

Language Awareness for Key Stage 3

15: Complex Sentences — Part I

Key Terms	Optional Terms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relative Pronoun• Complementizer• Conjunction• Indirect Statement• Indirect Question• Clause• Main Clause• Subordinate Clause• Relative Clause• Restrictive• Non-Restrictive• Interrogative Pronoun	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Root Clause• Matrix Clause• Secondary Clause• Subordination• Embedding• Relative Adverb• Conditional• Compound Sentence• Symmetry

- Introduction: Complex Sentences
 - Today we will look at ways to combine simple sentences into a single, complex sentence
 - We will revisit forms that we have seen before, such as relative pronouns, complementizers, and other conjunctions
 - We will see how these forms allow sentences to be used in the same way as other parts of speech: adjectives, nouns, and adverbs
 - We will also see how complex sentences can include indirect questions
- Complex Sentences
 - A complex sentence is a sentence with one or more other sentences inside it
 - The outer part is the main clause (sometimes called the root or matrix clause)
 - The inner parts are subordinate clauses (sometimes called secondary or embedded clauses)
 - The subordinate clauses add something “extra” to the main sentence:
 - A modifier for a noun
 - A subject or object for a verb
 - An adverbial modifier
 - We will see examples of each of these types, one by one
- Relative Pronouns
 - One way to combine sentences is using **relative pronouns**
 - I saw a bird
 - You saw a bird
 - You saw the bird **that I saw**
 - The part of a complex sentence that depends on a relative pronoun is called a relative clause
 - Relative clauses often perform a function similar to adjectives, helping to modify, define or describe people and things
 - You saw the bird **that I saw**
 - You saw the same bird
 - Relative clauses are often divided into two types, restrictive and non-restrictive
 - Restrictive clauses are used to define something
 - Mary found the dog **that was lost**
 - All we know about the dog is that it is the one that was lost

- Non-restrictive clauses describe something already known
 - Mary found John’s dog, **which** was lost
 - *John’s dog* tells us which dog it was, and the relative clause just tells us something extra about it
- In English, the rule of thumb is that *that* is used for restrictive clauses and who/which for non-restrictive clauses, but the full details of when each form is used are much more complex
- However, many languages always use the same word for each type of clause, as in French
 - Marie a trouvé le chien **qui** était perdu
‘Mary has found the dog that was lost’
 - Marie a trouvé son chien, **qui** était perdu
‘Mary has found his dog, which was lost’
- You can still tell the two types apart by their meaning, and usually by the comma before non-restrictive clauses (or a pause in speech)
- Like other pronouns, relative pronouns can have gender
 - Mary found John’s son, **who** was lost
 - In this sentence, *who* is masculine
 - Mary found John’s aunt, **who** was lost
 - In this sentence, *who* is feminine
 - Mary found John’s wallet, **which** was lost
 - *Which* is neuter
- Relative pronouns can also have case
 - Mary spoke to John, **who** had lost his wallet
 - *Who* is nominative — it is the subject of had lost
 - Mary spoke to John, **whose** wallet was lost
 - *Whose* is possessive (genitive)
 - Mary spoke to John, **whom** she had just met
 - *Whom* is accusative — it is the object of had met
 - Sometimes people also use *who* as an accusative form
 - *That* always has the same form for all genders and cases
- We see the same patterns in other languages where pronouns show gender and case, such as German
 - Maria sprach mit Hans, **der** seine Brieftasche verloren hatte
‘Mary spoke with John, who had lost his wallet’
 - Maria sprach mit Hans, **dessen** Brieftasche verloren war
‘Mary spoke with John, whose wallet was lost’
 - Maria sprach mit Hans, **dem** sie gerade begegnet war
‘Mary spoke with John, whom she had just met’
 - Hans sprach mit Maria, **die** ihre Brieftasche verloren hatte
‘John spoke with Mary, who had lost her wallet’
 - Hans sprach mit Maria, **deren** Brieftasche verloren war
‘John spoke with Mary, whose wallet was lost’
 - Hans sprach mit Maria, **der** er gerade begegnet war
‘John spoke with Mary, whom he had just met’

Activity 1:

Take a minute to look at these examples. What do you notice about German word order? Do you notice any other differences between German and English?

Notes:

- Relative Adverbs
 - There are also relative adverbs, which are very similar to relative pronouns
 - the place **where** something happened
 - the time **when** something happened
- Complementizers
 - Complementizers are another type of word that you may remember
 - One use for complementizers is to let sentences be used as subjects or objects, in the same way as nouns
 - John has left
 - **That John has left** surprises me
 - This fact surprises me
 - **Whether John has left or not** is unimportant
 - This question is unimportant
 - Because complementizers let sentences be used as subjects or objects, they can be used to form indirect questions and indirect statements
 - John has left
 - I wonder **whether John has left**
 - Mary says **that John has left**
 - We will look more closely at indirect statements in the next lesson
 - Note that *that* can be either a complementizer or a relative pronoun
 - If it is a relative pronoun, it will be modifying a noun
 - If it is a complementizer, it will normally be the subject or object of a verb
- Indirect Questions
 - Another way to form indirect questions is using interrogative pronouns
 - *Interrogative pronouns* are the ones used in questions
 - *Who* did that?
 - John asked *who* did that
 - In English, *interrogative pronouns* often look like **relative pronouns**
 - I saw *who* did it
 - I saw the person **who** did it
 - This is true in many other languages, such as French
 - J'ai vu *qui* l'a fait
 - J'ai vu la personne **qui** l'a fait
 - However, there are also languages where *interrogative pronouns* and **relative pronouns** have different forms
 - Ich habe gesehen, wer es gemacht hat (German)
'I saw who did it'
 - Ich habe gesehen den Menschen, **der** es gemacht hat
'I saw the person who did it'
 - Είδον τίς ἐποίησεν αὐτό (Greek)
'I saw who did it'
 - Είδον τὸν ἀνθρώπον **ὃς** ἐποίησεν αὐτό
'I saw the person who did it'
- Subordinating Conjunctions
 - As you may remember, there are many conjunctions that can be used to combine sentences
 - These **conjunctions** modify the meaning of the sentence in some of the same ways as *adverbs*
 - John left
 - Something happened **after** John left
 - Something happened *then*

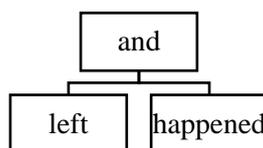
- Something happened **although** John left
 - Something happened *anyway*
- One important conjunction is *if*, which is used in conditional sentences
 - **If** John left, someone should bring him back
- *If* can also be used as a complementizer, like *whether*
 - I asked *if* John left
- As a complementizer, *if* creates a clause that can be used as the object of a verb (*ask*)
- Note that sentences like this do not have a conditional meaning
 - ‘If John left, then in that case I asked’

Activity 2:

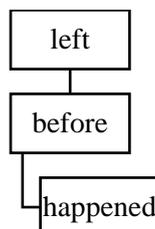
Take some time and try to make a list of all the other subordinating conjunctions you can find. Do not include coordinating conjunctions (*and, or, but*, etc.). If you’re not sure whether a word is right or not, you can consult a dictionary.

Subordinating Conjunctions

- You may remember the difference between coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions from an earlier lesson
- Coordinating conjunctions join two equal sentences to form a single compound sentence
 - John left **and** something happened



- Subordinating conjunctions subordinate one sentence to another and form a single complex sentence
 - John left **before** something happened



- The relationships expressed by coordinating conjunctions are more likely to be symmetrical
- This means that you can reverse the order without changing the meaning
 - John is Irish and Christina is Greek
 - Christina is Greek and John is Irish
- However, there are exceptions to this
- Conclusion
 - We have seen many different ways of combining simple sentences into a single, complex sentence
 - We have looked at relative pronouns, complementizers, and various conjunctions
 - We have seen different ways of forming indirect questions
 - We have also looked at the difference between subordination and coordination