MAIN CLAUSES & SENTENCE STRUCTURE

CEFR Level B1 — Intermediate

English Language Worksheets | 4 Worksheets + Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Main vs Subordinate Clauses

One stands alone; the other cannot.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Look and learn**

Clause	Can it stand alone?	Example
main (independent)	yes — it is a full sentence	She missed the bus.
subordinate (dependent)	no — it needs a main clause	because she overslept
together	subordinate + main = complex sentence	Because she overslept, she missed the bus.

*Test: read the clause on its own. If it sounds unfinished, it is **subordinate**. Subordinate clauses often start with because, when, if, although, that, who, which.*

PART B — **Main or subordinate?**

Write M (main) or S (subordinate) for each underlined clause.

1. Although the film was long, we enjoyed it. → _____
2. The lights went out and the room fell silent. → _____
3. I'll call you when I arrive. → _____
4. She locked the door before she left. → _____
5. The book that you recommended was excellent. → _____
6. He apologised, but nobody forgave him. → _____

PART C — **Four sentence types**

Label each sentence: SIMPLE (1 main), COMPOUND (2+ main), COMPLEX (main + subordinate) or COMPOUND-COMPLEX (2+ main + subordinate).

1. When the alarm sounded, everyone left the building and the fire crew arrived. → _____
2. The exhibition closes on Sunday. → _____
3. I wanted to help, but I had no time. → _____
4. She smiled because the news was good. → _____

Score: _____ / 14

Worksheet 2: Coordination — FANBOYS & Punctuation

Seven coordinating conjunctions, and the comma rule that governs them.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **The seven coordinators**

Word	Meaning	Example
For	because (formal)	He left early, for he was unwell.
And	addition	She writes, and she paints.
Nor	negative addition	He didn't call, nor did he write.
But	contrast	It rained, but we went out.
Or	alternative	Sit down, or you'll fall.
Yet	contrast (surprise)	It was cheap, yet it lasted years.
So	result	It was late, so we left.

*Rule: a comma goes **before** a coordinator that joins two main clauses. After **nor**, the word order inverts: nor did he write.*

PART B — **Choose the coordinator**

Complete each sentence with for, and, nor, but, or, yet, or so.

1. The plan was risky, _____ it worked perfectly.
2. She never replied, _____ did she apologise.
3. Take a coat, _____ you will get cold.
4. The roads were icy, _____ the school closed.
5. He stayed at home, _____ he was feeling unwell.
6. They packed their bags, _____ they called a taxi.
7. I studied for weeks, _____ I still failed.

PART C — **Semicolon or comma?**

Two main clauses can be joined by a semicolon (no conjunction) or a comma + coordinator. Rewrite each comma splice in BOTH ways.

1. “The evidence was clear, the jury acquitted him.”
   Semicolon: _____
   Comma + coordinator: _____
2. “She trained daily, she won the race.”
   Semicolon: _____
   Comma + coordinator: _____

Score: _____ / 11

Worksheet 3: Fixing Fragments, Run-Ons & Splices

Diagnose the fault, then repair it.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A **Diagnose**

Write FRAG (fragment), RUN (run-on), CS (comma splice) or OK.

1	The results arrived on Monday they were disappointing. → _____
2	Which nobody had predicted. → _____
3	He resigned; his deputy took over. → _____
4	The meeting ran late, we missed our train. → _____
5	Having read the report twice. → _____
6	She apologised, and the matter was closed. → _____

PART B **Repair**

Rewrite each faulty sentence. Use a different repair method each time (coordinator, semicolon, subordinator, or two sentences).

1	“The printer broke, we finished the report by hand.” _____
2	“Although the budget was approved.” _____
3	“He missed the deadline he lost the contract.” _____
4	“Running through the empty station at midnight.” _____

Score: _____ / 10

Worksheet 4: Reading & Writing

Analyse how a writer varies sentence structure.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Analytical reading**

> *The harbour was quiet. Fishing boats rocked against the wall, and gulls circled overhead, though nobody was cleaning fish that morning. Old Kemal had not gone out since his son left, nor had he mended his nets. He sat on an upturned crate; the sea moved without him. When the ferry sounded its horn, he did not look up. He had watched a thousand ferries leave, and he knew exactly how long it took for the wake to reach the harbour steps. It took eleven seconds. It always had.*

1. Find one SIMPLE, one COMPOUND, one COMPLEX and one COMPOUND-COMPLEX sentence.

_____

_____

_____

2. Locate the semicolon. Why has the writer used it instead of a full stop?

_____

_____

3. ‘nor had he mended his nets’ — what happens to the word order after ‘nor’?

_____

4. The last two sentences are very short. What is the effect?

_____

_____

PART B — **Write a description**

Write a description (80–100 words) of a place at a quiet moment. Use all FOUR sentence types (simple, compound, complex, compound-complex) at least once. Label each in the margin.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Word count: _____ Types used: _____ / 4

Score: _____ / 14

ANSWER KEY & TEACHER NOTES

For teacher use only — B1 Level Worksheets

Main Clauses & Sentence Structure | English Language Worksheets

Worksheet 1 – Main vs Subordinate

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B	M / S 1–6	**1 S, 2 M, 3 S, 4 M, 5 S, 6 M**
C	Sentence types 1–4	**1 COMPOUND-COMPLEX, 2 SIMPLE, 3 COMPOUND, 4 COMPLEX**

Worksheet 2 – FANBOYS & Punctuation

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B	Gaps 1–7 in order	**yet, nor, or, so, for, and, but**
C1	clear / acquitted	**Semicolon: The evidence was clear; the jury acquitted him. Coordinator: The evidence was clear, so the jury acquitted him.**
C2	trained / won	**Semicolon: She trained daily; she won the race. Coordinator: She trained daily, and she won the race.**

Worksheet 3 – Fragments, Run-Ons & Splices

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A	Diagnosis 1–6	**1 RUN, 2 FRAG, 3 OK, 4 CS, 5 FRAG, 6 OK**
B1	comma splice	**The printer broke, so we finished the report by hand.**
B2	fragment	**Although the budget was approved, the work never began.**
B3	run-on	**He missed the deadline; he lost the contract.**
B4	fragment	**She was running through the empty station at midnight.**

Worksheet 4 – Reading & Writing

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	Four sentence types	**Simple: ‘The harbour was quiet.’ / ‘It took eleven seconds.’ Compound: ‘He had watched a thousand ferries leave, and he knew exactly how long …’ Complex: ‘When the ferry sounded its horn, he did not look up.’ Compound-complex: ‘Fishing boats rocked against the wall, and gulls circled overhead, though nobody was cleaning fish that morning.’**
A2	the semicolon	**‘He sat on an upturned crate; the sea moved without him.’ — the two clauses are closely linked in meaning; a semicolon binds them more tightly than a full stop would.**
A3	after ‘nor’	**The word order inverts: auxiliary before subject (‘nor had he mended’, not ‘nor he had mended’).**
A4	short final sentences	**The abrupt simple sentences slow the rhythm and land the point, isolating Kemal's precise, unchanging knowledge — a stillness that echoes his grief.**

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B	Description (80–100 words)	**Up to 6 marks: 4 for using all four sentence types accurately, 2 for punctuation and effect.**