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## Objectives:

- Grammar: Review independent and subordinate clauses.

### *Grammar*

## *Independent and Dependent Clauses*

### *Comma Usage*

*Independent* and *dependent* (subordinate) *clauses* play important roles in sentences. Knowing how to correctly use commas when using *independent* and *dependent* clauses can make all the difference in how clearly you communicate your ideas to your readers.

As a review, *independent clauses* contain a subject and a predicate, and they can stand alone as complete sentences. *Dependent*, or subordinate, *clauses* also contain a subject and a verb, but they cannot stand alone as complete sentences. *Dependent clauses* must be joined to an independent clause in order for a sentence to make grammatical sense.

Two independent clauses can be separated by a comma in a sentence. This shows that the subject of each clause is not the same. For example:

Soccer is a fun sport, but swimming is my personal favorite.

Aerobic walking is good exercise, and early morning is the best time to do it.

In this sentence, two *independent clauses* with different subjects are separated by a comma and the conjunction but.

Two independent clauses with the same subject can also be joined together with a comma and a conjunction, but it is useful to change the second subject to a pronoun. For example:

Cats are fun pets to have, but they can shed a lot. (Here, both cats and they refer to the same subject. The clauses are separated by the conjunction but.)

My mother and I love to go shopping, and we usually find great deals. (Here, my mother and I and we refer to the same subject. The clauses are separated by a comma and the conjunction and.)

*Dependent*, or subordinate, *clauses* can be divided into two categories: restrictive and non-restrictive.

Restrictive clauses are necessary in order for a sentence to make sense. Non-restrictive clauses are not necessary, but add additional information in a sentence.

**Restrictive:** My brother who has a pilot's license will be flying us to Connecticut.

**Non-restrictive:** My brother, who has a pilot's license, loves to know how engines work.

In the first sentence, it is necessary for your reader to know that your brother is qualified to fly an airplane, so the *dependent clause* who has a pilot's license is not set apart from the rest of the sentence by commas. In the second sentence, the fact that your brother has a pilot's license has no impact on his love of engines. Therefore, the *dependent clause* is set apart from the rest of the sentence by commas on either side.

### *Practice*

Directions: Decide how to properly use commas in each of the following sentences. Some will not require any commas.

1. The dog that is sitting on the porch belongs to our neighbors.
2. It is early afternoon and I think I will sit by the pool.
3. His cousin who plays basketball is visiting for the week.
4. My aunt who owns a bakery will be making the cake for our party.
5. You may plant the lilies in the flowerbed but be careful where you dig.