

What are Noun Clauses?

Worksheet

A noun clause is a subordinate clause that performs the grammatical role of a noun — it can be a subject, direct object, or object of a preposition. Example: 'That he lied became clear' (noun clause as subject).

Questions

1. Which sentence contains a noun clause as the subject?
A) She knows that he is here.
B) What happened was unexpected.
C) The student who arrived late apologized.
D) I gave the book to whoever wanted it.
2. Identify the noun clause: 'The coach asked whether they were ready.'
A) The coach asked
B) asked whether
C) whether they were ready
D) they were ready
3. What is the function of the noun clause in: 'The issue is that we lack time.'?
A) Subject
B) Direct object
C) Subject complement
D) Object of preposition
4. Which is NOT a noun clause?
A) Who you are is important.
B) The man who entered was tall.
C) She wondered whether to stay.
D) What impressed me most was your effort.
5. Identify the noun clause and its function: 'Whoever finishes first wins a prize.'
6. Identify the noun clause and its function: 'The teacher asked whether the students understood the lesson.'
7. Identify the noun clause and its function: 'My hope is that you will succeed.'
8. Define: What is a noun clause?
9. Define: What words introduce noun clauses?
10. Define: Can a noun clause be a subject?

Answer Key

1. B) What happened was unexpected. — 'What happened' is the noun clause functioning as the subject of 'was'. It answers 'What was unexpected?'
2. C) whether they were ready — 'Whether they were ready' is the noun clause (complete thought), acting as the direct object of 'asked'.
3. C) Subject complement — 'That we lack time' renames/describes the subject 'issue' after the linking verb 'is' — it is a subject complement (also called predicate nominative).
4. B) The man who entered was tall. — 'The man who entered was tall' — 'who entered' is a relative clause modifying 'man', not a noun clause acting as a noun.
5. Noun clause: 'Whoever finishes first' (a complete thought with subject 'whoever' and verb 'finishes'). Function: SUBJECT of the main verb 'wins'. Proof: Replace with a simple noun: '[The winner] wins a prize.' The noun clause takes the place of a noun.
6. Noun clause: 'whether the students understood the lesson'. Function: DIRECT OBJECT of the verb 'asked'. Proof: What did the teacher ask? The answer is the noun clause.
7. Noun clause: 'that you will succeed'. Function: SUBJECT COMPLEMENT (renames/describes 'hope'). Proof: The noun clause renames the subject after the linking verb 'is'.
8. A dependent clause that acts as a noun — can be subject, object, or complement in a sentence.
9. 'That', 'what', 'who', 'whoever', 'whom', 'which', 'whether', 'if', 'when', 'where', 'why', 'how'.
10. Yes: 'What he said was shocking.' (noun clause is the subject of 'was').

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