

Identifying Clauses

15a. 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.

Every clause has a subject and a verb, but not every clause expresses a complete thought.

SENTENCE While the bear crossed the road, the tourists stayed inside their cars.

CLAUSE While the bear ^S crossed the road ^V [incomplete thought]

CLAUSE ^S the tourists stayed ^V inside their cars [complete thought]

Do not mistake a phrase for a clause. A phrase does not contain both a verb and its subject.

PHRASE After the soccer game, the coach took us out for pizza.

CLAUSE After we won the soccer game, the coach took us out for pizza.

EXERCISE A For the underlined clause in each of the following sentences, identify the subject and verb by writing *S* above the subject and *V* above the verb.

Example 1. ^S After Jim woke, ^V he watched a Japanese monster movie on television.

1. Antonio told her that he had not planned on coming to the party.
2. I have no idea when the mechanic finished the repairs on the car.
3. Before the storm struck, the sky turned an odd shade of green.
4. When she arrived at the dock, the ferry had already left for the island.
5. At last Gretchen met Conrad and Padgett, who were the pets of her friend Mimi.
6. Grabbing his hat, Robb dashed out into the snow.
7. Even though they invited her, Joie decided not to come along on the field trip.
8. Vince decided to read the book before he saw the movie.
9. You may come with us if you want.
10. Teddy stopped the dryer when he heard his boots clunking around inside it.

EXERCISE B On the line provided, identify the underlined word group in each of the following sentences as a *clause* or a *phrase*.

Example *clause* 1. Before I met you, I had never heard of the jazz musician Miles Davis.

- _____ 11. After the game, the winning team shook hands with the losing team.
- _____ 12. While they waited for sunset, the crowd sang songs.
- _____ 13. During the broadcast, the singer kept her eye on the camera.
- _____ 14. Unfortunately for us, Warren did not bring enough food for everybody.
- _____ 15. Sometimes the Santos family likes to eat popcorn while they watch a video.