



## SUBORDINATION in COMPLEX SENTENCES

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If you've ever reported to a boss or supervisor, you already understand subordination! Just as you are less important than your boss, one idea in a **complex sentence** is less important than the other. The more important idea goes into an *independent clause* (which can stand alone) while the less important idea goes into a *dependent clause* (which cannot stand alone). This pattern (independent + dependent clauses) creates a **complex sentence**.

These conjunctions frequently begin *dependent* clauses:

after	because	since	until
although	before	so that	when
as	how	provided	whenever
as if	if	than	where
as long as	once	though	wherever
as though	in order that	unless	while

Tired of short, choppy, monotonous sentences in your writing? Use more **complex sentences** in which the *independent* (main) and *dependent* (subordinate) clauses are linked by a logical conjunction. This technique makes your writing more sophisticated, especially if you almost always connect sentences with the FANBOYS words (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).

### HOW TO PUNCTUATE COMPLEX SENTENCES

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If the dependent clause begins your sentence, use a comma after it. Read these examples. (We've italicized the dependent clause for you):

*Whenever he hears that special song*, he thinks of his old girlfriend.  
*Once everybody boards*, the *Minnow* can begin its three-hour cruise.  
*Because she was so busy*, she skipped lunch.

**Important Point:** Did you notice? These examples follow the rule to **use** a comma when the dependent clause *begins* the sentence.

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Don't use a comma if the dependent clause ends your sentence. Read these examples. (We've italicized the dependent clause for you):

A mouse ate the cheese *while our lazy cat slept*.  
I can help you with your paper *provided you bring me your rough draft*.  
Some people have migraines *that force them to stay in bed for hours*.

**Important point:** Did you notice? These examples follow the rule to **omit** the comma when the dependent clause *ends* the sentence.