NOUN CLAUSES

CEFR Level B1 — Intermediate

English Language Worksheets | 4 Worksheets + Answer Key

Worksheet 1: The Functions of a Noun Clause

Wherever a noun can go, a noun clause can go.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Look and learn**

Function	Example	Noun equivalent
subject	That he lied was obvious.	His lie was obvious.
object of a verb	She explained why she left.	She explained her reason.
complement after 'be'	The problem is that we're late.	The problem is our lateness.
object of a preposition	It depends on what you decide.	It depends on your decision.
after an adjective	I'm certain that he'll come.	I'm certain of his arrival.

*Note! After a preposition use **what / whether**, never **that**: It depends on whether he agrees. (NOT on that he agrees)*

PART B — **Name the function**

Underline the noun clause and write its function (subject, object, complement, after preposition, after adjective).

1. Everything depends on what the doctor says. → _____
2. He denied that he had seen the message. → _____
3. What she decided changed everything. → _____
4. I'm not sure whether the shop is open. → _____
5. The truth is that nobody checked. → _____
6. Whether we succeed depends on funding. → _____

PART C — **That or what?**

Complete each sentence with 'that' or 'what'. Remember: 'what' = 'the thing which' and needs no other object.

1. I didn't understand _____ he meant.
2. She promised _____ she would call.
3. _____ he told us was completely false.
4. It is clear _____ the plan has failed.

5	Show me _____ you bought.
6	I hope _____ you feel better soon.

Score: _____ / 12

Worksheet 2: Reported Speech

Backshift, pronouns, time words — and questions.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Look and learn**

Direct	Reported	Change
“I am tired.”	He said he was tired.	present → past
“I saw her.”	He said he had seen her.	past → past perfect
“I will call.”	He said he would call.	will → would
“I can swim.”	He said he could swim.	can → could
“today / tomorrow”	that day / the next day	time words shift

Rewrite each sentence as reported speech.

1. “I have finished the report,” he explained.
   → He explained _____
2. “Where do you live?” she asked me.
   → She asked me _____
3. “We will leave tomorrow,” they said.
   → They said _____
4. “Did you see the email?” he asked.
   → He asked _____
5. “I can't come today,” she told him.
   → She told him _____

PART B — **Reporting verbs**

admitted • asked • explained • promised • suggested • warned

Complete each sentence with a reporting verb from the box. Use each once.

1. She _____ that the ice was thin and dangerous.
2. He _____ that he had taken the money.
3. The guide _____ how the machine worked.
4. They _____ that we meet again next week.
5. He _____ whether the museum was open.
6. She _____ that she would never tell anyone.

Score: _____ / 11

Worksheet 3: Word Order, Punctuation & Fragments

The three most common noun-clause errors.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — Fix the word order

Each embedded question uses question order by mistake. Rewrite it correctly.

1. "I wonder when will the results arrive."
   _____
2. "Could you tell me how much does it cost?"
   _____
3. "She asked me what was I doing."
   _____
4. "Nobody knows why did he resign."
   _____
5. "Do you remember where did we park?"
   _____

PART B — Comma or no comma?

A noun clause NEVER takes a comma before it. An adverbial clause takes one when fronted. Rewrite each sentence correctly, or write 'correct'.

1. I believe, that you are mistaken.
   _____
2. Because the roads were icy the school closed.
   _____
3. She told me, what had happened.
   _____
4. When you arrive call me immediately.
   _____

PART C — Fragment or sentence?

Write FRAG or OK. A noun clause alone is a fragment.

1. That the deadline has passed. → _____
2. I understand why you are angry. → _____
3. Whatever the committee decides. → _____
4. What matters is the result. → _____

Score: _____ / 13

Worksheet 4: Reading & Writing

Noun clauses at work in a real text.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Analytical reading**

> *What the villagers remembered was not the storm itself but the silence that followed it. Nobody could explain why the birds had left three days early. The oldest resident insisted that she had seen it happen once before, though she could not say when. The council announced that the bridge would be rebuilt; whether it ever would be was another question. What surprised everyone was how quickly the children returned to the river.*

1. Find FIVE noun clauses in the passage and give the function of each.

_____

_____

_____

2. 'What the villagers remembered was not the storm itself…' Identify the two clauses in this sentence and label one as a noun clause, one as a relative clause.

_____

_____

3. 'whether it ever would be was another question' — what word has been left out, and what is the clause's function?

_____

_____

4. Rewrite 'What surprised everyone was how quickly the children returned' using 'It…' Why might the writer have preferred the original?

_____

_____

PART B — **Write an account**

Write an account (80–100 words) of an event nobody could explain. Use at least FIVE noun clauses, including ONE as the subject and ONE after a preposition. Underline them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Word count: _____ Clauses underlined: _____ / 5

Score: _____ / 14

ANSWER KEY & TEACHER NOTES

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Worksheet 1 – Functions

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B	Functions 1–6	**1 ‘what the doctor says’ = after preposition; 2 ‘that he had seen the message’ = object; 3 ‘What she decided’ = subject; 4 ‘whether the shop is open’ = after adjective; 5 ‘that nobody checked’ = complement; 6 ‘Whether we succeed’ = subject**
C	that or what 1–6	**1 what, 2 that, 3 What, 4 that, 5 what, 6 that**

Worksheet 2 – Reported Speech

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	have finished	**He explained that he had finished the report.**
A2	where do you live	**She asked me where I lived.**
A3	will leave tomorrow	**They said that they would leave the next day.**
A4	did you see	**He asked whether/if I had seen the email.**
A5	can't come today	**She told him that she couldn't come that day.**
B	Reporting verbs 1–6	**warned, admitted, explained, suggested, asked, promised**

Worksheet 3 – Word Order, Commas & Fragments

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A	Word order 1–5	**1 I wonder when the results will arrive. 2 Could you tell me how much it costs? 3 She asked me what I was doing. 4 Nobody knows why he resigned. 5 Do you remember where we parked?**
B1	noun clause	**I believe that you are mistaken. (no comma)**
B2	fronted adverbial	**Because the roads were icy, the school closed.**
B3	noun clause	**She told me what had happened. (no comma)**
B4	fronted adverbial	**When you arrive, call me immediately.**
C	FRAG / OK 1–4	**1 FRAG, 2 OK, 3 FRAG, 4 OK**

Worksheet 4 – Reading & Writing

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	Five noun clauses + functions	**‘What the villagers remembered’ = subject; ‘why the birds had left three days early’ = object of ‘explain’; ‘that she had seen it happen once before’ = object of ‘insisted’; ‘when’ (= when she had seen it) = object of ‘say’; ‘that the bridge would be rebuilt’ = object of ‘announced’; ‘whether it ever would be’ = subject; ‘What surprised everyone’ = subject; ‘how quickly the children returned’ = complement**

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A2	the two clauses	**Noun clause: ‘What the villagers remembered’ (subject). Relative clause: ‘that followed it’ (describes ‘the silence’).**
A3	the ellipsis	**‘rebuilt’ is ellipted after ‘would be’ (recoverable from the previous clause). The whole ‘whether’ clause is the SUBJECT of ‘was another question’.**
A4	extraposition	**‘It surprised everyone how quickly the children returned to the river.’ The original wh-cleft fronts the surprise as the topic and places the new information (‘how quickly…’) in end-focus, giving it more weight.**
B	Account (80–100 words)	**Up to 6 marks: 5 for five correct noun clauses (including one subject and one after a preposition), 1 for coherence and accuracy.**