

Grammar and Punctuation: Clauses and Phrases

A clause is a meaningful group of words containing a subject and a verb. There are two kinds of clauses: dependent and independent.

Independent clauses can stand alone as a sentence, but dependent clauses cannot stand alone because they contain a word that makes them incomplete.

Subordinating conjunctions are words that make a clause dependent. Here are some common subordinating conjunctions: **as, after, although, because, before, even though, if, since, so (meaning so that), when, where, whether, while, unless, and until.**

If we start the sentence with a dependent clause, we must place a comma at the end of that clause for clarity. If the dependent clause comes at the end of the sentence, we do not set it off with a comma.

Because of the increased prevalence of prediabetes, researchers investigated the causes of insulin resistance (Johnson, 2014).

Because of the increased prevalence of prediabetes , *researchers investigated the causes of insulin resistance (Johnson, 2014).*

Researchers investigated the causes of insulin resistance because of the increased prevalence of prediabetes (Johnson, 2014).

Researchers investigated the causes of insulin resistance *because of the increased prevalence of prediabetes (Johnson, 2014).*

An introductory phrase (or word) doesn't have a subject or verb, but it must also be set off with a comma when it comes at the beginning of a sentence.

Without additional research, it will be impossible to form informed conclusions.

Without additional research , *it will be impossible to form informed conclusions.*

You can identify introductory words and phrases because you can remove them from the sentence, and the sentence still makes sense.

Similarly, researchers studied the effects on blood sugar.

Similarly , *researchers studied the effects on blood sugar.*