**Dependent Clauses**

**Objectives**

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Identify dependent clauses in the middle of sentences.
- Practice checking if clauses could be complete sentences.

**Preparation**

**Materials Needed**

- Chart paper and markers
- Dependent Clauses (BLM 5)
- Interactive whiteboard resources

**Advanced Preparation**

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text (with underlining) and practice text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” onto chart paper.

**1. Focus**

**Explain Dependent Clauses**

Write the following sentence, with underlining, on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources: “Two of my closest friends were Stokely, who became a civil rights leader, and his sister Lynnette.” Read the sentence aloud. **Say:** I’ve underlined a dependent clause in the middle of this sentence. A dependent clause is a phrase that can’t stand alone as a sentence. It needs other words within the same sentence to help it make sense. If you take a dependent clause out of a sentence, the other words should still make a complete sentence. You should see commas before and after a dependent clause that appears midsentence. Knowing how to use dependent clauses is important for writing memoirs, as it is for writing other types of text.

**Model Identifying Dependent Clauses**

Display the modeling text (with underlining) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

1. This man, whom we called Uncle Sam, became a member of our family.

2. The song, which had been recorded years ago, brought back many memories.

**Modeling Text**

**Read sentence 1.** **Say:** I see a dependent clause in the middle of this sentence: “whom we called Uncle Sam.” There is a comma before and after this clause. This clause depends on the other words around it to form a complete sentence. If I remove the clause, the remaining words still form a complete sentence. However, I notice that the dependent clause does provide useful information about the man. Dependent clauses can still provide useful information even though they are not necessary to make a sentence complete.

**Read sentence 2.** **Say:** This sentence also has a dependent clause in the middle: “which had been recorded years ago.” This clause provides helpful information about the song, but it could not be a complete sentence by itself. It is enclosed by commas. Also, the words around it form a complete sentence if I remove the clause.
2. Rehearse

Practice Identifying Dependent Clauses

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Ask students to work with partners to identify the dependent clause in each sentence. (Students do not need to copy the sentences.)

If your class includes English language learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

1. The people, who were from many different backgrounds, marched together in protest.
2. The civil rights movement, which I was a part of, became an important part of history.

Practice Text

Share Dependent Clauses

Invite volunteers to share the dependent clause in each sentence. Discuss their choices as a class. Prompt with questions such as:
- What is the dependent clause in the sentence?
- How can you tell that this is the dependent clause?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Today we learned about dependent clauses. A dependent clause cannot stand alone as a sentence. It depends on other words to complete the sentence. If you remove a dependent clause from the middle of a sentence, the remaining words should form a complete sentence. However, the dependent clause adds information to the rest of the sentence. When we write memoirs, we can use dependent clauses in the middle of sentences to provide additional information about our topics.

If you would like to give students additional practice identifying dependent clauses, have them complete BLM 5.

4. Share

Review and provide corrective feedback based on students’ answers to BLM 5. Ask students to share what they learned about dependent clauses in sentences.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Beginning ELs are not ready to work on this English grammar skill. While other students collaborate on the partner activity or write independently, meet one on one with students to support developmentally appropriate grammar skills based on their independent writing and language level. For example, you may want to work on students’ recognition of complete sentences that have a subject, verb, and possibly an object.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair students with fluent English speakers to complete the practice sentences. Provide the following sentence frames to assist students with oral vocabulary:
- ______ is a dependent clause.
- I can check if a clause is dependent by ______.