NOUN CLAUSES

CEFR Level C1 — Advanced

English Language Worksheets | 4 Worksheets + Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Advanced Complement Clauses

At C1, the basics are assumed. Focus: factivity, selection, embedding.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Key structures at C1

Structure	Function & Notes	Example
factive predicates	Presuppose the clause is TRUE (regret, know, realise)	“He regrets that he spoke.” (he did speak)
non-factive predicates	Leave truth open (claim, believe, allege)	“He claims that he was absent.” (perhaps not)
counter-factive	Presuppose the clause is FALSE (pretend, imagine)	“She pretended that she knew.” (she didn't)
extraposition	Dummy ‘it’; heavy clause moved to the end	“It is unclear whether the fund is solvent.”
mandative subjunctive	insist / essential + that + base form	“We require that he be removed.”
nominal relative	‘what / whoever’ = the thing(s) which	“What troubles me is the silence.”
multiple embedding	A clause inside a clause inside a clause	“He said that the woman who called claimed that she knew.”
‘that’ deletion constraints	Impossible in subject clauses and after some verbs	“That he lied is obvious.” (‘that’ obligatory)

PART A — **Complete the sentences**

Fill in each gap with an appropriate word or phrase. More than one answer may be possible.

1. _____ the report omits is any mention of the earlier warnings.
2. It is imperative that the witness _____ protected at all costs.
3. _____ remains unclear whether the two accounts can be reconciled.
4. She pretended _____ she had never seen the document.
5. _____ authorised the payment has never been established.
6. The board regrets _____ the error was not detected sooner.
7. Everything turns on _____ the clause is legally binding.
8. _____ he lied is not in dispute; his motive is.

PART B — **Error analysis**

Identify and correct the error in each sentence. Then note the rule violated.

1. "The board insisted that he resigns immediately."
   Correction: _____
   Rule: _____

2. "It depends on that he agrees to the terms."
   Correction: _____
   Rule: _____

3. "That the auditors had been dismissed three weeks before the collapse was known to the board."
   Correction: _____
   Rule: _____

4. "I wonder whether will they publish the findings."
   Correction: _____
   Rule: _____

Score: _____ / 20

Worksheet 2: Factivity, Presupposition & Register

What a verb makes you accept before you have agreed to anything.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — The factivity spectrum

The choice of reporting verb decides what the reader must presuppose. Study the tables.

Class	Predicates	The clause is…
factive	know, realise, regret, admit, reveal, discover	presupposed TRUE
non-factive	believe, claim, allege, suppose, argue	left OPEN
counter-factive	pretend, imagine, wish, feign	presupposed FALSE
semi-factive	notice, remember, forget (under negation, factivity survives)	usually TRUE

Test	How it works
negation test	‘He didn't regret that he spoke’ — he still spoke. Factive.
question test	‘Did he realise that she left?’ — she left either way. Factive.
the smuggling effect	‘He admitted that he lied’ makes the lie a shared premise, not a claim.

PART B — Factive, non-factive or counter-factive?

Classify each sentence, then say what the reader is made to presuppose.

1. “The minister alleges that the funds were misused.”
   Class: _____ Presupposition: _____
2. “The committee revealed that the funds were misused.”
   Class: _____ Presupposition: _____
3. “He imagines that he is being persecuted.”
   Class: _____ Presupposition: _____
4. “She realised that the door had been forced.”
   Class: _____ Presupposition: _____

PART C — Verdicts

Decide whether each sentence is (a) standard, (b) acceptable but marked/stylistic, or (c) a genuine error. Justify in one sentence.

1. “It is essential that every member be present.”
   Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____
2. “He regrets that he may have misled the House.”
   Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____
3. “That the scheme would fail was obvious to anyone who had read the costings.”
   Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____

4	“She asked me did I want to stay.” Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____
5	“The thing what he said was untrue.” Verdict: (a)/(b)/(c) Justification: _____

Score: _____ / 25

Worksheet 3: Academic Writing & Critical Analysis

How complement clauses smuggle premises into argument.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Analytical reading**

> *What a writer presupposes is harder to resist than what a writer asserts. Compare two sentences. 'The company claims that no data were lost' invites doubt; 'The company admits that no data were lost' is almost incoherent, because 'admit' is factive and nobody admits good news. That the choice of a single verb can decide whether a reader arrives at scepticism or assent is rarely taught. Consider the political favourite: 'Mistakes were made.' Nominalisation has already dissolved the agent; but observe how much further a factive can carry us. 'We regret that mistakes were made' concedes the mistakes and appropriates the regret, and it does so in a clause the reader must accept before the sentence has finished.*

1. Identify FIVE noun clauses and give the function of each.

_____

_____

_____

2. Explain the writer's point about 'claims that' versus 'admits that'.

_____

_____

3. 'That the choice of a single verb can decide… is rarely taught.' Rewrite with extraposition. Why might the writer have resisted it?

_____

_____

4. Analyse 'We regret that mistakes were made' as a piece of syntax. What does the reader accept, and at what point?

_____

_____

PART B — **Sentence transformation**

Rewrite each sentence according to the instruction. Preserve the meaning.

1. Original: "The council did not consult residents. This caused the dispute."
   Task: combine using a nominal relative as subject.
   → _____

2. Original: "It was obvious that the scheme would fail."
   Task: front the that-clause. Comment on end-weight.
   → _____

3. Original: "The panel said the rules had to be changed."
   Task: rewrite with a mandative subjunctive.
   → _____

4 Original: “The minister said he had not known about the payments.”
Task: replace the reporting verb with a factive one. What changes?
→ _____

5 Original: “We do not know if the treaty will hold.”
Task: extraposition with ‘whether’.
→ _____

PART C — Guided essay paragraph

Write a paragraph of 120–150 words arguing ONE position below. Include at least FOUR distinct structures from Worksheets 1–2; keep the register formal-academic.

Position A: The choice of reporting verb is an ethical act, not a stylistic one.
Position B: Readers are not so easily manipulated; presupposition is overstated.

My position: ___ A ___ B

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Word count: _____

Score: _____ / 30

Worksheet 4: Synthesis, Data Interpretation & Argumentation

Deploy complement clauses to interpret evidence and rebut claims.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Interpreting complex data**

Study the table analysing reporting verbs in five newspapers' coverage of one political scandal.

Paper	Factive verbs (%)	Non-factive (%)	Nominalisations /100w	Verdict implied
The Herald	62	31	6	guilty
Daily Post	18	74	4	open
The Chronicle	44	48	11	open
Evening Star	71	22	3	guilty
The Register	9	38	19	innocent

Write six analytical sentences using the data. Apply the constraints below.

1. [Use a nominal relative as the subject (‘What the data show …’).]

_____

_____

2. [Use extraposition with dummy ‘it’.]

_____

_____

3. [Use a factive predicate to present a finding as established.]

_____

_____

4. [Use a non-factive predicate to keep a claim open.]

_____

_____

5. [Use a noun clause after a preposition.]

_____

_____

6. [Acknowledge a limitation using a mandative subjunctive or a hedged that-clause.]

_____

_____

PART B — **Adversarial comparison (debate format)**

Write a two-sentence counter-argument that concedes part of each claim but challenges it from another angle. Use formal register and at least one advanced noun-clause structure per response.

1. Claim: “The Evening Star's factive rate proves that it abandoned impartiality.”

Hint: consider whether some facts were, by then, established.

Counter-argument:

_____

2. Claim: “The Register is the most responsible paper: it presupposes least.”
Hint: consider its nominalisation figure.

Counter-argument:

3. Claim: “The Chronicle is neutral, since its factive and non-factive rates are nearly equal.”
Hint: consider what nominalisation conceals that verbs reveal.

Counter-argument:

PART C — Extended writing task

Write a discursive essay introduction (180–220 words) on the proposition below. Use at least FIVE distinct noun-clause structures from this unit (underline them). Maintain a formal-academic register; present the proposition, acknowledge its complexity, and signal your line of argument.

“What a writer presupposes shapes the reader more powerfully than what a writer asserts.”

Word count: _____ Structures underlined: _____ / 5

Score: _____ / 35

ANSWER KEY & TEACHER NOTES

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Worksheet 1 – Gap Fill

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
1	___ the report omits	**What (nominal relative as subject)**
2	imperative that the witness ___ protected	**be (mandative subjunctive, passive)**
3	___ remains unclear whether	**It (extraposition, dummy subject)**
4	She pretended ___ she had never seen	**that (counter-factive; 'that' omissible)**
5	___ authorised the payment	**Who / Whoever (nominal relative as subject)**
6	The board regrets ___ the error	**that (factive — the error is presupposed)**
7	Everything turns on ___ the clause is binding	**whether (after a preposition, never 'that')**
8	___ he lied is not in dispute	**That (subject clause — 'that' obligatory)**

Worksheet 1 – Error Analysis

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
1	insisted that he resigns	**… that he resign. — 'insist' as a demand triggers the mandative subjunctive (base form)**
2	depends on that he agrees	**It depends on whether he agrees to the terms. — a 'that'-clause cannot follow a preposition; use 'whether'**
3	heavy fronted subject clause	**It was known to the board that the auditors had been dismissed three weeks before the collapse. — end-weight: extrapose the heavy clause**
4	whether will they publish	**I wonder whether they will publish the findings. — a noun clause takes statement word order, not inversion**

Worksheet 2 – Factivity & Verdicts

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B1	alleges	**Non-factive — the reader need not accept that the funds were misused**
B2	revealed	**Factive — the reader must accept that the funds were misused**
B3	imagines	**Counter-factive — the reader is invited to accept that he is NOT persecuted**
B4	realised	**Factive — the door had been forced, whether or not she realised it**
C1	essential that … be present	**(a) Standard mandative subjunctive**
C2	regrets that he may have misled	**(b) Marked — 'regret' is factive, so hedging its complement with 'may' is evasive: it concedes regret while denying the fact. Rhetorically effective, logically slippery.**

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
C3	That the scheme would fail was obvious …	**(b) Marked — grammatical, but the fronted heavy subject strains end-weight; 'It was obvious that …' is unmarked**
C4	She asked me did I want	**(c) Error — the noun clause requires statement order: 'She asked me whether I wanted to stay.'**
C5	The thing what he said	**(c) Error — 'what' contains its own antecedent: 'What he said was untrue.'**

Worksheet 3 – Part A (Passage Analysis)

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
Q1	Five noun clauses + functions	**'What a writer presupposes' = subject; 'what a writer asserts' = after preposition ('than'); 'that no data were lost' = object of 'claims'/'admits'; 'That the choice of a single verb can decide …' = subject; 'whether a reader arrives at scepticism or assent' = object of 'decide'; 'how much further a factive can carry us' = object of 'observe'; 'that mistakes were made' = object of 'regret'**
Q2	claims vs admits	**'Claim' is non-factive: the complement is a contested assertion, so the reader is invited to doubt it. 'Admit' is factive and carries a pragmatic implication of concession against interest — so admitting good news is incoherent, because nothing is being conceded.**
Q3	extraposition	**'It is rarely taught that the choice of a single verb can decide whether a reader arrives at scepticism or assent.' The writer resists it so that the proposition itself, not the dummy 'it', occupies subject position — the sentence performs the prominence it argues for.**
Q4	'We regret that mistakes were made'	**A factive verb takes a passive, nominalised complement. The reader must accept the mistakes as presupposed before reaching the main verb, while the agentless passive supplies no one to blame. The regret is asserted; the fault is smuggled.**

Worksheet 3 – Part B (Transformations)

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
1	nominal relative	**What caused the dispute was the council's failure to consult residents.**
2	front the that-clause	**That the scheme would fail was obvious. — grammatical but marked: it defies end-weight, so the fronting must be doing deliberate rhetorical work**
3	subjunctive	**The panel recommended that the rules be changed.**
4	factive verb	**'The minister admitted that he had not known …' — with a factive verb his ignorance becomes a presupposed fact rather than a contested claim; the reader can no longer doubt it**
5	extraposition	**It is not known whether the treaty will hold.**

Worksheets 3–4: Extended & Creative Tasks — Rubric

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Structural range	Uses 4–5 distinct noun-clause structures accurately	0–4
Register	Consistently formal-academic; predicate choice deliberate	0–3
Argumentation	Clear line of argument; factivity serves the reasoning	0–3

Criterion	Descriptor	Marks
Accuracy	No errors in subjunctive, word order, or extraposition	0–2
Coherence	Information hierarchy clear; end-weight respected	0–3

Worksheet 4 – Part A (Model sentences)

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
1	nominal relative	**What the data show is a near-perfect correlation between factive verbs and an implied verdict of guilt.**
2	extraposition	**It is striking that The Register presupposes least yet nominalises most.**
3	factive	**The figures reveal that the Evening Star used factive verbs in seventy-one per cent of cases.**
4	non-factive	**One might argue that The Chronicle's balance reflects editorial caution rather than neutrality.**
5	after preposition	**Everything depends on whether nominalisation is counted as evasion.**
6	limitation	**It is essential that any conclusion drawn here acknowledge that verb counts cannot capture headline placement or photograph choice.**