinate clause used as a **fronted adverbial**. Add a comma if necessary.

**David didn't wear a coat  
even though it was cold outside.**

**Even though it was cold outside,  
David didn't wear a coat**

# Quiz! Part 3

Underline the **main clauses** in the following sentences.

1. Running late for work, Mum frantically searched for her keys.
2. The setting sun, which looked beautiful, glistened in the sky.
3. The gerbil bit my finger before running back to its cage.

*Are you feeling  
confident with main  
and subordinate clauses?*

