

Definition of a main clause

Introduction

Main clause

A main clause (or independent clause) contains a **subject** and a **verb** and expresses a complete thought.

Examples

Jenny was a teacher.
She lived in London.

These are both main clauses and also sentences.

Jenny was a teacher and she lived in London.

Two main clauses linked by the **conjunction** 'and'.

A main clause is not dependent on any other clause within a sentence.

When Jenny was a teacher...

This is no longer a complete thought as we do not know what happened when Jenny was a teacher. It is not an independent clause.

Every sentence must contain at least one main clause.

When Jenny was a teacher, she lived in London.

[time adverbial clause and main clause]

Jenny, who was a teacher, lived in London.

[main clause and embedded relative clause]

Jenny could be a head teacher if she lived in London.

[main clause and conditional clause]

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