

A clause is a unit of grammar that expresses a proposition. In other words, it is part of a sentence that contains some form of meaning.

Example: *Although there was a storm, I walked to work.*

Here, there are two clauses. "Although there was a storm" expresses a proposition, and so does "I walked to work."

The first clause in the example above is called an **adverb clause**, which means that **it is part of a sentence that contains a subordinating conjunction, a subject, and a verb.**

There are essentially **five types of adverb clauses**, and they can use a variety of subordinating conjunctions. They are:

Place – wherever, anywhere, everywhere, where

Example: *Everywhere she goes, she brings a camera.*

Time – since, while, as soon as, before, after, until, when, anytime

Example: *While we were waiting for the pizza guy to arrive, we played poker at the kitchen table.*

Reason – because, since, as, for, so that

Example: *Because it was exceptionally cold, I wore my winter jacket.*

Condition – if, when, unless, even if, even though

Example: *Even if they lose by five goals, people will still love them.*

Contrast – though, although, despite, in spite of, whereas

Example: *Despite the poor service provided, we still enjoyed the food and the atmosphere of the restaurant.*

All of these examples contain two parts: a **subordinate clause (the adverb clause)**, and an **independent clause**. A subordinate clause needs an independent clause for it to have a complete context and for it to make sense.

The subordinate clause and independent clause can be reversed in a sentence. However, if the subordinate clause comes first, there must be a comma between it and the independent clause.

Example: *Anytime I want to go outside, it always seems to rain.*

This sentence can also be flipped, so that the independent clause comes first. However, if the independent clause comes first, a comma is not necessary.

Example: *It always seems to rain anytime I want to go outside.*

Adverb clauses are an important part of spoken and written English, and must be understood if a student wants to be a fluent speaker, or a better writer.