SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

CEFR Level B1 — Intermediate

English Language Worksheets | 4 Worksheets + Answer Key

Worksheet 1: Identifying the Three Types

Noun, relative and adverbial clauses — and how to tell them apart.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Look and learn**

Type	Test	Typical openers
noun (nominal)	Replace it with ‘something’ or ‘it’	that, what, whether, if, who, why, how
relative (adjectival)	It answers ‘which one?’ about a noun	who, whom, whose, which, that, where, when
adverbial	It answers when / why / how / on what condition	because, when, although, if, so that, until

*Careful! The same word can open different clause types. Compare: I know **that** he lied (noun) and the letter **that** he sent (relative). **If** you ask (adverbial) vs I wonder **if** he knows (noun).*

PART B — **Name the type**

Write N (noun), R (relative) or A (adverbial) for each underlined clause.

1. I'll wait until you call. → _____
2. The reason why he resigned remains unclear. → _____
3. Whether we succeed depends on funding. → _____
4. She showed me the photo that she had taken. → _____
5. He admitted that he had lied. → _____
6. Although the pay was poor, she stayed. → _____
7. I can't decide which one I prefer. → _____
8. We met at the café where they first spoke. → _____

PART C — **Same word, different clause**

For each pair, say which sentence contains a NOUN clause and which contains a RELATIVE or ADVERBIAL clause.

1. (a) I hope that she arrives. (b) The train that she took was late.
   (a) = _____ (b) = _____
2. (a) Ask him if he's ready. (b) If he's ready, we'll go.
   (a) = _____ (b) = _____

3 (a) This is the town where I grew up. (b) Nobody knows where he went.
(a) = _____ (b) = _____

Score: _____ / 14

Worksheet 2: Noun Clauses in Depth

Subject, object, complement — and reported speech.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **The functions of a noun clause**

Function	Example
subject	That he resigned surprised nobody.
object of a verb	She explained why she was late.
complement after ‘be’	The problem is that we have no money.
object of a preposition	It depends on whether they agree.
after an adjective	I'm certain that he'll come.

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

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

PART B — **Reported speech = a noun clause**

Rewrite each direct quotation as reported speech. Remember to shift the tense and use statement word order.

1. “I am tired,” she said.
   → She said _____
2. “Where do you live?” he asked.
   → He asked _____
3. “Will you help me?” she asked.
   → She asked _____
4. “I have finished the report,” he explained.
   → He explained _____
5. “Why is the office closed?” they wondered.
   → They wondered _____

Score: _____ / 10

Worksheet 3: Punctuation, Fragments & Combining

Commas, fragments — and joining ideas efficiently.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Comma or no comma?**

Adverbial clauses take a comma when they come FIRST. Noun clauses never take a comma. Rewrite each sentence with correct punctuation, or write 'correct'.

1. Because the roads were icy the school closed.
   _____
2. I believe, that you are mistaken.
   _____
3. When you arrive call me immediately.
   _____
4. She told me, what had happened.
   _____
5. Although he apologised nobody forgave him.
   _____

PART B — **Fragment or sentence?**

A subordinate clause alone is a fragment. Write FRAG or OK; fix every fragment.

1. Whatever the committee decides. → _____
2. I understand why you are angry. → _____
3. Which nobody had expected. → _____
4. Until the results are published. → _____
5. She knows that the deadline has passed. → _____

Fix your fragments here:

_____

_____

_____

Score: _____ / 10

Worksheet 4: Reading & Writing

See all three clause types at work, then use them yourself.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

PART A — **Analytical reading**

> *What nobody expected was how quickly the village would recover. Although the flood had destroyed the bridge that linked the two halves of the settlement, the residents, who had lived there for generations, refused to leave. They insisted that the council rebuild it. When the engineers finally arrived, they found that half the work had already been done. The mayor later admitted she had underestimated the people whose homes she governed.*

1. Find one NOUN clause, one RELATIVE clause and one ADVERBIAL clause. Label each.

_____

_____

_____

2. ‘What nobody expected was how quickly the village would recover.’ This sentence contains TWO noun clauses. Identify both and give the function of each.

_____

_____

3. ‘They insisted that the council rebuild it.’ Why is it ‘rebuild’, not ‘rebuilds’?

_____

4. Rewrite ‘she had underestimated the people whose homes she governed’ as two separate sentences. What is lost?

_____

_____

PART B — **Write an account**

Write an account (80–100 words) of a community responding to a problem. Use at least TWO noun clauses, TWO relative clauses and TWO adverbial clauses. Label each in the margin (N / R / A).

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Word count: _____ Clauses labelled: _____ / 6

Score: _____ / 14

ANSWER KEY & TEACHER NOTES

For teacher use only — B1 Level Worksheets

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Worksheet 1 – Identifying the Types

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
B	N / R / A 1–8	**1 A, 2 R, 3 N, 4 R, 5 N, 6 A, 7 N, 8 R**
C1	that	**(a) noun clause (object of 'hope'); (b) relative clause (describes 'the train')**
C2	if	**(a) noun clause (object of 'ask' = whether); (b) adverbial clause of condition**
C3	where	**(a) relative clause (describes 'the town'); (b) noun clause (object of 'knows')**

Worksheet 2 – Noun Clauses in Depth

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A	Functions 1–5	**1 'that nobody checked the figures' = complement; 2 'What she decided' = subject; 3 'whether the shop is open' = after adjective; 4 'what the doctor says' = after preposition; 5 'that he had seen the message' = object**
B1	reported	**She said (that) she was tired.**
B2	reported	**He asked where I lived.**
B3	reported	**She asked whether/if I would help her.**
B4	reported	**He explained that he had finished the report.**
B5	reported	**They wondered why the office was closed.**

Worksheet 3 – Punctuation & Fragments

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	fronted adverbial	**Because the roads were icy, the school closed.**
A2	noun clause	**I believe that you are mistaken. (no comma)**
A3	fronted adverbial	**When you arrive, call me immediately.**
A4	noun clause	**She told me what had happened. (no comma)**
A5	fronted adverbial	**Although he apologised, nobody forgave him.**
B	FRAG / OK 1–5	**1 FRAG, 2 OK, 3 FRAG, 4 FRAG, 5 OK. Sample fixes: 'Whatever the committee decides, I will accept it.' 'The result, which nobody had expected, was announced.' 'Until the results are published, we can do nothing.'**

Worksheet 4 – Reading & Writing

#	Question / Item	Answer / Guidance
A1	One of each type	**Noun: ‘What nobody expected’ / ‘that the council rebuild it’ / ‘that half the work had already been done’. Relative: ‘that linked the two halves’ / ‘who had lived there for generations’ / ‘whose homes she governed’. Adverbial: ‘Although the flood had destroyed the bridge’ / ‘When the engineers finally arrived’.**
A2	two noun clauses	**‘What nobody expected’ = subject; ‘how quickly the village would recover’ = complement after ‘was’.**
A3	‘rebuild’	**‘Insist’ takes the subjunctive in a that-clause: the base form is used regardless of subject (‘that the council rebuild’). ‘Should rebuild’ is also acceptable.**
A4	split the relative clause	**e.g. ‘She had underestimated the people. She governed their homes.’ Lost: the compact link between the people and their homes, and the ironic weight of ‘whose homes she governed’ as a single subordinated idea.**
B	Account (80–100 words)	**Up to 6 marks: 3 for two clauses of each type used correctly, 2 for accurate labelling, 1 for coherence.**