

How I  
Teach... *with the*



# Teacher's Notebook Episode Sheets

*Sentences, Clauses, and Phrases!*

*HIT #51*

*from The Write Right Quick Kit*

Broadcasts/Podcasts

[LanguageArtsLadyBlog.com](http://LanguageArtsLadyBlog.com)

From Donna

# Introduction

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Here is what you need to know:

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I want so many good things for you and your students!

Love and hope,

*Donna*

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# THE WRITE RIGHT QUICK KIT

DONNA REISH

# The Write Right Quick Kit

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## Part II

### *Sentences (and “Un” Sentences!)*

Section A: Sentences vs. Clauses vs. Phrases

Section B: Sentence Types and Sentence Structures

Section C: Conciseness Techniques

Section D: Quotations

## Lesson 1. Five Parts of a Sentence: CAVES

- Capital at beginning
- All make sense
- Verb
- End mark
- Subject

## Lesson 2. A Subordinate Clause or a Sentence?

*When you start a sentence with a subordinate clause,  
Put the comma in when you hear the pause!*

That is a cute rhyme (don't you think?)--but unless you know what a subordinate clause is (and prior to that, what a subordinator is), it will not do you much good to recite it. So this lesson will go back to what subordinators are first.

Maybe you were taught that **subordinators** (words that make the part of the sentence that they are in be "subordinate" to the rest of the sentence) **are called other things, like conjunctives or subordinate conjunctions.**

Some grammar handbooks do not even classify subordinators at all but call them whatever other class they fall under (i.e. the preposition *before* might always be called a preposition, even though it is a subordinator when it has a subject and verb following it and can sometimes even be an adverb).

Regardless of what you were taught about **subordinators**, they are extremely important to good writing. Why?

**It is important to learn to recognize subordinators because they signal to the writer that special punctuation is required.**

### Remember This!

You need to study and understand **Part II: Sentences (and "Un" Sentences)** if you find yourself with any of the following challenges:

(1) You sometimes **question whether your sentence is really a sentence.**

(2) You write **run-on sentences sometimes** and do not always know how to fix them--and often put a comma here and there!

(3) You are **unsure of how to combine two sentences into one to create a compound sentence**--and find yourself haphazardly using semicolons and/or dashes.

(4) You **do not consistently know where to put a comma in** when you begin a sentence with the words *since, when, because, though,* etc.

(5) You are **unsure of which pronoun to use in various scenarios**, such as "We/Us writers enjoy writing" or "give this to Ray, Donna, and me/I."

(6) You are **unsure of how to punctuate sentence openers.**

(7) **Internal commas elude you** (not allude you!).

(8) You are **not confident when you include quotations** in your writings.

## Subordinators and Subordinate Clauses

### Remember This!

It is the “All makes sense” part of CAVES that most writers mess up on. The best antidote for this is to **read your sentences aloud and “listen” for fragments, run on sentences, and dependent clauses.**

1. A subordinator is a word that **falls at the beginning of a subordinate clause.**
2. A **subordinate clause is a group of words that begins with a subordinator and has a subject and verb following it.**
3. A **subordinate clause is subordinate to the rest of the sentence**--that is, it is "less than" the real sentence.
4. A **subordinate clause may not stand alone** as it is not a real sentence.
5. A **subordinate clause sounds as though something is missing** when it is read--because something is (the real sentence!).
6. A **subordinate clause may be joined with a complete sentence** to create a complex sentence, but the subordinate clause may never stand alone.

### Remember This!

A **subordinate clause** is called that because

- (1) It **begins with a word called a subordinator.**
- (2) It is **“subordinate” to the rest of the sentence** that it is in--that is, it is “less than” the rest of the sentence.

## Learning Subordinators

Let's start with the first six that I teach my youngest language arts students in my books:

**Since, when, though**  
**Because, if, although.**

Yeah, it's a rhyme! Cute, huh?

It helps to learn subordinators with a **Subordinator-Check Sentence** that most subordinators fit into. In a nutshell, if a word fits in the check sentence and the word is not an adverb, it is likely a subordinator:

\_\_\_\_\_ **the submarine went down, we could no longer/still see it.**

It helps to learn subordinators with my **Subordinator-Check Sentence** for a few reasons:

1. Many subordinators fit well into it.
2. One of the key words in it (**submarine**) has the prefix *sub*, just like the word **subordinator** does.
3. **A submarine goes down**--just like a **subordinator** makes the part of the sentence it is **in go down** (or be less important).

**Since** the submarine went down, we could no longer see it.

**When** the submarine went down, we could no longer see it.

**Though** the submarine went down, we could still see it.

**Because** the submarine went down, we could no longer see it.

**If** the submarine went down, we could no longer see it.

**Although** the submarine went down, we could still see it.

**In as much as** the submarine went down, we could no longer see it.

**Until** the submarine went down, we could still see it.

**While** the submarine went down, we could no longer see it.

**Note: A nearly-complete list of subordinators is provided in Appendix A, Lesson 2**

## What Is a Subordinate Clause?

Once you can recognize subordinators quickly, you are ready to write **well** with them.

Do you remember what I said a subordinate clause is?

1. A subordinator is a word that **falls at the beginning of a subordinate clause**.
2. A **subordinate clause** is a group of words that begins with a subordinator and has a **subject and verb following it**.

## Remember This!

Why learn subordinators?

(1) In order to **distinguish between a real sentence and a non-sentence**.

(2) In order to **punctuate sentences containing them**.

(3) In order to **use the correct pronouns** (subjective vs. objective) in sentences.

(4) In order to **write more advanced sentence structures**.

Tricky Trick to Help It Stick

**First Six Subordinators in Rhyme**

Since, when, though  
Because, if, although.

Tricky Trick to Help It Stick

In a nutshell, if a word fits in the Check Sentence and the word is not an adverb, it is likely a subordinator:

\_\_\_\_\_ **the submarine went down, we could no longer/still see it.**

**Remember This!**

- (1) A sentence **can** stand alone.
- (2) A subordinate clause **cannot** stand alone!

**Subordinate Clause = Subordinator + Subject + Verb**

- When** she drove,
- As** he said,
- After** she left,
- When** they arrived,
- Because** he smiled,

Did you notice anything about those subordinate clauses? If you noticed that **each one would be a sentence if the subordinator were removed**, you are correct!

**A subordinate clause is a sentence (subject + verb) that has a subordinator at the beginning of it!**

**Remember This!**

A **subordinate clause** is sometimes called a **dependent clause**—because it is **dependent upon something else** in order to be used.

Sentence	Subordinate Clause
She drove.	<b>When</b> she drove,
He said.	<b>As</b> he said,
She left.	<b>After</b> she left,
They arrived.	<b>When</b> they arrived,
He smiled.	<b>Because</b> he smiled,

So...**a subordinate clause is a sentence** (independent clause--can stand alone) **that has a subordinator added to the beginning of it** (which makes it a dependent clause--is dependent upon something else in order to be used [has to have a real sentence put with it in order to be used]).

**Remember This!**

**Independent** clause = sentence  
**Dependent** clause = subordinate clause

<i>Sentence vs. Subordinate Clause</i>	
<i>Sentence (Independent Clause)</i>	<i>Subordinate Clause (Dependent Clause)</i>
(1) <i>Contains a subject and a verb</i>	(1) <i>Contains a subject and a verb</i>
(2) <i>Can stand alone</i>	(2) <i>Can <u>not</u> stand alone</i>
(3) <i>Also called an independent clause (because it can stand alone).</i>	(3) <i>Also called a dependent clause because it is dependent on a real sentence in order to be used.</i>

# Lesson 3. Prepositional Phrases

Just like subordinate clauses, prepositional phrases require special punctuation--part of the time. This kit will get into punctuation prepositional phrases used as sentence openers later.

Here is the sequence of “reasoning” for learning prepositions:

1. Prepositions are words that are **found at the beginning of prepositional phrases**.
2. The prepositional phrase
  - a. A **phrase—a group of words** that does not contain a subject and a verb
  - b. **Prepositional phrase--a phrase** (group of words) that begins with a word known as a preposition
3. The subject of a sentence is seldom found within a prepositional phrase.
4. Subjects in a sentence (anywhere in a sentence) must match their verbs in tense, number, etc.
5. Since the subjects of a sentence are not found in a prepositional phrase, if you learn to recognize prepositional phrases easily, you can eliminate them (mentally) and easily find your sentence’s subject(s) and verb(s) to be sure they match.

Consider the sentences below that have the prepositional phrases isolated with parentheses. Once you mentally eliminate these prepositional phrases, you can easily match the sentences’ subjects with their verbs.

1. The **boy** (in the stories) was lost.
  - a. Isolating *in the stories* with parentheses keeps the writer from thinking that the sentence’s subject is *stories*—and keeps the writer from writing *stories were*, which is not correct in this sentence.
  - b. The sentence’s real subject is *boy* and needs the singular verb *was*.
2. (On the outskirts) (of town,) a **little house** fell down.
  - a. This sentence contains a double prepositional phrase.
  - b. This double prepositional phrase is used as a **sentence opener**—coming before the sentence’s real subject and real verb.
  - c. By isolating both prepositional phrase openers with parentheses, we find that the sentence’s real subject is *house* (or a *little house*—some grammarians consider the one word subject and some consider the entire subject with its descriptors) and the sentence’s verb is *fell*.
3. The **blonde girl** (out of all the girls) was (on key).
  - a. This sentence contains two prepositional phrases
    - i. Out of all the girls
    - ii. On key
  - b. By isolating them with parentheses (and thus, not considering them when we find our sentence’s main subject and verb), we can see that the sentence’s subject is *girl* and verb is *was*.
  - c. If we did not isolate *out of all the girls*, we might be tempted to think that *girls* is our main subject and use the plural verb *were*.

## Remember This!

- Why learn prepositions?
- (1) In order to **distin-guish between a real sentence and a non-sentence**.
  - (2) In order to **punctuate sentences containing them**.
  - (3) In order to **use the correct pronouns** in sentences.
  - (4) In order to match your sentence’s subjects with their verbs in tense and number.
  - (5) In order to **write more advanced sentence structures**.

## Remember This!

**Prepositional phrase--a phrase** (group of words) that begins with a word known as a preposition

## Remember This!

The subject of a sentence is seldom found within a prepositional phrase.

## Tricky Trick to Help It Stick

Prepositions show position!

Tricky Trick to  
Help It Stick

For very young students, I use a technique I call the Preposition Practice Pal (PPP). If you are a visual or hands-on learner, the PPP technique might help you too!

With the PPP technique, my young students and curricula users gather a bathroom tissue tube, little toy/character, and zip-type bag (for storage later).

Consider if my PPP were Birdie (though it could be Polly, Kitty, Joe, Superman, etc.), and I held it up in relation to my bathroom tissue tube. See how many prepositions fit in the sentence using the two objects:

**Birdie flew \_\_\_\_\_  
the tube.**

Practice prepositions with the PPP and bathroom tissue tube—and see how many prepositions you can name.

Note: If you are stuck, think Birdie flew **above** the tube; Birdie flew **around** the tube...get creative with your PPP and tube! It helps to actually move your PPP in positions with your bathroom tissue tube.

Re-read the sample sentences carefully. Without isolating the prepositional phrases, would you have been tempted to use the wrong verbs?

**Isolating prepositional phrases is one of the most helpful beginning writing skills that a writer can learn. It helps eliminate one of the most common sentence writing errors—that of mismatched subjects and verbs.**

Just like many other grammar aspects, I have tricks to learn prepositions quickly!

Our first “**Preposition-Check Sentence**” is a spatial one. That is, it works for prepositions that show positions.

**The plane flew \_\_\_\_\_ the clouds.**

This check sentence actually “fits” with about ninety percent of the “position” prepositions. It is a valuable tool for learning and memorizing dozens of prepositions. So, which prepositions fit into our “plane” sentence?

Try the following in my **Preposition-Check Sentence**, and you will see how simple learning prepositions can be.

The plane flew **aboard** the clouds.  
The plane flew **about** the clouds.  
The plane flew **above** the clouds.  
The plane flew **aboard** the clouds.  
The plane flew **across** the clouds.  
The plane flew **across from** the clouds.  
The plane flew **after** the clouds.  
The plane flew **against** the clouds.  
The plane flew **ahead of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **along** the clouds.  
The plane flew **alongside** the clouds.  
The plane flew **alongside of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **along with** the clouds.  
The plane flew **amid** the clouds.  
The plane flew **amidst** the clouds.  
The plane flew **among** the clouds.  
The plane flew **amongst** the clouds.  
The plane flew **around** the clouds.  
The plane flew **as far as** the clouds.  
The plane flew **aside** the clouds.  
The plane flew **aside of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **aside from** the clouds.  
The plane flew **astride** the clouds.  
The plane flew **atop** the clouds.  
The plane flew **atop of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **away from** the clouds.  
The plane flew **before** the clouds.  
The plane flew **behind** the clouds.  
The plane flew **below** the clouds.  
The plane flew **beneath** the clouds.  
The plane flew **beside** the clouds.  
The plane flew **beside of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **between** the clouds.  
The plane flew **betwixt** the clouds.  
The plane flew **beyond** the clouds.  
The plane flew **by** the clouds.  
The plane flew **by means of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **close to** the clouds.  
The plane flew **down** the clouds.  
The plane flew **far from** the clouds.  
The plane flew **following** the clouds.  
The plane flew **from** the clouds.  
The plane flew **in** the clouds.  
The plane flew **in addition to** the clouds.

The plane flew **inside of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **inbetween** the clouds.  
The plane flew **in place of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **in front of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **in addition to** the clouds.  
The plane flew **in back of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **into** the clouds.  
The plane flew **like** the clouds.  
The plane flew **minus** the clouds.  
The plane flew **near** the clouds.  
The plane flew **near to** the clouds.  
The plane flew **next to** the clouds.  
The plane flew **off** the clouds.  
The plane flew **off of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **off the top of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **on** the clouds.  
The plane flew **onto** the clouds.  
The plane flew **on top** the clouds.  
The plane flew **on top of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **opposite** the clouds.  
The plane flew **opposite of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **out** the clouds.  
The plane flew **out from** the clouds.  
The plane flew **out of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **outside** the clouds.  
The plane flew **outside of** the clouds.  
The plane flew **over** the clouds.  
The plane flew **past** the clouds.  
The plane flew **round** the clouds.  
The plane flew **through** the clouds.  
The plane flew **throughout** the clouds.  
The plane flew **to** the clouds.  
The plane flew **towards** the clouds.  
The plane flew **under** the clouds.  
The plane flew **underneath** the clouds.  
The plane flew **unto** the clouds.  
The plane flew **up** the clouds.  
The plane flew **up to** the clouds.  
The plane flew **upon** the clouds.  
The plane flew **via** the clouds.  
The plane flew **with** the clouds.  
The plane flew **within** the clouds.  
The plane flew **without** the clouds.

Tricky Trick to  
Help It Stick

Preposition-Check Sentence

The plane flew \_\_\_\_\_  
the clouds.

About eighty percent of prepositions are spatial (positional) in nature. The other prepositions are time-based for the most part. Of course, I have another trick!

**The boy played \_\_\_\_\_ the classes.**

The boy played **after** the classes.

The boy played **amid** the classes.

The boy played **amidst** the classes.

The boy played **among** the classes.

The boy played **amongst** the classes.

The boy played **along with** the classes.

The boy played **apart from** the classes.

The boy played **around** the classes.

The boy played **at** the classes.

The boy played **away from** the classes.

The boy played **because** the classes.

The boy played **before** the classes.

The boy played **behind** the classes.

The boy played **between** the classes.

The boy played **close to** the classes.

The boy played **despite** the classes.

The boy played **during** the classes.

The boy played **following** the classes.

The boy played **in between** the classes.

The boy played **prior to** the classes.

The boy played **regardless of** the classes.

The boy played **until** the classes.

The boy played **through** the classes.

The boy played **throughout** the classes.

The boy played **until** the classes.

Once you have memorized dozens (or two hundred!) of prepositions, it is easier to spot prepositional phrases. A prepositional phrase (PP) is a phrase (group of words that does not contain a subject and a verb) that begins with a preposition and ends with the object of the preposition.

## Lesson 4. A Subordinate Clause or a Phrase?

One of the important reasons for learning the differences among sentences, subordinate clauses, and phrases (besides knowing when you have written a real sentence and when you have not) is that of **using pronouns correctly**.

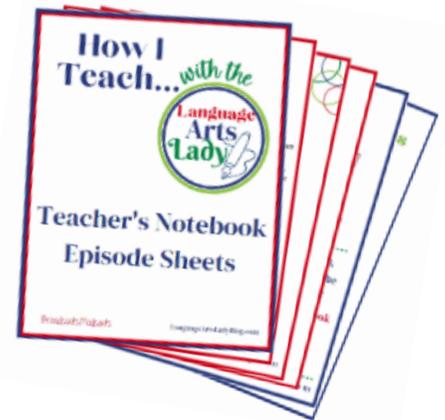
That is, **pronouns used as subjects** in sentences and subordinate clauses **need the subjective forms** of pronouns (*I, he, she, we*) while **phrases have objects** that **use the objective forms** of pronouns (*me, him, her, us*).

Additionally, the punctuation of a sentence is heavily dependent upon understanding the differences and uses of subordinate clauses and phrases (as we will learn in Section B).

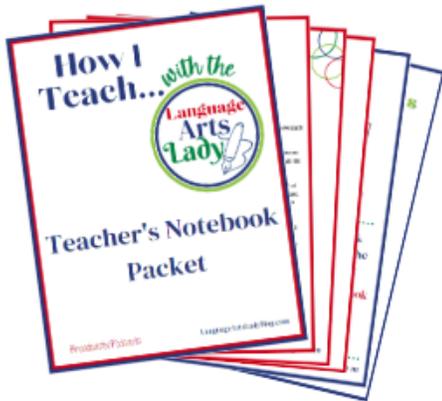
<i>Sentence and Subordinate Clause</i>	<i>Phrase</i>
<i>(1) Has a subject and a verb</i>	<i>(1) Does NOT have a subject and a verb</i>
<i>(2) Sentence can stand alone; sub clause cannot</i>	<i>(2) Never stands alone</i>
<i>(3) Has a subject near the beginning of it</i>	<i>(3) Has an object near the end of it</i>

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WFAM Tools and Tricks I: How to S-by-S Chicken Little (Lessons 1 & 2)  
WFAM Tools and Tricks II: How to S-by-S Pinocchio (Lessons 1 & 2)  
WFAM Tools and Tricks III: How to S-by-S Snow White (Lessons 1 & 2)  
WFAM Tools and Tricks IV: How to S-by-S Dumbo (Lessons 1 & 2)  
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