**Identifying the Adverb Clause**

Here is a list of sentences, all written by professional writers, but with some parts deleted.

1. He ate.
2. I was just fourteen years of age.
3. The number thirteen proved unlucky for Harry Cone and his crew of twelve aboard the big PBM.
4. Shrinking is always more painful than growing, but the pain was over quickly enough.

Now compare those sentences with the originals. Notice that the additions account for the distinctiveness of the original sentences.

1. He ate **while his blanket, still damp, steamed in front of the fire.**

*Hal Borland, When the Legends Die*

1. I was just fourteen years of age **when a coward going by the name of Tom Chaney shot my father down in Fort Smith, Arkansas, and robbed him of his life and his horse and $150 in cash money plus two California gold pieces that he carried in his trouser band**.

*Charles Portis, True Grit*

1. The number thirteen proved unlucky for Harry Cone and his crew of twelve aboard the big PBM, **for the giant plane was never heard from again**.

*Richard Winer, The Devil’s Triangle*

1. Shrinking is always more painful than growing, **since for a moment all your bones jam together like a crowd on market day, but the pain was over quickly enough as I became the size of a cat**.

*Laurence Yep, Dragonwings*

The **boldface** parts are adverb clauses, another of the sentence parts that differentiate professional writing from student writing.

**Characteristics of the Adverb Clause**

Adverb clauses are sentence parts that tell more about the rest of the sentence in which they appear. They usually tell *why, how, when,* or *under what condition* something was done.

Most begin with the words: *after, if, because, although, when, as, before, until, for,* or *since* (subordinators). They can occur as sentence openers, subject-verb splits, or sentence closers. Examples are **boldfaced**, with the subordinators in *italics*.

*Sentence Opener*

1. ***After* he got himself under control**, he apologized.

(Tells when he apologized.)

*Stephen King, “The Mouse on the Mile”*

1. ***If* you know whence you came**, there is really no limit to where you can go.

(Tells the condition for not having limits.)

*James Baldwin, “Letter to My Nephew”*

1. ***Because* its primary reason for existence was government**, Maycomb was spared the grubbiness that distinguished most Alabama towns its size.

(Tells why Maycomb wasn’t grubby.)

*John Knowles, A Separate Peace*

1. ***Although* they lived in style**, they felt always an anxiety in the house.

(Tells an ironic condition.)

*D.H. Lawrence, “The Rocking-Horse Winner”*

*Subject-Verb Split*

1. The truck drivers, ***when* they heard that Maxie Hammerman had been released**, were furious.

(Tells when the drivers were furious.)

*Jean Merrill, The Pushcart War*

1. Uncle Hammer, ***as* he had every day since he had arrived**, wore sharply creased pants, a vest over a snow-white shirt, and shoes that shone like midnight.

(Tells when he dressed neatly.)

*Mildred D. Taylor, Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*

1. Raisl, ***before* they were married**, had made the bag out of a piece of her dress and embroidered it with the tablets of the Ten Commandments.

(Tells when Raisl made the bag.)

*Bernard Malamud, The Fixer*

*Sentence Closers*

1. Alfred quietly slipped out the back door and waited ***until* Henry left**.

(Tells when Alfred waited.)

*Robert Lipsyte, The Contender*

1. Bert seemed a little sheepish ***as* he followed the other members to their seats at the front of the room**.

(Tells when Bert seemed sheepish.)

*John Steinbeck, The Red Pony*

1. A pile of silver coins grew at the door flap ***when* a baby died, *because* a baby must be well buried, *since* it has had nothing else of life**.

(This sentence has three closers. The first clause tells when people give money to the parents of a baby who has died; the next two tell why.)

*John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath*

**PRACTICE I Name:**

*UNSCRAMBLING*

Each scrambled sentence has one or more adverb clauses. Identify them. Then unscramble the sentence parts and write out the sentence, punctuating it correctly. Identify (mark or highlight) the adverb clause(s). Be aware that there are often multiple correct answers. Your answers must be acceptable and not awkward.

1 a. from the van

b. jumped

c. and yanked open the left rear door of the Lincoln

d. when the parking lot was still

e. Lomax

*John Grisham, The Firm*

2 a. and back home on San Piedro Island

b. later

c. when he was no longer so young

d. began to moderate

e. his view of things

*David Guterson, Snow Falling on Cedars*

3 a. took a ladder

b. the boy or the nanny

c. and locked the attic door

d. in fear of what may be hiding up there

e. before it was dark each day

*Henry James, Turn of the Screw*

4 a. and opening it

b. she found her niece

c. one summer evening

d. who begged for money

e. when the first heavy rains were falling

f. a knock came at the aunt’s door

g. scared, hungry, and disheveled

*Louisa May Alcott, Rose in Bloom*

5 a. distributing his bundle of papers

b. when he got back into town

c. before he went home to supper

d. he would have to go on

*Sherwood Anderson, “Death in the Woods”*

6 a. and listened to the fire crack

b. while he put the food in his mouth and chewed thoughtfully

c. when the sun set

d. and cooked a small supper

e. he crouched by the path

*Ray Bradbury, The Martian Chronicles*

7 a. stuck into a white mess of bread dough

b. her face

c. and her eyes

d. as she stepped into the light

e. was round and thick

f. were like two immense eggs

*Ray Bradbury, The Martian Chronicles*

8 a. although oil had kept off the frost so far

b. when the seal was dead

c. before it could freeze

d. getting rid of the wet from her coat

e. the bear attended first to herself

*Noah Burke, “Polar Night”*

**PRACTICE II**

*IMITATING*

Unscramble the sentences to imitate the model. Make sure your **entire** sentence imitates the model (ie: subject, predicate, phrases, clauses are in the same place as the model).

*MODEL*:

***As* she approached the top of the ridge**, she came to a game trail, a wide muddy track through the jungle.

*Michael Chriton, The Lost World*

1 a. a professional con artist in her own right

b. she ran to her mother

c. after she found the ring in his drawer

2 a. she walked away with the trophy for first place

b. a golden stature in the shape of a clef note

c. although she had the fewest years of violin lessons among the contestants

**PRACTICE III Name:**

*COMBINING*

Study the model, and then combine the sentences that follow into one sentence that imitates the model. Begin by changing the first sentence to resemble the first sentence part of the model, the second sentence to resemble the second sentence part of the model, etc.

**EXAMPLE**

*MODEL*:

***Before* I got two steps**, John knee-walked away from me and into the corner of the room, coughing harshly and dragging for each breath.

*Stephen King, “Night Journey”*

a. Something happened when we almost caught himlost hope.

b. What happened was the waiter hurried from the kitchen.

c. And the waiter hurried toward our table.

d. He was apologizing profusely.

e. And he was smiling with great sincerity.

*COMBINATION:*

***When* we almost lost hope**, the waiter hurried from the kitchen and toward our table, apologizing profusely and smiling with great sincerity.

1.

*MODEL*:

Sadler’s first question, ***when* he reached the hotel**, was about his friend.

*Henry James, The Ambassadors*

a. This is about Tabitha’s favorite activity.

b. It happened after she started up her computer.

c. Her favorite activity was on the Internet.

*MODEL*:

***When* I was seventeen and in full obedience to my heart’s urgent commands**, I stepped far from the pathway of normal life and in a moment’s time ruined everything I loved.

*Scott Spencer, Endless Love*

2.

a. This happened after the beast’s heart was transformed and in complete love with Belle.

b. What happened was he changed magically back into the handsome prince of his past.

c. And in quick time he dazzled everyone he greeted.

3.

*MODEL*:

***When* she was home from her boarding-school**, I used to see her almost every day, ***because* her house was right opposite of the Town Hall Annex**.

*John Fowles, The Collector*

a. Something happened although the Barbie doll was almost legless from so much play.

b. What happened was that Kristie used to walk her doll.

c. She would walk the doll exclusively in the early evening.

d. She walked her then because her doll was just up from her afternoon nap.

4.

*MODEL*:

In the week before their departure to Arrakis, ***when* all the final scurrying about had reached a nearly unbearable frenzy**, an old crone came to visit the mother of the boy, Paul.

*Frank Herbert, Dune*

a. This happened in the game’s last seconds after the winning pass to Brennan.

b. It happened as the thunderous cheering rose to a gadzillion decibels.

c. His proud dad jumped up.

d. The reason he jumped up was to sing the fight song.

e. The fight song was of the team, the winners.

**PRACTICE IV**

*EXPANDING*

At the slash mark, add an **adverb clause**. In PART 1, the first few words are provided and the number of words you need to add is given. You cannot add another adverb clause; you must complete the one started for you. You are not allowed to use the actual words which were omitted for your answer.

**PART 1**

1. ***Before* the girls** / [4], I heard their laughter crackling and popping like pine logs in a cooking stove.

*Maya Angelou, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

**Before the girls** / [4]

1. ***While* the children** / [6], their father leaned over a sofa in the adjoining room above a figure whose heart in sleep had quietly stopped its beating.

*Algernon Blackwood, “The Tradition”*

**While the children** / [6]

1. We had gone about ten miles ***when* Harry** / [10].

*Stephen King, “Night Journey”*

**when Harry** / [10]

1. My first impression, ***as* I** / [3], was that a fire had broken out, ***because* the room** / [18].

*Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, The Hound of the Baskervilles*

**as I** / [3]

**because the room** / [18]

**PART 2**

In PART 2, add an **adverb clause** for each slash mark. You are not allowed to use the actual words which were omitted for your answer.

1. /, the afternoon wind struck him and blew up his hair and ruffled his shirt.

*John Steinbeck, The Red Pony*

1. They were hateful sharks, bad smelling, scavengers as well as killers, and /, they would bite at an oar or the rudder of a boat.

*Ernest Hemingway, The Old Man and the Sea*

1. A child with a crooked mouth and twisted hands can very quickly and easily develop a set of very crooked and twisted attitudes both towards himself and life in general, especially /.

*Christy Brown, My Left Foot*

1. /, and /, she decided that in spite of the instructions on the radio, she simply could not face starting out all over again.

*John Hersey, Hiroshima*