

# THE SUBORDINATE CONJUNCTION

**Recognize a subordinate conjunction when you find one.**

---

Some sentences are *complex*. Such sentences have two **clauses**, one **main** (or *independent*) and one **subordinate** (or *dependent*).

The essential component in a complex sentence is the subordinate conjunction:

SUBORDINATE CONJUNCTIONS		
after	in case	that
although	in order that	though
as	insofar as	till
as if	just as	unless
as long as	no matter how	until
as soon as	now that	when
as though	once	whenever
because	provided that	where
before	rather than	whereas
even if	since	wherever
even though	so that	whether
how	than	while
if		why

The subordinate conjunction has two jobs. First, it provides a necessary transition between the two ideas in the sentence. This transition will indicate a time, place, or cause and effect relationship.

Here are examples:

Louisa will wash the sink full of her dirty dishes **once her roommate Shane cleans his stubble and globs of shaving cream from the bathroom sink.**

We searched the top of the refrigerator, **where Jenny will often hide a bag of chocolate chip cookies.**

**Because her teeth were chattering in fear,** Lynda clenched her jaw muscle while waiting for her turn to audition.

The second job of the subordinate conjunction is to reduce the importance of one clause. The more important idea belongs in the main clause, the less important in the clause introduced by the subordinate conjunction.

Read these examples:

**As Samson blew out the birthday candles atop the cake,** he burned the tip of his nose on a stubborn flame.

Burning his nose > blowing out candles.

Ronnie sneezes violently **whenever he opens the door to greet a fresh spring day.**

Sneezing violently > opening the door.

**Even though Dana persevered in her calculus class,** she was only adding another F on her transcript.

Adding another *F* > persevering in the class.

## **Punctuate a complex sentence correctly.**

---

Complex sentences follow two patterns:

**Main Clause** + Ø + **Subordinate Clause** .

Nicky shook her head and sighed as she puzzled over the algebra problem.

**Subordinate Clause** + , + **Main Clause** .

When the doorbell rang, Nicky slammed shut her textbook and rose to pay for her pizza.

