

Independent and Subordinate Clauses

15b. An *independent* (or *main*) *clause* expresses a complete thought and can stand by itself as a complete sentence.

EXAMPLE I left Trina a message on her voice mail, but she never returned my call.

15c. A *subordinate* (or *dependent*) *clause* does not express a complete thought and cannot stand by itself as a complete sentence.

EXAMPLES When the pot boiled over, the oatmeal spilled onto the stove.

One bird that travels long distances in the spring and fall is the osprey.

EXERCISE A On the line provided, identify each of the following word groups as an *independent* clause or a *subordinate* clause.

Example subordinate 1. whenever she chops onions

- _____ 1. as she leaned across the table
- _____ 2. they voted for a new chairperson
- _____ 3. the bottle was broken
- _____ 4. which they all said
- _____ 5. if someone can help me
- _____ 6. that the car was already in the garage
- _____ 7. my birthday comes in August
- _____ 8. that photograph is striking
- _____ 9. is the cup full
- _____ 10. since Keeley is not going

EXERCISE B Draw one line under each independent clause and two lines under each subordinate clause in the following sentences.

Example 1. When she had finished skating, the judges awarded the French skater, who was my favorite, the gold medal.

- 11. Dr. Zamora left the dinner party before the main course was served.
- 12. Before we begin the meeting, let me introduce the newest member of our team.
- 13. The last singer on the program is the one who can hit the high notes.
- 14. When the conductor tapped her baton, the orchestra fell silent.
- 15. One planet that has often excited the imaginations of science fiction writers is Mars, which is sometimes called the red planet.