Maria English Society

Essential English Grammar
Teaching Notes - Unit 9

Table of Contents

Noun clauses and Adjective clauses

- Three kinds of clauses
- Noun clauses
- Adjective clauses
- Relative pronouns
- Non-restrictive and restrictive adjective clauses

Unit 9

Noun clauses and Adjective clauses

Three kinds of clauses

A subordinate conjunction introduces a subordinate clause.

If a subordinate clause acts as a subject of a verb or object of a transitive verb, we say this subordinate clause is a noun clause.

If a subordinate clause qualifies a noun, and we say this subordinate clause is an adjective clause.

If it modifies a verb, we say this subordinate clause is an adverb clause.

Clauses

- noun clauses
- adjective clauses
- adverb clauses

Noun Clauses

We have learned the FOUR PLACES that are reserved for nouns (pronouns):

1. Before a verb (subject of a verb)	S His work shows profit.
2. After a transitive verb (object of a t.v.)	O His work shows profit.
3. After a verb 'be' (complement of 'be')	C His absence is a problem.
4. After a preposition (object of a preposition)	O We know the fact from the news. Prep.

Now we use a subordinate clause to replace the noun 'work' in (a):

S V O

[That he labors day and night] shows profit.

This subordinate clause occupies the place of the noun 'work' as subject of the finite verb 'shows', and we say this subordinate clause is a noun clause, subject of the verb 'show'.

We use another subordinate clause to replace the noun 'profit' in (a):

S V O

His work shows **[that his company earns money]**.

The underlined clause occupies the place of the noun 'profit' as object of the transitive verb 'show', and we say this dependent clause is a noun clause, object of the transitive verb 'shows'.

So, to combine the two clauses, we have the new sentence:

S V O

[That he labors day and night] shows **[that his company earns money]**.

noun clause — *subject of 'shows'*

main clause

noun clause — *object of t.v. 'shows'*

As we have learned that a finite verb forms a clause, so the verb 'shows' is the main clause and its subject and object are noun clauses.

Now we come to the 3rd kind of noun clause in sentence (b):

S V C

His absence is a **problem**.

We use a subordinate clause to replace the noun 'problem':

S V C

His absence is **[that he causes troubles]**.

This subordinate clause occupies the noun position of 'problem', so we say this clause has become a noun clause, complement of 'is' because after 'is', anything that goes into this position must become noun, and if it is a clause, the clause must be a noun clause.

We have learned 'that' is a relative pronoun in adjective clauses where 'that' has two jobs to perform: one is the role of subordinate conjunction, and the other is the role of pronoun. But in noun clause, 'that' has only ONE job to do and that is subordinate conjunction for statement.

Other subordinate conjunctions for noun clauses are the following:
how, why, where, when, what, who, whatever, wherever, whoever, etc.

Now we a subordinate clause to replace the noun 'news' in (c):

We know the fact from the news.

prep *O.*

We know the fact from **[what we have read in the morning post].**

More examples on noun clauses

Here are **two simple sentences** each with a **noun** for the **subject:**

Subject	
Your work	seems very difficult.
The prisoner's escape	is a complete mystery.

Now, instead of the noun *work* and the noun *escape* we will use a **clause** that is doing exactly the same work, acting as **subject** of the verb *seems* and the **subject** of the verb *is:*

Subject	
What you are doing	seems very difficult.
How the prisoner escaped	is a complete mystery.

Here are **two simple sentences** each with a **noun** for the **object:**

	Object
Fred dreamed	a dream.
I know	arithmetic.
Mary said	a few words.

Now instead of using nouns for the objects of those verbs we'll use a **clause**:

	Object
Fred dreamed	that he was traveling to the moon.
I know	that two and two makes four.
Mary said	that she liked reading books.

Exercises

Divide these **complex sentences** into **main clauses** and **noun clauses**. Say what work is done by each noun clause. We have done the first one for you.

Main clause	*Noun clause*	*Work done by noun clause*
1. Fred said	that he was taking Jock for a walk.	object of *said*

S V O

1. Fred said **[that he was taking Jock for a walk]**.

2. Richard hopes that the teacher won't ask him a question.

3. I believe that you are telling the truth.

4. I have forgotten what your name is.

5. The pupils said that the questions were too difficult.

6. The teacher replied that the exercises were quite easy.

7. Show me how I must do these exercises.

8. What you said was quite true.

9. I asked the porter if the train had gone.

10. Why I made the mistake I don't know.

Exercise

1. People questioned _____ Mr. Richardson was allowed to remain when the other staff member involved in the security breach.

   (A) whereas (B) who (C) whom (D) why

2. _____ it took only 60 days to complete the merger is an extraordinary feat.

   (A) What (B) When (C) That (D) So

3. Our publisher has produced an excellent vocabulary-builder _____ is greatly praised by English learners in Asia.

   (A) which (B) who (C) whose (D) Whom

4. The consultant recommended involving workers in identifying what the production process could be improved.

   A B C D

5. The problem is how he can't speak English, so he can't get the job

   A B C D

Noun Clauses

We have learned 4 kinds of noun clauses. Here is a summary.

1. <u>The Subject of a verb.</u>

a. <u>That he turns up</u> surprises us.
b. <u>What he said</u> was true.
c. <u>When I will return</u> is not sure.
d. <u>How he got well</u> is our chief concern.
e. <u>Why he fails</u> is obvious to all.
f. <u>Whether we can start tomorrow</u> seems uncertain.

In (a), 'that' is used to state something, and the word 'that' itself doesn't have any special meaning. In (b), we use the subordinate conjunction 'what' when we have said or done something. In (c), we use 'when' if we talk about time. In (d), we use 'how' to show the method we employ or the amount we have. When we talk about reason, we use 'why' in (e). Finally, if we have doubt, we use the subordinate conjunction 'whether' or 'if in (f).

2. The Object of a transitive verb.

a. She denied <u>that she had eaten the apple</u>.
b. I don't know <u>what you said</u>.
c. No one can tell <u>how old the tree was</u>.
d. The father doesn't know <u>why his son did this</u>.
e. I want to ask <u>if he is at home</u>. *('If = 'whether')*
f. Please, tell me <u>who he is</u>.

In (a), the noun clause acts as an object, the subordinate conjunction 'that' can be omitted.
In (f), 'tell' is one of the few transitive verbs that take TWO objects. 'Tell me your name.' The clause 'who he is' replaces the noun 'name' to be the object of 'tell'. Others are 'give', 'send', 'write', 'pay', 'teach', 'show', 'offer', lend' and 'buy'.

* *Other subordinate conjunctions of the noun clauses acting as objects cannot be omitted,*
* *When the noun clause acts as a SUBJECT, 'that' CANNOT be omitted as in 1.(a).*

3. The Complement of 'be' - (am, is, are, was, were, being, been, be).

a. His great fear is that he may not pass the exam.

b. My request is that I will be allowed to join the club.

c. Life is what we make it.

d. This is where I live.

When we know the subordinate clause is a noun clause, we treat this noun clause as something or a fact in order to explain the whole sentence.

Now we come to study the FOURTH kind of noun clause.

4. The Object of a preposition.

a. We cannot rely on what he says.

b. The prize goes to whoever answers the question correctly.

c. He is grateful for what I have given him.

d. Some evidence is found close to where the man was murdered.

e. Everyone is pleased with how you have handled the case.

f. Your adulthood depends on when you were born.

g. People are suspicious of why you did this.

You may discover a strange thing occurs here. The familiar ' that' with its introductory sense doesn't appear in this kind of noun clause. The truth is that prepositions and 'that' are enemies. The two hate each other so much that they never come face to face.

(Wrong) I was sure OF THAT he would be here.

(Right) I was sure THAT he would be here.
(Noun clause, object of the preposition 'of understood.)

(Right) I was sure he would be here.
(Noun clause acts as an object; 'that' can be omitted)

'That' is never used with a preposition proceeding. But 'in that' is different. It is a fixed expression - in that = because.

I'm lucky in that (because) I've got four sisters.

'in that I've got four sister' is an adverb clause of reason, modifying 'am' in the main clause.

Noun clauses that start with a question

Noun clauses that start with a question are usually used to answer a question. The following examples should better explain this.

Where does Susan live?
I don't know **where Susan lives**.

("where Susan lives" is a noun clause. We could answer this question without a noun clause by saying the following. I don't know Susan 's address. The noun phrase, Susan 's address, replaces with the noun clause, where Susan lives.)

What time is it?
I don't know **what time it is**.

("what time it is" is a noun clause. We could answer this question without a noun clause by saying the following. I don't know the time. In this case, the noun phrase, the time, replaces the noun clause, what time it is.)

Noun clauses that start with 'whether' or 'if'

Noun clauses that start with whether or if are used to answer yes/no type questions. Whether and if are usually interchangeable. The following examples should better explain this.

Does Judy own a Honda?

I don't know **if Judy owns a Honda**.

("if Judy owns a Honda" is a noun clause. We could answer this question without a noun clause by saying the following. I don't know the answer. In this case, the noun phrase, the answer, replaces the noun clause, if Judy owns a Honda.)

- Will Cindy be at work on Friday?

I don't know **whether Cindy will be at work on Friday**.

("whether Cindy will be at work on Friday" is a noun clause. We could answer this question without a noun clause by saying the following. I don't know the answer. In this case, the noun phrase, the answer, replaces the noun clause, whether Cindy will be at work on Friday.)

Exercise

Identify the noun clause in the following story

An antique collector with lots of money was walking in the downtown area of a city one day. He was a small skinny cat on the sidewalk. Te cat was drinking some milk from a small dish. The art collector looked again at the dish. What the antique collector saw shocked him. The small dish on the sidewalk was extremely old, and the antique dealer knew at once that it was very valuable. He was so interested in what he had just seen that he immediately walked into the store to talk to the owner about buying the valuable antique dish. The man did not want the owner to suspect that the dish was so valuable, so he offered the owner some money for the cat. He said that he would pay $10 for the cat, but the owner refused. The man was getting desperate, so he offered the owner a crisp fifty-dollar bill from his wallet. At this point, the owner could no longer refuse what the man was offering. Then the man quickly added, "You know … how about including the dish, too? That cat is probably used to eating from that dish." The owner replied, "No, sir, I'm sorry. You may be right about the cat and the dish, but that dish is not for sale. "Why not?" asked the man. The owner answered, "Well, I'll tell you why it's not for sale. You see, it's my lucky dish. So far this week, I've sold fifteen skinny cats!

Adjectives clauses
Relative pronouns : who, which, that

An **adjective**, as you know, limits the meaning of a **noun.**

I like a *good* story.

John is a *clever* boy.

Is this your *lost* kitten?

We helped the *shipwrecked* sailors.

But instead of these **adjectives**, we could use a **clause** that does the same work – to limit the meaning of a **noun**. For example:

(subject)

I like a story. The story is good.

S V O

I like a story **[that is good].**

(object)

I like a story. John wrote the story.

O S V

I like a story **[that John wrote].**

(subject)

Is this your kitten? The kitten was lost.

S V

Is this your kitten **[which was lost?]**

(subject)

We helped the sailors. The sailors were shipwrecked.

S V

We helped the sailors **[who were shipwrecked].**

Each of these **clauses** (*that is good; who is clever; which was lost; who were shipwrecked*) does the work of an adjective. But none of them makes complete sense by itself. These **clauses** make complete sense only when they are with the other clauses - the **main clauses**. So they are **dependent clauses**. And, because they do the work of an adjective, they are called **adjective clauses**. The other clauses on which they depend for their meaning (*I like a story; That is a boy; Is this your kitten? We helped the sailors*) are called **main clauses.**

A main clause and one or more dependent clauses together make a complex sentence.
Here are some examples of **complex sentences.** The **dependent adjective clauses** are all in brackets, with arrows to indicate the nouns they refer to.

Main clause **Dependent clause**

This is the house [**that Jack built**.]

Here is the letter [**that I received**.]

Where is the boy [**who looks after the sheep**?]

They met an Indian [**who earned his living by trapping animals**.]

Sometimes the **dependent adjective clause** is embedded into (inserted into) the **main clause**.

S V

The house [**that Jack built**] has fallen down.

S V

The letter [**that I received**] is in my pocket.

S V C

The boy [**who looks after the sheep**] is fast asleep.

The principle of proximity

The adjective clause goes as near as possible to the noun it qualifies.

The **adjective clause** *that Jack built* qualifies *house*; so we put it next to *house*.
The **adjective clause** *that I received* qualifies *letter*; so we put it next to *letter*.
The **adjective clause** *who looks after the sheep* qualifies *boy*; so we put it next to *boy*.

Exercise

Write out these sentences and draw a bracket round the **dependent adjective clause**. Put an arrow to show the word that it qualifies. We have done the first one for you.

1. This is the bicycle [that my uncle gave me.]

2. Do you know anyone who wants to buy a motorbike?

3. Here are the cakes that I bought.

4. Mr. Green was returning home with the money that he had put in his pocket.

5. The bicycle that my uncle gave me was a birthday present.

6. A motorbike that won't go is of no use.

7. The cakes that I bought have all been eaten.

8. The money that Mr. Green had drawn from the bank was in his pocket.

9. The house that you see over there is very old.

10. The thief who had robbed the policeman of his notebook gave it to Mr. Green.

Adjective clauses: the relative pronoun

You know now what **adjective clauses** are. Let us see how they are formed.

Here are two **simple sentences**:

That is the lady. She drives the school bus.

You can make those two **simple sentences** into one **compound sentence** by joining them with the **conjunction** *and*, like this:

That is the lady, **and** she drives the school bus.

But here is another way to join them:

That is the lady **who** drives the school bus.

Now we have made the two **simple sentences** into a **complex** one. *That is the lady* is the **main clause;** *who drives the school bus* is a **dependent adjective clause**.

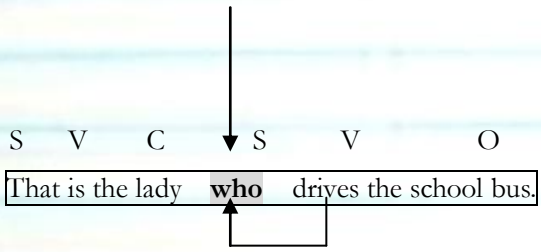
The relative pronoun

Notice how we made that **complex sentence**. If you compare it with the **compound** one, you will see that instead of *and* (a conjunction) and *she* (a pronoun) we have used one word, *who,* that does the work of *and* and *she*. The word *who* is a **pronoun**, because it stands instead of *she*; it is also a **conjunction,** because it joins together (or 'relatives') the two clauses. It is called a **relative pronoun**.

A relative pronoun does the work of a pronoun and a conjunction.

It stands instead of a **noun** and also joins an **adjective clause** to another clause in a **complex sentence**.

1. 'who' is a conjunction that joins together the two clauses.



2. 'who' is a pronoun representing 'she'.

The two most commonly used **relative pronouns** are *who* (used for people) and *that* (used for people and things). You will also meet *which,* used for things, but nowadays it is not so common as *that*. Here are examples to show you how these **relative pronouns** join **simple sentences** to **make complex** ones. Remember to put the **adjective clause** next to the noun it qualifies.

That is the lady. That lady drives the school bus. (simple sentences)
That is the lady **[*who / that* drives the school bus.]** (complex sentence)

Here are the passengers. They want to travel by this plane. (simple sentences)
Here are the passengers **[*who / that* want to travel by this plane.]** (complex sentence)

I have a book. It teaches English grammar. (simple sentences)
I have a book **[*that* teaches English grammar.]** (complex sentence)

The book teaches me grammar. It is a new one. (simple sentences)

The book **[*that* teaches me grammar]** is a new one. (complex sentence)

The lady drives the school bus. She is called Mrs. Jones. (simple sentences)

The lady **[*who /that* drives the school bus]** is called Mrs. Jones. (complex sentence).

Non-restrictive and restrictive adjective clauses

(Non-defining)	(defining)

There are two types of adjective clauses: non-restrictive and restrictive. A non-restrictive clause is separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma. A restrictive clauses is not.

Non-restrictive adjective clauses

When the information in the adjective clause is not essential to the meaning of the sentence, set it off with a comma or commas.

My sister, **who lives in California,** is a doctor.

(The adjective clause gives extra information. You can take out the information between the commas without changing the meaning of the sentence.)

Restrictive adjective clauses

When the information in the adjective clause is essential to the meaning of the sentence, do not set it off with a comma or commas. If you take a restrictive clause out of the sentence, either the sentence will not make sense or the meaning will not be clear.

My sister **who lives in California** is a doctor.

(The adjective clause gives essential information because I have more than one sister. If I take out the information, it means that I have only one sister.)

More on non-restrictive adjective clauses:

Her son, **who was proud**, left home.

When an adjective clause is not needed to complete the meaning of the main clause, it is called a non-restrictive clause. A non-restrictive clause is set off by commas. If you omit "who was proud," then the sentence still makes complete sense:

Her son left home.

The implication is that the woman had one son, and we are told that he left home. The clause "who was proud" simply adds additional--but not essential--information.

More on restrictive adjective clauses:

If you do not put commas around "who was proud," the meaning of the sentence is different:

Her son **who was proud** left home.

Here the implication is that the woman had more than one son. The sentence tells us that the particular son who was proud is the one who left home. The sentence therefore distinguishes that son from those other sons who were not proud. In this case you cannot omit the adjective clause, "who was proud," because the meaning of the sentence will then be incomplete. We say that the adjective clause "restricts" the noun ("son") that it modifies.

Further examples:

Restrictive clause:

The clothes **that he scattered on the floor** are messy.

The sentence which remains when the adjective clause is removed--"The clothes are messy."--leaves the reader wondering "which clothes?" In other words, the adjective clause is needed to define or restrict the noun ("clothes") that it modifies.

Non-restrictive clause:

He turned from the window, **which was open despite the cold**, and faced me.

The sentence which remains when the adjective clause is removed--"He turned from the window and faced me." --seems complete to the reader. That is, the reader is not left wondering "Which window?" That the window was open and that it was cold outside are not essential to the meaning of the sentence.

Exercise

Underline the adjective clause in each of the following sentences, and indicate in the space to the left whether the adjective clause is restrictive (R) or non-restrictive (NR).

1. _____ John Smith, who comes from Cleveland, is a grocer.

2. _____ The John Smith who comes from Cleveland is a grocer.

3. _____ The coach, who is fierce on the sidelines, behaves meekly at home.

4. _____ Coaches who are fierce on the sidelines behave meekly at home.

5. _____ John Huff, who used to deliver our newspaper, is now an editor of *The Post*.

6. _____ The same John Huff who used to deliver our newspaper is now an editor of *The Post*.

7. _____ The summer which I spent on the Georgia coast was uneventful but not unremarkable.

8. _____ Last summer, which I spent on the Georgia coast, was uneventful but not unremarkable.

Exercise

Use commas to set off the non-restrictive clauses in the following sentences. Some of the sentences contain restrictive clauses and therefore need no further punctuation.

1. William White who had helped Henry build his fortune died yesterday.

2. Anyone who saw him could tell that something was wrong.

3. The only subject that I don't understand is geometry.

4. She pointed out that the Samuel Johnson whom we all met yesterday is descended from that other Samuel Johnson.

5. He threw a shoe at his favorite cat which had been howling all night.

Exercise

Underline each adjective clause in the following sentences. Underline with a double line the noun modified by each adjective clause. Then, paying particular attention to the way each adjective clause is used (i.e., whether it is restrictive or non-restrictive), explain what each sentence means. Finally, note whether the adjective clause is restrictive or non-restrictive.

Example: Students who use drugs are treated as criminals by the police.

This means: Only some students (those who use drugs) are treated as criminals by the police.

The adjective clause is **restrictive**.

1. Those Students, who use drugs, are treated as criminals by the police.

This means: _____

The adjective clause is _____

2. I have no patience with scientists, who talk only of abstractions.

This means: _____

The adjective clause is _____

3. I have no patience with scientists who talk only of abstractions.

This means: _____

The adjective clause is _____

Adjective clause and noun clause in apposition

1. You must not forget the story that made you laugh last week. (adjective clause)

   You must not forget the story that the grasshopper danced winter away. (noun clause)

2. His belief that he held cheered him through many disappointments. (adjective clause)

   His belief that he would succeed cheered him through many disappointments. (noun clause)

3. 1 do not believe the fact that was disclosed yesterday. (adjective clause)

   I do not believe the fact that the end of the world will be in 2010. (noun clause)

Exercise

State which is an adjective clause and which is a noun clause in apposition

1. You should read the report that your boss gave you.

   You should read the report that our firm has received many new orders.

2. The company offered a job that you may apply for.

   The company offered a job that you are required to sell cars.

Exercise

Find out the noun clauses and adjective clauses in this passage.

Last week our form master said we should take an interest in an extra-curricular activity that would help us relax during our free time. Many of us did not know what to do. To learn the guitar was Robert's suggestion. Some students who thought they were talented musicians who would one day appear on the stage, the radio or television, agreed at once and set about buying the a guitar. My father being not a rich man did not like my spending money on something he considered luxury. That I would want to earn the money I needed made me look for a part-time job.

My uncle was a musician. His advice was that he gave free lesson to any of us who were interested. My friend Hubert, who could afford to buy a guitar straight away, offered to lend me his instrument he was not using. After school we usually found an empty classroom to practice. Soon my playing improved rapidly, but Hubert didn't.

Exercise

Rewrite each of the following sentences making a subjective adjective clause from the clause in parentheses.

Examples:

Last year, Alaska experienced an earthquake (the earthquake exceeded 7.0 on the Richter scale).

Last year, Alaska experienced an earthquake that exceeded 7.0 on the Richter scale.

1. Lee bought an insurance policy (the policy covers earthquake damage to his home.

2. The graph (the graph shows how much the policy will pay) is on page 3.

3. Scientists (the scientists study earthquakes) predicted that Seattle will experience a very severe earthquake in the future.

Exercise

Rewrite each of the following sentences making an objective adjective clause from the clause in parentheses.

Examples:

Pam devoted a lot of time to the class (she taught the class)

Pam devoted a lot of time to the class that she taught.

1. Pam edited the report (Tim wrote the report).

2. The concern (people feel the concern) about earthquakes is legitimate.

3. Scientists will soon publish the new evidence (they have acquired the evidence).