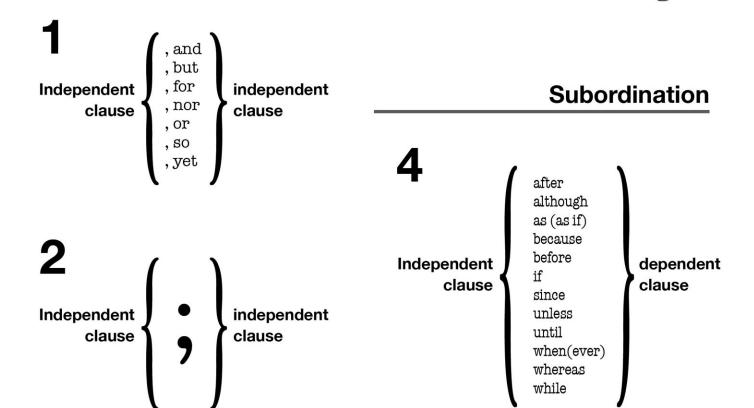
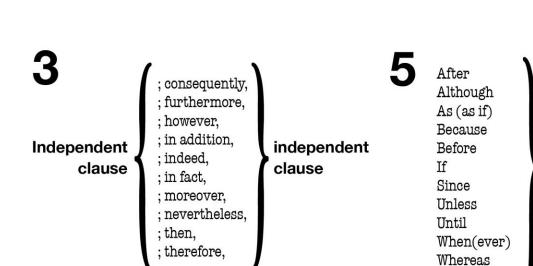


Five Useful Ways I to Join Ideas in a Sentence

Coordination





dependent clause, independent clause

While

One of the most frequently asked questions about grammar is about choosing between the various forms of the pronoun **who** (i.e., who, whose, whom, whoever, whomever).

The number (singular or plural) of the pronoun (and its accompanying verbs) is determined by what the pronoun refers to; it can refer to a singular person or a group of people:

- The person who hit my car should have to pay to fix the damages.
- The people who have been standing in line the longest should get in first.

It might be useful to compare the forms of **who** to the forms of the pronouns **he** and **they**. Their forms are similar:

	Singular	Plural
Subject	he	they
Form	who	who
Possessive	his	their
Form	whose	whose
Object	him	them
Form	whom	whom

To choose correctly among the forms of **who**, re-phrase the sentence so you choose between **he** and **him**. If you want **him**, write **whom**; if you want **he**, write **who**.

- Who do you think is responsible?
 Do you think he is responsible?
- Whom shall we ask to the party?
 Shall we ask him to the party?
- Give the box to whomever you please.
 Give the box to him.
- Give the box to whoever seems to want it most.

He seems to want it most.*

* And then the clause "whoever seems to want it most" is the object of the preposition "to".

The number of people who use whom and who wrongly is appalling. The problem is a difficult one and it is complicated by the importance of tone, or taste. Take the common expression, "Whom are you, anyways?" That is of course, strictly speaking, correct – and yet how formal, how stilted! The usage to be preferred in ordinary speech and writing is, "Who are you, anyways?" **Whom** should be used in the nominative case only when a note of dignity or austerity is desired. For example, if a writer is dealing with a meeting of, say, the British Cabinet, it would be better to have the Prime Minister greet a new arrival, such as an under-secretary, with a "Whom are you, anyways?" rather than a "Who are you, anyways?" - always granted that the Prime Minister is sincerely unaware of the man's identity. To address a person one knows by a "Whom are you?" is a mark either of incredible lapse of memory or inexcusable arrogance. "How are you?" is a much kindlier salutation.