

In this guide, we will look at adverbial clauses (or adverb clauses). We will answer a number of questions, such as: What is an adverbial clause? What are the components of an adverb clause? What is the difference between a clause and a phrase? What is the difference between adverb clauses and adjective clauses? What are the types of adverbial clauses?

We also provide a lot of examples and explanations for each type of adverb clauses.

This guide will help you get a better idea of adverb clauses and how to use them in sentences. Enjoy!

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What is an Adverb Clause?

Adverbial clauses or Adverb clauses are groups of words with a subject and a predicate that function as adverbs in a sentence.

Just like adverbs, they answer the questions “when?”, “where?”, “how?”, “why?” to describe time, place, manner, purpose, etc.:

- *Before you leave, please turn off the lights.*
- *The show will start after the sun goes down.*
- *She acted like it was a joke.*
- *We canceled the trip because the weather has gotten worse.*

Components of an Adverbial Clause

An adverb clause has a number of essential components:

Many adverb clauses also have objects.

- A subject
- A predicate
- A subordinating conjunction

Subject

A SUBJECT is a person or thing that is “doing” something in the clause. It answers the question “who/what”.

A subject can be a pronoun, a noun, a noun phrase (noun+modifiers) or even a verb (an infinitive or gerund):

- *He came home very late. (pronoun)*
- *A cat crossed the street. (noun)*

- *Small children can be hyperactive. (noun phrase)*
- *To leave was a good idea. (infinitive)*
- *Swimming is a great exercise. (gerund)*

Predicate

A PREDICATE tells us what the subject “does”. It can be a verb or a verb phrase (verb+objects or modifiers):

- *Audrey laughed. (verb)*
- *Audrey laughed happily (verb + modifier)*
- *Audrey laughed like a little child. (verb phrase)*

Conjunction (trigger word)

Most adverb clauses begin with a conjunction or “trigger word”. A conjunction sets the context of the sentence. It can indicate time, place, manner, condition, etc.

Conjunctions used with adverb clauses are called subordinating conjunctions. Adverb clauses are therefore called subordinate clauses or dependent clauses.

Here are some examples of subordinating conjunctions:

Time	<i>when, after, before, until, since, while, once, as, as soon as</i>
Reason	<i>because, since, as, so</i>
Condition	<i>if, unless</i>
Manner	<i>like, as</i>
Comparison	<i>as ... as, more than, less than</i>
Concession	<i>although, even though, even if, while</i>

Adverb Clause vs Adverb Phrase

When talking about clauses, it is important to know the difference between a clause and a phrase.

An adverb clause always has a subject (who/what) and a predicate (what the subject does):

- *If you are late...*
- *When I saw my friend...*
- *Before I go back to school...*

An adverb phrase, on the other hand, does not have a subject and a predicate:

- *Like a little kid*
- *In two days*
- *Quite well*

Adverb Clause vs. Adjective Clause

Not that we have learned how to tell apart adverbial clauses and adverbial phrases, it's time to learn how to distinguish between adverbial clauses and adjective clauses.

Adjective clauses are **dependent clauses** that modify **nouns** or **pronouns**. Just like with adverbial clauses, when trying to identify adjective clauses it is important to determine what kind of questions the clause answers. Adjective clauses describe nouns or noun phrases by answering the questions "which?" or "what type of?"

- *The piano, **which was my grandfather's favorite**, did not fit into the new apartment.*
- *Jane, **who won the jackpot**, just bought a new car.*
- *Bob broke the toy **which he was given for his birthday**.*

As you can see, the adjective clauses here answer the question "which?" and describe nouns

just like adjectives normally do.

Another distinctive feature of adjective clauses is that you can't move them in the sentence without ruining the grammatical structure of the sentence. With adverbial clauses, this is usually not a problem and their position in the sentence can be changed fairly easily.

- ***Which was my grandfather's favorite*** the piano did not fit into the new apartment.
- The piano did not fit into the new apartment ***which was my grandfather's favorite***.

When you move the adjective clause, the sentence usually makes no sense. This is actually an easy way to determine whether the clause you are analyzing is an adjective clause or an adverbial clause. If you are not sure, just try moving the clause around in the sentence. With adjective clauses, you will immediately notice that the sentence becomes weird. With adverbial clauses, you can normally move the clause without too much trouble.

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Examples of Adverb Clauses in Sentences

As we discussed before, you can move adverb clauses in sentences fairly easily. You can put adverb clauses in the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence.

Below are some examples of adverb clauses in different positions in sentences.

Adverb clauses at the beginning of a sentence:

- Before you leave, please turn off the lights.

- *Although she hasn't finished her work, she is watching a movie.*
- *Once they throw you out, you can't go back.*
- *After the game had finished, everyone went to a pub.*
- *When they went to the zoo, she saw an elephant for the first time in her life.*
- *Because she loved him, she was extremely forgiving.*

Adverb clauses in the middle of a sentence:

- *Chocolate, because it melts at low temperatures, can be tricky to bake with.*
- *Bob, after he bought his new boat, was rarely seen at home.*
- *My grandmother, when she was angry, was better left alone.*
- *Jack, although it was chilly, was only wearing a t-shirt.*

Examples of adverb clauses at the end of a sentence:

- *I don't think he needs much sleep because he calls me at all hours of the day.*
- *We canceled the trip because the weather has gotten worse.*
- *Turn the TV off so that we can eat our dinner.*
- *She acted like it was a joke.*
- *The show will start after the sun goes down.*

Types of Adverb Clauses

Types of Adverb Clauses



An adverb clause is a group of words with A SUBJECT and A PREDICATE that functions as an ADVERB in a sentence.

1. Time

'when', 'whenever', 'before', 'after', 'as', 'while', 'until', 'as soon as', 'since'

2. Place

'where', 'wherever', 'everywhere'

3. Condition

'if', 'unless', 'provided that'

4. Manner

'like', 'as though', 'as if'

5. Reason

'because', 'since', 'as'

6. Effect

'so...that', 'such...that'

7. Comparison

'where', 'wherever', 'everywhere'

8. Contrast

'although', 'though', "even if", 'even though', 'while', 'whereas'

9. Purpose

'so that', 'lest', 'in order that'

Types of Adverb Clauses

Adverb Clauses of Time

Adverb clauses of time tell us about when something happens.

We can use **conjunctions** like **'when', 'whenever', 'before', 'after', 'as', 'while', 'until', 'as soon as',** and **'since'**:

- I stopped running when I saw my friend.
- Annie gets excited whenever she sees a dog.
- I'll do my homework before I go back to school.
- Harry went home after the movie ended.
- I watched my mother as she prepared dinner.

- *He washed the dishes while his girlfriend vacuumed the floor.*
- *I will come over as soon as I finish eating.*
- *Gemma hasn't stopped working since she arrived.*

You can also take our [interactive quiz](#) on adverb clauses of time.

Adverbial Clauses of Place

Adverb clauses of place tell us about where something happens.

We can use the conjunctions **'where'**, **'wherever'**, and **'everywhere'**:

- *Wherever I go, I always see a McDonald's restaurant.*
- *I'm not sure where she lives.*
- *We met kind people everywhere we went.*
- *Where there is a will, there is a way.*
- *He followed her wherever she went.*
- *That's the town where I was born.*

Adverbial Clauses of Condition

Adverbial clauses of condition tell us about the circumstances under which something happens. These clauses often begin with **'if'**, **'unless'**, or **'provided that'**:

- *I only watch TV if my favorite show is on.*
- *He won't go to university unless he studies very hard.*
- *You can play the game provided that you follow the rules.*

Adverbial Clauses of Manner

Adverbial clauses of manner show us how something happens. They usually begin with the conjunctions **'like'**, **'as though'** or **'as if'**:

- *She looked as though she was in pain.*
- *Ryan walked past as if he hadn't seen us.*
- *He talked to me like I was a child.*

You can find more information about adverbial clauses of time, place, condition, and manner in our separate post: [Adverb Clauses of Time, Place, Condition, and Manner](#).

Adverbial Clauses of Cause/Reason

Clauses of cause are used to show why something happens. These clauses begin with the conjunctions **'because'**, **'since'**, and **'as'**:

- I listen to classical music because it sounds beautiful.
- Since you're so kind to me, I will help you.
- As it was so sunny, he walked to the park.

Note: **'because'** is more common in informal conversations than **'since'** or **'as.'**

Adverbial Clauses of Effect

Clauses of effect tell us about consequences. They often begin with **'so...that'**, and **'such...that'**.

We usually put an adjective between **'so'** and **'that.'**:

- I was so tired that I couldn't stay awake.
- The meal was so delicious that we made it again the next day.

We can put an adjective and a noun (or just a noun) between **'such'** and **'that'**:

- She is such a good runner that nobody can catch her.
- It was such a warm day that we could not believe it was February.

Adverbial Clauses of Comparison

Clauses of comparison are used to **compare** things or ideas. They often begin with the conjunctions **'than'** or **'as...as'**:

- *My brother is older than he looks.*
- *She is as beautiful as she is smart.*
- *You are stronger than you think.*
- *That restaurant is not as good as it used to be.*

You can find more information about adverbial clauses of cause/reason, effect, and comparison in our separate post: [Adverb Clauses of Cause, Effect, and Comparison](#).

Adverbial Clauses of Concession/Contrast

Adverbial clause of concession describes contrasting statements or circumstances **despite** which something happens.

They usually begin with *'although', 'though', "even if", 'even though', 'while'* or *'whereas'*:

- *Although it rained, they enjoyed their walk.*
- *I enjoyed the meal, though it was expensive.*
- *Even though I was full, I couldn't stop eating.*
- *Harry, while he was almost crying from the pain, decided to finish the race.*
- *Joseph was very popular whereas his brother had more enemies than friends.*

Adverbial Clauses of Purpose

Adverbial clauses of purpose show why something is happening (the intended result).

We can use *'so that', 'lest'* and *'in order that'*:

- *He took off his shoes so that he would not ruin the carpet.*
- *Walk carefully lest you should fall.*

- *The doctors did extensive research in order that they can find the cure for that disease.*

You can find more information about adverbial clauses of contrast and purpose in our separate post: [Adverb Clauses of Contrast and Purpose](#).