



Clauses

Just like ly words, there are 2 kinds of clauses: **inner** and **Outer**.

An inner clause (#4 on your TP) is found **inside/inbetween** 2 related verb phrases, while an outer clause (#6 on your TP) **starts or comes before** 2 related verb phrases.

A clause is a word that connects related verb phrases. Clauses are all about verbs, like dinosaur claws grabbing more prey for dinner!



The good news about clauses is that they are easy to spot. There are only a handful in the English language. The 10 most basic are:

When
Where
While

As
Since
If
Although

Because
Until
Unless



To make them easier to remember, I use the first letter of each word to form **WWW.ASIA.BUU**. There are other clausal words, but these are sufficient to get a writer started. Once you know the grammar pattern, you will be able to spot other clauses, like *that, who, which*, etc., a mile away!

Here are some clauses in action:

*I buy Hershey Kisses **when** I shop at Target.*

when is an **inner clause** because it sits in between 2 verb phrases that are related to each other.

On one side of the **when**, we have

I buy...

and on the other side of the **when**, we have

I shop...

Sometimes the phrases before or after the clause word have only a verb and not a subject like *I buy...* and *I shop...* That's OK. **Remember, clauses are all about VERBS!**

*I talked on my phone **while** shopping at Target.*

Here on one side of the **while**, we have

I talked...

and on the other side of the **while**, we have

shopping at Target.



Mr. Fuddy Duddy

WARNING!

Watch out for *Because of...*
and *a while*

Don't be fooled!

Because of... is a **Preposition!!!**
a while is just a noun!!!




(In case you are wondering, technically, when a group of words has a verb in it, the whole group of words is called a **clause**, like **I buy Hershey Kisses** and **when shopping at Target**. But the key to understanding clauses is the **verb**. So, I call the **key word** (*when, where, while, as, since, etc.*), the **clause** and the groups of words - **verb phrases** - to make the concept easier to understand.)

She gave the money to the waitress **who** was wearing the red hat.

On one side of the **who**, we have
She gave...
and on the other side of the **who**, we have
was wearing...

The grammar pattern is **Verb phrase-clause-verb phrase**.

An **Outer** clause works the same way, only it comes **FIRST or BEFORE** the verb phrases.

Because Sherlock dug in the mud, Zoe gave him a bath. (Sherlock is  our dog.)

First we have **Because**, then we have 2 related verb phrases – **notice the comma!**

Because ... dug ... , ... gave ...

Because Sherlock dug in the mud,

is **dependent**. It drives your reader/listener nuts if you don't finish your sentence.

Zoe gave him a bath.

is **independent**. It makes sense all by itself, but it doesn't tell you the whole story.

When I join the 2 parts together into 1 sentence, it makes a lot of sense!

Because Sherlock dug in the mud, Zoe gave him a bath.

The grammar pattern for an outer clause is **Clause-verb phrase, verb phrase**. Notice the comma!

Sometimes an **Outer Clause** can happen inside a sentence, but it is still an **OUTER** if both verb phrases happen after the clausal word.

Fortunately, when they noticed the teachers falling asleep during fourth period, the football team began to sell cookies and coffee between classes.



ONLY **OUTER** CLAUSE sentences need a **comma**. Inner **clauses** (usually) do NOT.

See also the ATTACK OF THE CLAUSES handout that you downloaded from the website for further study of clauses.

Handouts that go along with this Handout:
Stylistic Techniques Page (TP)
Attack of the Clauses! (ACL)
The Great Clause/Prep WAR (GCPW)

