

PHRASES AND CLAUSES

“Words cluster like chromosomes, determining procedure.” - Marianne Moore

Question: What is the difference between phrases and clauses?

A **phrase** is a group of words that has either no **subject** or no **predicate**.

opening the gate (no subject)
the man at the counter (no predicate)
across the river (a modifier : neither a subject nor a predicate)

A **clause** is a group of words containing both a **subject** and a **predicate**.

Dependent Clauses cannot stand alone as sentences. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• although the man held his daughter• because Jerry was laughing at the joke
Independent Clauses can stand alone as a sentence. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alfred did not want to marry• My sister, Mariana, was talking about our mother

Question: How do we know if a clause can stand alone as a sentence?

To test, determine if the clause has a complete verb (subject) and a predicate .		
Try the “Yes/No Question” Test.		
Word Group	yes/no question	phrase/independent clause/dependent clause
walked to the store	Did walk to the store?	phrase
Harry walked to the store	Did Harry walk to the store?	independent clause
where Harry walked	Did where Harry walked?	dependent clause