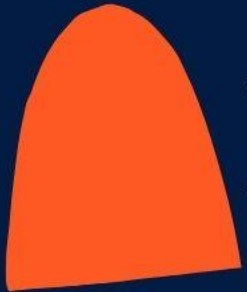




# THE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH SENTENCES



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# Introduction



## **Syntax is the study of sentence structure.**

Every language has rules that govern how the words in that language come together to form phrases, clauses, and sentences.

This is the layer of language that informs us that while some orders work just fine (**why did he eat the sandwich?**) others do not work at all (**he eat the sandwich did why?**).

It is important to note that while there are differences in these rules from language to language, all languages have their own sets of rules.






# Introduction (cont.)



## **What does it mean for languages to have rules for sentence structure?**

It means that words cannot be combined randomly.

## **This chapter shows**

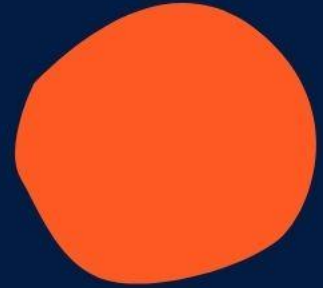
- how words are grouped into syntactic categories, and how sentences have a hierarchical design in which words are gathered into successively larger structural units.
  - how to diagram phrase structure trees.
- 

# Constituency



Often, we think of phrases, clauses, and sentences as being a string of words.

Certainly, when we hear a sentence or produce an utterance, it comes out in a continuous string. However, linguists have identified that there are groupings in sentences that form a hierarchy.



This idea that words are grouped into units is called **constituency**.



# Constituency (cont.)



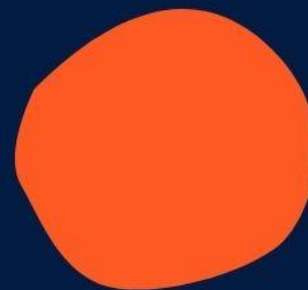
Let consider the following examples.

- (1) They quickly ran out the door.
- (2) They quickly found out the truth.
- (3) Out the door, they quickly ran.
- (4)\*Out the truth, they quickly found.



**Constituents can be**

individual words, phrases, and clauses.



# Parts of speech



**Different words have different grammatical functions.**

**The basic nine parts of speech that we will cover in this chapter are**

- nouns (N)
- verbs (V)
- adjectives (A)
- adverbs (Adv)
- prepositions (P)
- determiners (D)
- auxiliaries (Aux)
- complementizers (C)
- conjunctions (Conj)





# Phrase structure

Phrases are units of language (constituents) that are just above the level of words.

Phrases can consist of a single word, as in (9), or many words, as in (10). (p. 81)

- (9) Ella found my backpack.
- (10) The tall woman in the green sweatshirt from the cafe found my backpack.



# Phrase structure (cont.)

Here are many kinds of phrases, but the main ones we will discuss in this book are the following:

- noun phrase (NP)
- verb phrase (VP)
- adjective phrase (AP)
- adverb phrase (Adv)
- prepositional phrase (PP)



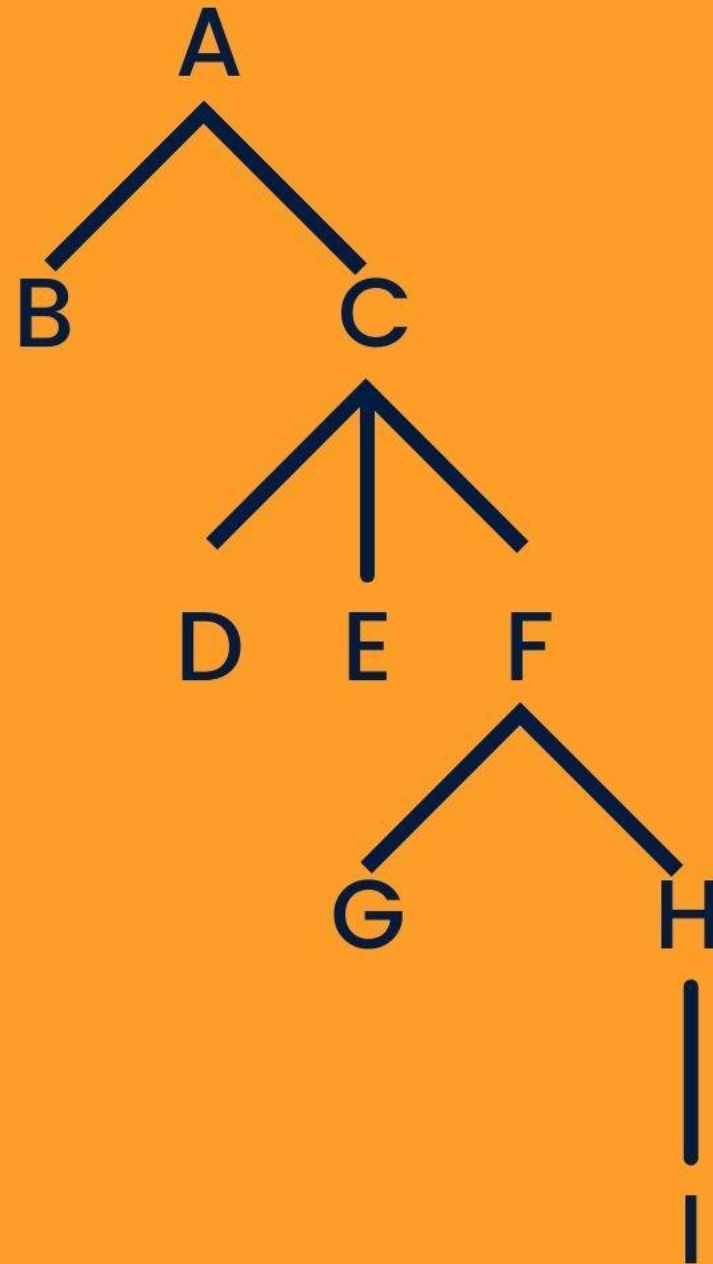
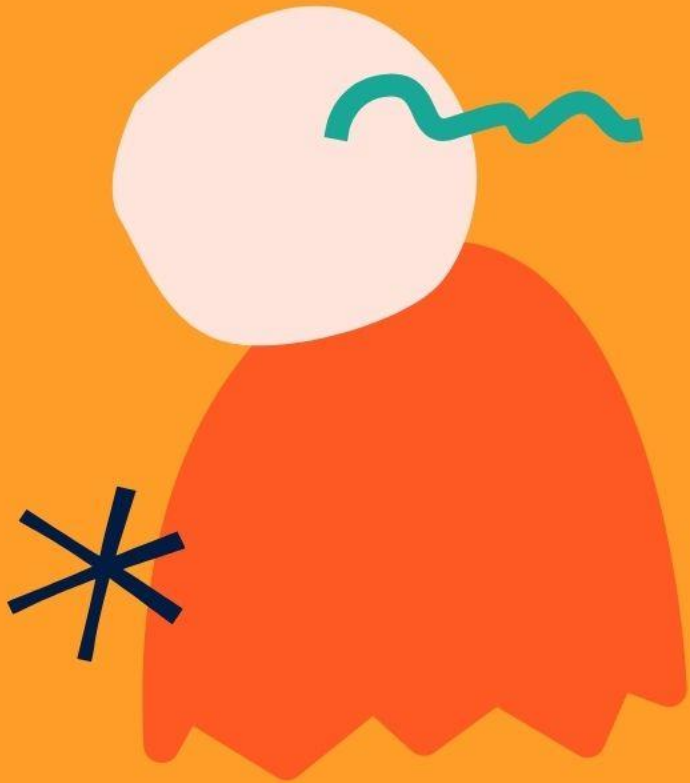
# Drawing tree diagrams

A tree diagram is a typical way that linguists represent the inner workings of phrases and sentences.

They are called trees because of the way different constituents branch off from other parts of the structure.




figure 5.1  
Sample tree diagram



# Drawing tree diagrams (cont.)




Figure 5.1 presents an abstract tree for us to reference. Each joint of a tree is called a node; therefore, every letter on the tree in Figure 5.1 is a node.



Terminal nodes are the ones at the ends of the branches, like B, D, E, G, and I. Also, mother, daughter, and sister are relationships between nodes.

Mothers are nodes one level directly above the node in question. So for instance, C is the mother of D, E, and F. F is the mother of G and H. Daughters are the other way around, so D is the daughter of C, and C is the daughter of A. Sisters are ones that have a common mother, so B and C are sisters, and D, E, and F are sisters.



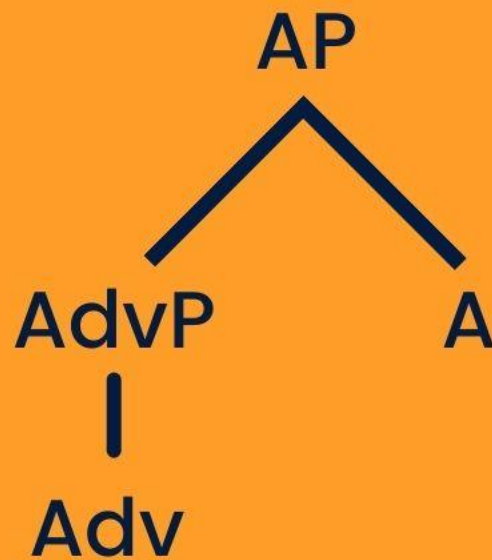
# figure 5.2

## Good phrase structure trees

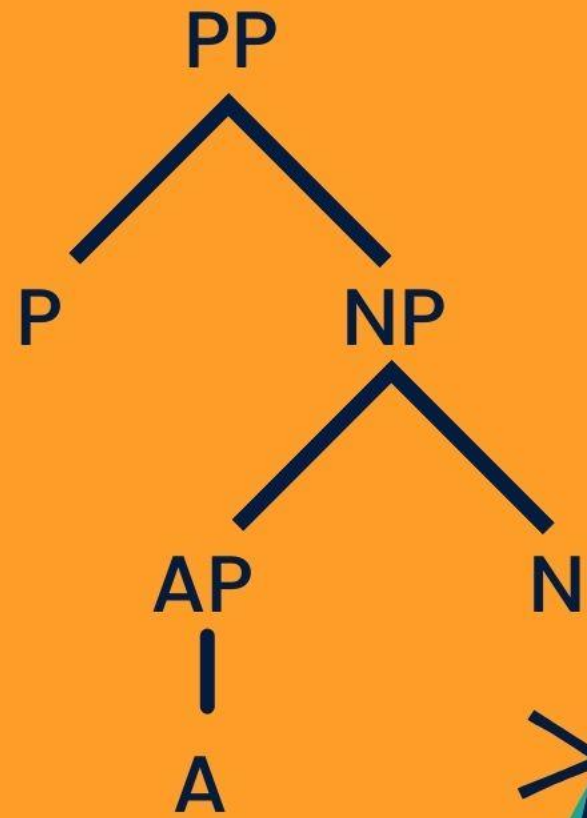
Tree 1



Tree 2



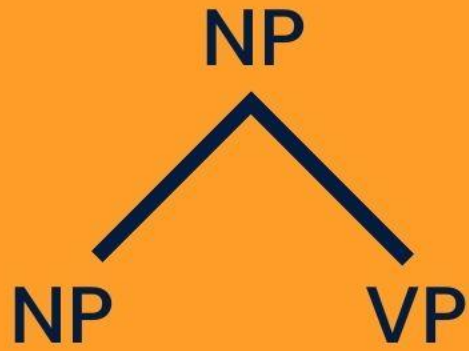
Tree 3



# figure 5.3

## Bad phrase structure trees

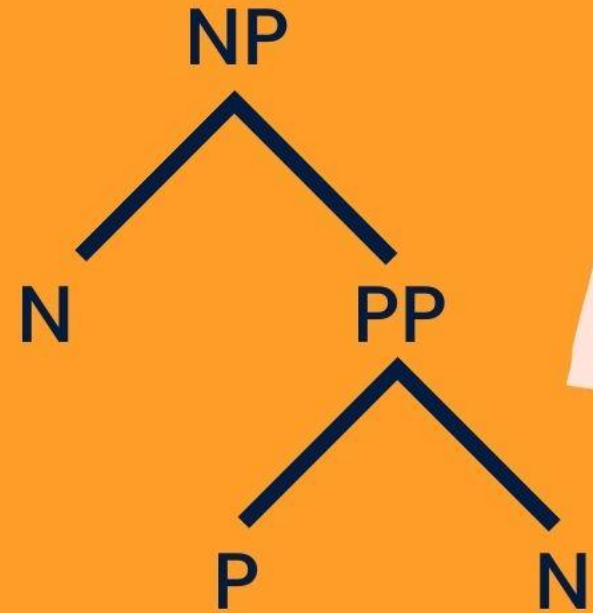
Tree 4



Tree 5



Tree 6





Example(s):

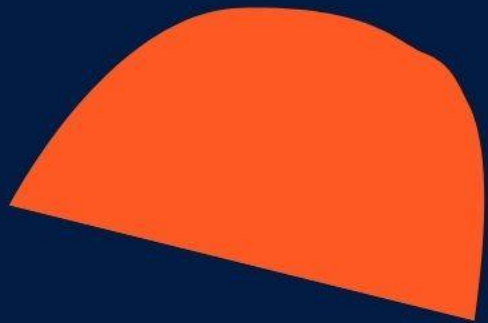
<sup>D</sup> a <sup>N</sup> woman <sup>P</sup> from <sup>D</sup> the <sup>N</sup> cafe



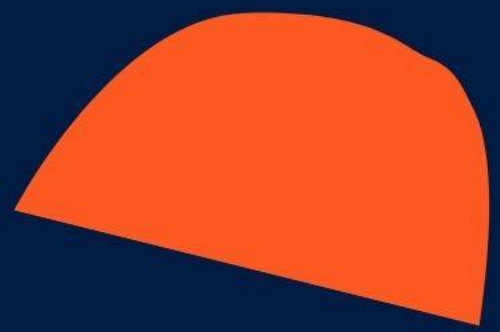
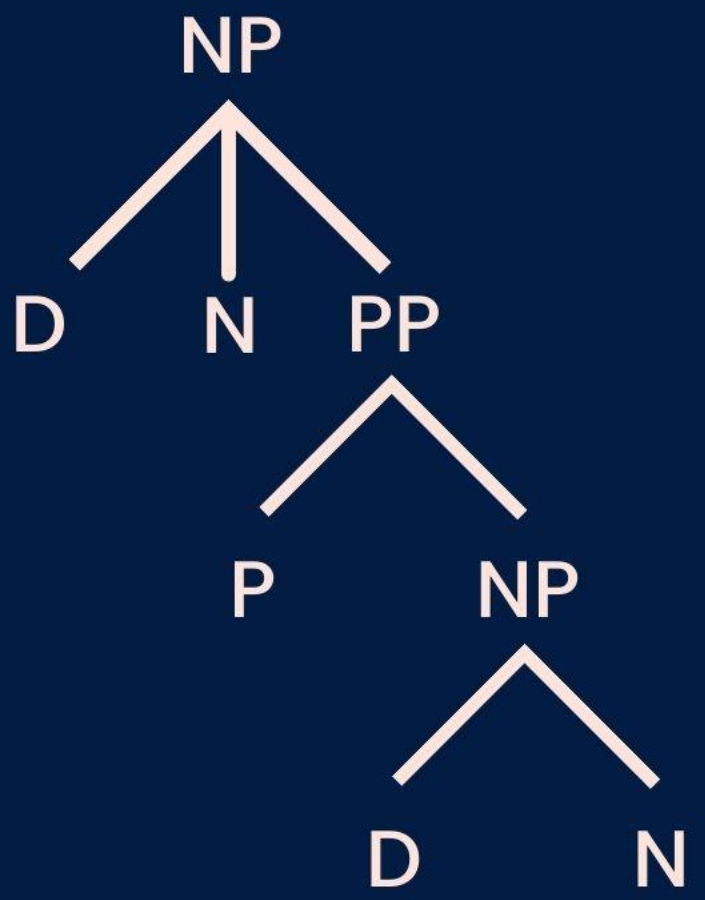


bracketed version

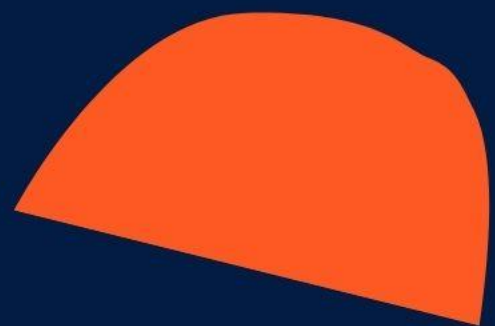
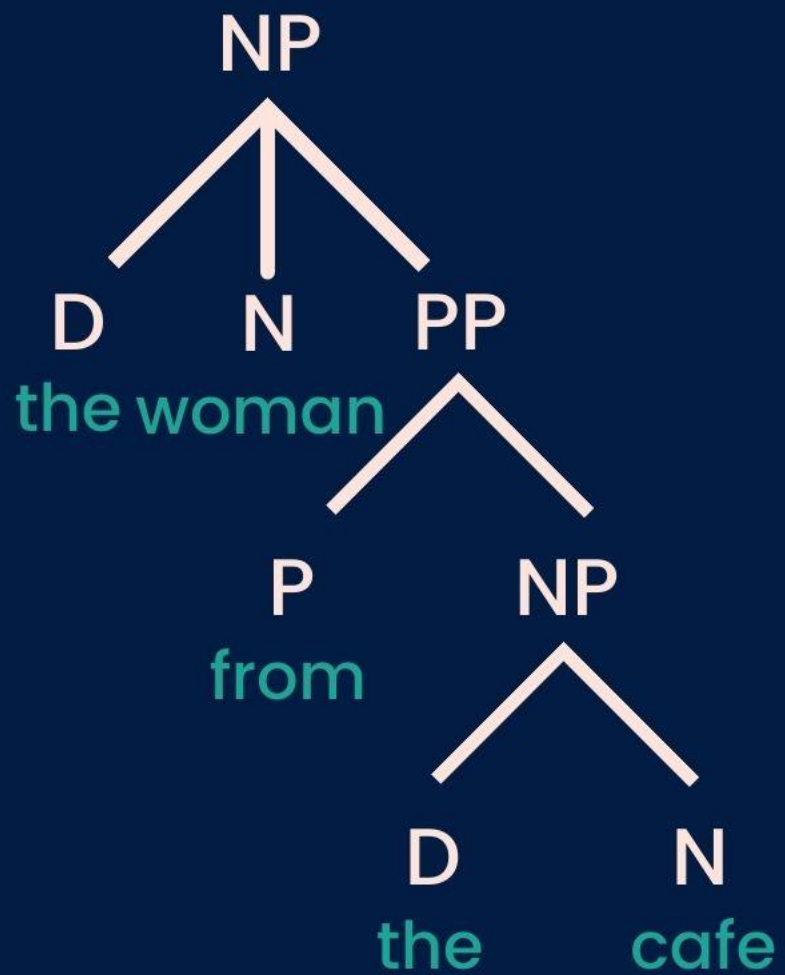
[<sub>NP</sub><sup>D</sup> a <sup>N</sup> woman [<sub>PP</sub><sup>P</sup> from [<sub>NP</sub><sup>D</sup> the <sup>N</sup> cafe]]



NP node



The terminal node



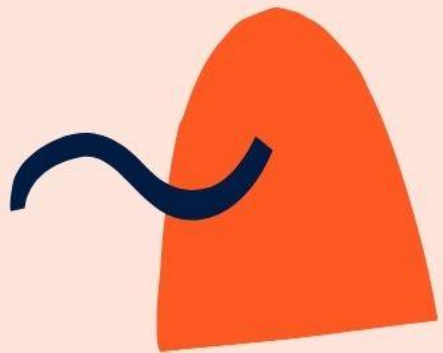


# Clauses

The next level of syntax is the **clause**, which is made up of several phrases coming together.

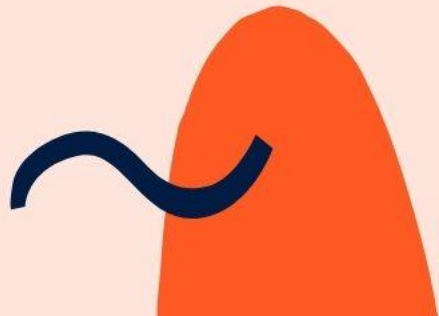
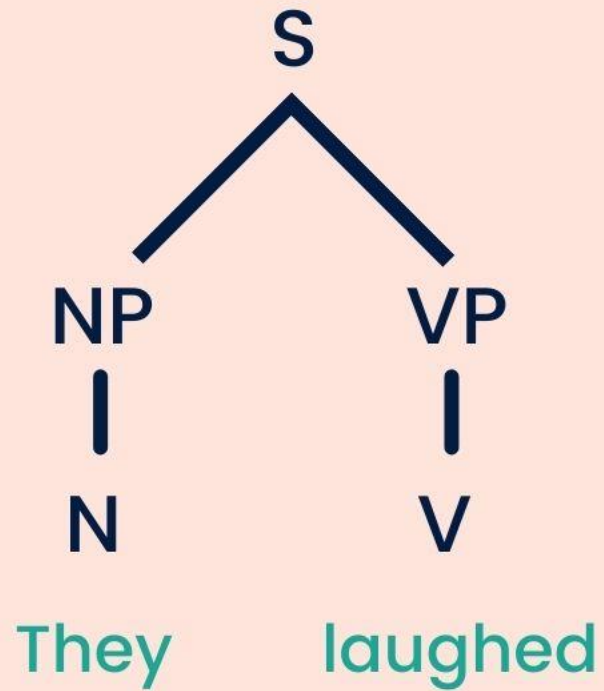
A clause is a constituent containing **a subject** and **a predicate**.

- Subjects are typically noun phrases.
- Predicates are typically verb phrases.
- The subject and the predicate come together to form the clause.



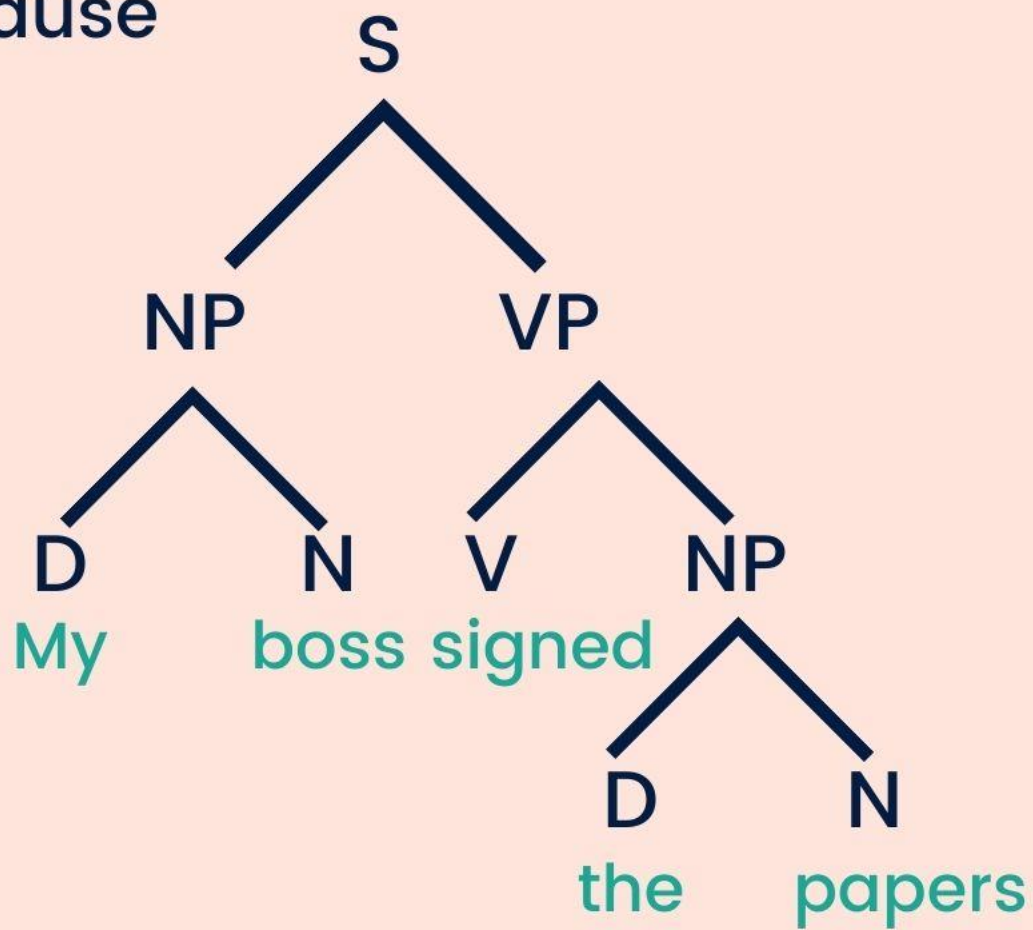


a simple example clause





a slightly more complex clause





# Clauses (cont.)

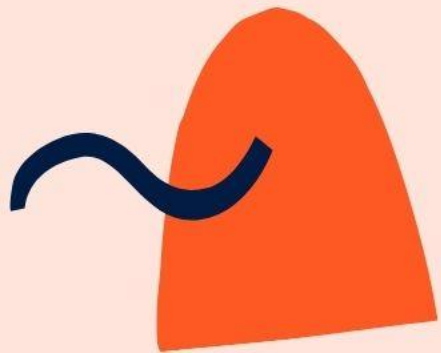
Clauses come in **two main varieties**.

The first type of clause is an **independent clause**.

It is named such because it can stand alone, like the examples in (22). Independent clauses are sentences. (p. 89)

(22)

- a. Jill ran.
- b. The student studied,
- c. Every attendee received an award.
- d. The package was delivered to the wrong house.





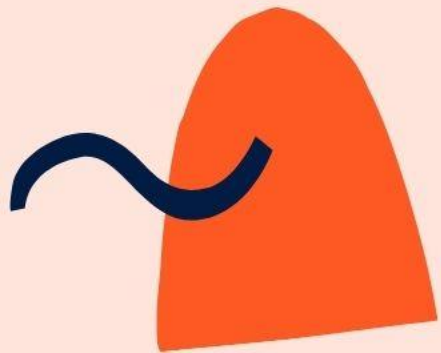
# Clauses (cont.)

The second type of clause is a **dependent clause**, or embedded clause.

Dependent clauses usually begin with a complementizer, or a particle that serves as a connector to the main sentence, as in (23). (p. 89)

(23)

- a. Because Jill ran
- b. What the student studied
- c. That every attendee received an award
- d. If the package was delivered to the wrong house



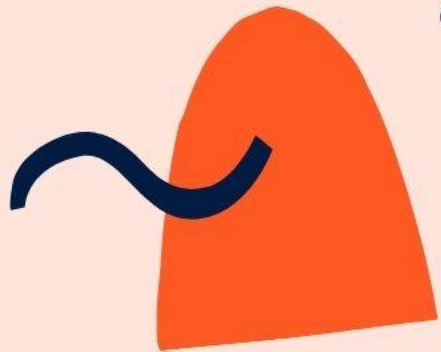


# Clauses (cont.)

Dependent clauses are usually **found embedded within an independent clause.**

(24)

- a. Jack dropped out of the race because Jill ran.
- b. I don't know what the student studied.
- c. That every attendee received an award surprised us all.
- d. We'll see if the package was delivered to the wrong house.



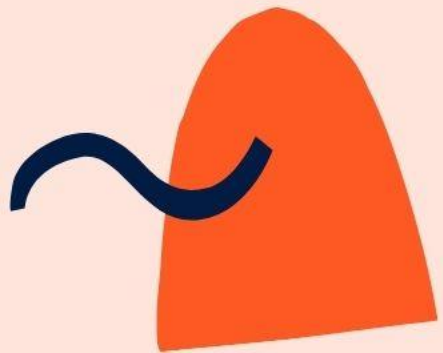


# Clauses (cont.)

In formal spoken English and in most written registers of English, **dependent clauses** typically **cannot stand alone**.

However, it is important to note that it is not ungrammatical or wrong; it is simply a usage etiquette rule.

It's not atypical to hear dependent clauses by themselves in spoken English or within informal registers of written English.





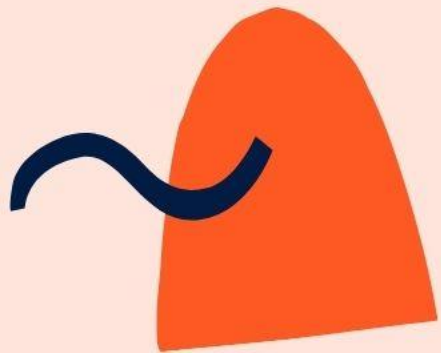
# Clauses (cont.)

Related to this, in formal written English, you may have heard of the terms **run-on** and **fragment**.

Run-ons are **two independent clauses in one sentence**, which usually sounds like just that; two sentences fused together

(The student studied she got an A in her class).

To remedy a run-on, students can (a) separate them into two different sentences, (b) put a semicolon between the two clauses if the clauses are related, or (c) turn one of the sentences into a dependent clause by adding a complementizer.



An example of each remedy can be seen in (25).

(25)

- a. The student studied. She got an A in her class.
- b. The student studied; she got an A in her class.
- c. Because the student studied, she got an A in her class.





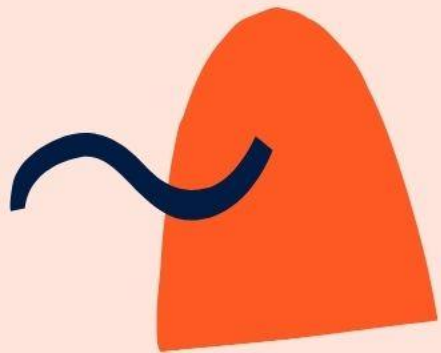
# Clauses (cont.)

A fragment, on the other hand, is a clause that is missing something.

It could be an independent clause missing a subject found no relationship between the two variables) or missing a predicate

(the researchers from the institute with many years of experience).

Additionally, a fragment can be a dependent clause that is not embedded within an independent clause (since the research was funded by the government). To fix a fragment, students can (a) supply a subject, (b) supply a predicate, or (c) embed the dependent clause in an independent clause.



**the examples below in (26):**

- a. Dr. Park found no relationship between the two variables.
- b. The researchers from the institute with many years of experience visited our lab.
- c. Since the research was funded by the government they were able to complete the project.





# Reference



Park-Johnson, S. K., & Shin, S. J. (2020). Linguistics for language teachers: Lessons for classroom practices. New York.

