

The Independent Clause

- 6b.** An *independent* (or *main*) *clause* expresses a complete thought and can stand by itself as a sentence.

EXAMPLES Sheldon can make homemade pizzas.

Sheldon can make homemade pizzas, and he made one for me.

EXERCISE A Underline the independent clause or clauses in each of the following sentences.

Examples 1. Sheldon made whole-wheat pizza dough, and then he spread the dough in a pan.

2. He used a nonstick pan because he wanted cleanup to be easy.

1. After he prepared the dough, Sheldon washed mushrooms, green peppers, and an onion.
2. He peeled the onion, and he chopped the vegetables into bite-size chunks.
3. The next step was sautéing the vegetables until they were tender.
4. I wanted to make myself useful, so I grated the mozzarella and Parmesan cheese.
5. Now we had two bowls of ingredients, which were the vegetables and the cheese.
6. I also opened a jar of pizza sauce, and I spread the sauce on the dough.
7. Then came the fun part!
8. Sheldon spread the vegetables evenly across the sauce, and I added the cheese on top.
9. After baking at 450° for twenty-five minutes, the pizza was ready.
10. What a delicious pizza it was!

EXERCISE B For each of the following sentences, identify the underlined word group by writing above it *I* for *independent clause* or *NI* for *not an independent clause*.

Example 1. ^{NI} Since I met you, I've become more interested in baseball.

11. I never watched baseball games on television before meeting you.
12. We then watched games for several weekends in a row.
13. Now I understand the game much better.
14. When the game makes sense, it is suspenseful and enjoyable.
15. Since I have never played baseball, you can teach me!

Clauses

- 6a.** A **clause** is a word group that contains a verb and its subject and that is used as a sentence or as part of a sentence.

A clause that expresses a complete thought is called an *independent clause*. A clause that does not make sense by itself is called a *subordinate clause*.

NOT A CLAUSE I enjoy **writing in purple ink**. [This word group is not a clause because it does not contain both a verb and its subject.]

INDEPENDENT CLAUSE I **write** when I am angry or confused.

SUBORDINATE CLAUSE I write **when I am angry or confused**.

EXERCISE A For each of the following sentences, identify the subject and the verb in the underlined part of the sentence. Above the subject write *S*, and above the verb write *V*.

Example 1. At the local bookstore I bought a blank book.

- An antique map of the world is on the cover of my journal.
- To me, this map represents the undiscovered areas of my mind.
- When I read entries from months ago, I usually learn something about myself.
- I often write about experiences because I need an outlet for my emotions.
- I vent my frustrations in writing, and I feel better afterwards.

EXERCISE B For each of the following sentences, identify the underlined word group by writing above it *C* for *clause* or *NC* for *not a clause*.

Example 1. Writing down the angry comments ^{NC} that I think of is better than saying them aloud to a friend.

- If I let a few days go by, I usually do not feel the same anger.
- I then wonder what would have happened if I had actually said those things aloud!
- During the past two years, I have filled four blank books with journal entries.
- I know that many fascinating novelists and poets kept journals.
- Sometimes the writer will use his or her own experiences to inspire a story.
- Although I do not enjoy feeling sadness or fear, I am able to write about them convincingly.
- I can write convincingly because I have experienced these emotions myself.
- Several of my friends have told me that my stories should be published.
- Not even my best friend, whom I have known for three years, has ever read my journal.
- I believe that everyone deserves a certain amount of privacy.