

Types of clauses

Clauses can be either *independent* or *dependent*, based upon *whether they can stand on their own as complete sentences*.

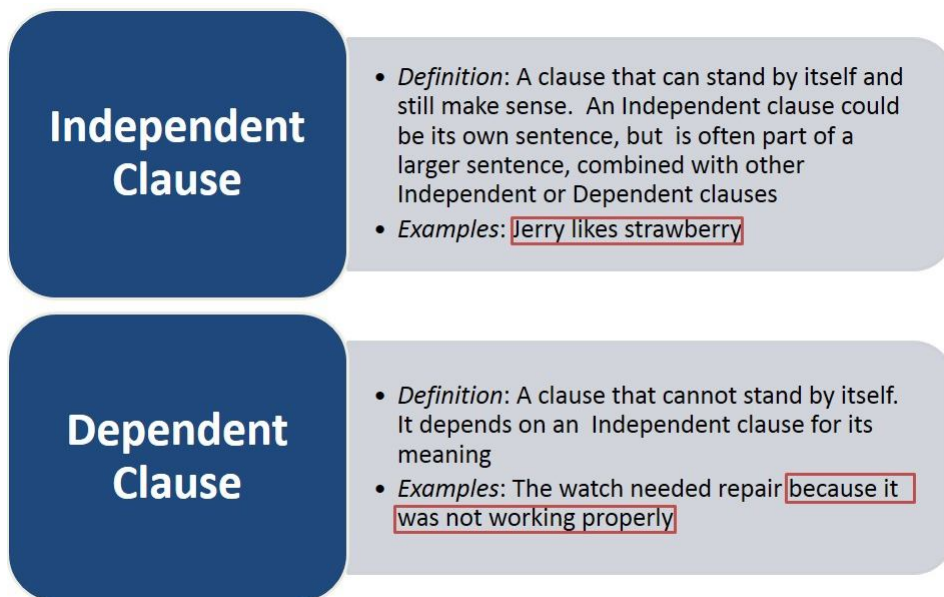


Figure 8: Classification of Clauses

2.2.2 Independent clauses

As depicted in Figure 8, an *independent clause* is a clause that can stand by itself as a complete sentence, and still make sense.

Jerry likes strawberry.

– This sentence is an *independent clause*, since it can be (in fact it *is*) a complete sentence. *Jerry* is the subject, and *likes* is the verb.

Note: Every complete sentence *must* have an *Independent clause*. A sentence that does *not* have an Independent clause is called a *Sentence Fragment*, and is an *invalid* construction. GMAT tests this concept frequently and hence, this concept has been discussed in detail in Section 10.1: *Sentence Fragments*.

Joining two independent clauses

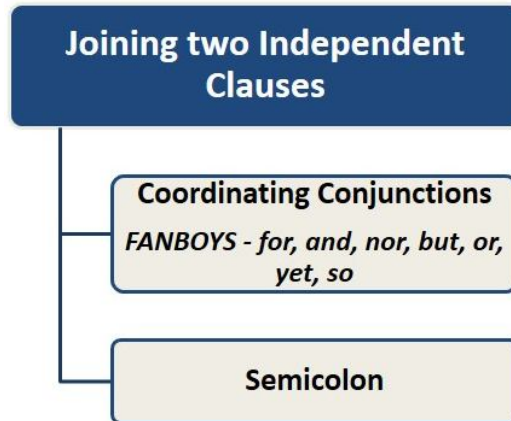


Figure 9: Joining two Independent clauses

As depicted in Figure 9, there are only *two* ways to connect independent clauses: using a *coordinating conjunction* or using a *semicolon*.

- a. Using a *coordinating conjunction*: FANBOYS is a popular acronym to depict the most commonly used coordinating conjunctions: *for, and, not, but, or, yet, so*.

For example, let us consider the following two Independent clauses:

- i) *Jack plays guitar*
- ii) *His brother plays the violin*

These two independent clauses can be connected by using a *coordinating conjunction*: For example: *Jack plays guitar, **but** his brother plays the violin.*

Let us take another example:

Jerry likes strawberry, and his brother likes vanilla.

Clearly, this sentence has two *Independent* clauses, since each of these clauses can be its own sentence:

1. *Jerry likes strawberry*
– Independent clause: *Jerry* is the subject, and *likes* is the verb
2. *His brother likes vanilla*
– Independent clause: *His brother* is the subject, and *likes* is the verb

In this case, the *coordinating conjunction and* connects two independent clauses. This is actually the basic characteristic of *coordinating conjunctions*: They are used to connect independent clauses.

- b. Using a *semicolon*: Using a *semicolon* is another way to connect two independent clauses. In the above example, we can also connect the two independent clauses by a *semicolon*:

Jack plays guitar; his brother plays the violin.

Note:

- a) If any other way (other than *coordinating* conjunction or *semicolon*) is used to connect independent clauses, it results in an *invalid* sentence.

A good understanding of the construct of a *run-on* sentence (two independent clauses are connected by a *comma*) is crucial, since GMAT tends to test this quite extensively. Remember that run-on sentences are always *incorrect*

For example, if two independent clauses are connected by a *comma*, it results in what is called a *run-on* sentence and is a grammatically *incorrect* sentence.

In the above example, if we connect the two independent clauses by a *comma*:

Jack plays guitar, his brother plays the violin.

This sentence is a case of two *independent clauses* connected by a *comma*, and is hence a *run-on* sentence, an invalid sentence structure.

- b) Independent clauses can start with words such as *instead*, *moreover*, *likewise*, *therefore*, *however* and *otherwise*. So, following sentences would also be *run-on* and hence *incorrect*.

James did not study well for the exam, hence, he could not succeed.

- The two *independent clauses* in this sentence (*James did not study well for the exam* and *hence, he could not succeed*) are connected by just connected by a *comma*, and hence, is *run-on*.

Many businesses in the country do not pay regular taxes, instead, they find innovative ways to evade taxes.

- The two *independent clauses* in this sentence (*many businesses in the country do not pay regular taxes* and *instead, they find innovative ways to evade taxes*) are connected by just connected by a *comma*, and hence, is *run-on*.