Subordination is a means of joining a dependent clause to an independent clause. Remember that a dependent clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb but cannot stand alone as a complete idea. On the other hand, an independent clause contains a subject and a verb and can stand alone as a complete idea. A sentence that contains one independent clause and one dependent clause is called a complex sentence. Complex sentences are used to relate ideas within one sentence. For instance, a complex sentence might be used to show a cause and affect relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Clause</th>
<th>Independent Clause</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>showing cause</td>
<td>showing effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Because it is raining, we will stay home.

A dependent clause begins with a subordinating conjunction. It is, in fact, this word that changes an independent clause into a dependent clause. For instance, notice how the following sentence is transformed from an independent clause into a dependent clause through the addition of one word, a subordinating conjunction.

Independent Clause: John hit the ball.
Dependent Clause: When John hit the ball,

There are many subordinating conjunctions. The following list contains examples of subordinating conjunctions.

- after
- although
- as
- because
- before
- if
- since
- unless
- until
- when
- unless
- while

Exercise 1: Underline the subordinate clause in each of the following sentences and circle the subordinating conjunction.

1. Although the sunshine was intense, everyone enjoyed the picnic.
2. If you continue to practice writing paragraphs, you will be able to write faster.
3. The shirt is on sale today unless the store runs out of merchandise.
4. Since LaShandra Chambers has a degree in mechanical engineering, she will know how to solve our indoor air pollution problem.
5. Our new car has a lot of power although it uses too much gas.

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SUBORDINATION

PUNCTUATING SUBORDINATE CLAUSES

When a subordinate clause is used at the beginning of a sentence, a comma must be used to separate the subordinate (dependent) clause from the independent clause.

Example: When I was little, my favorite cereal was Fruit Loops.

The dependent clause “When I was little” is at the beginning of the sentence. It is separated from the independent clause “my favorite cereal was Fruit Loops” by a comma.

Because the dependent clause is at the beginning of the sentence, a comma is used to separate the dependent clause from the independent clause.

When I was little, my favorite cereal was Fruit Loops.

However, if the subordinating conjunction and the dependent clause follow the independent clause, then no comma is needed to separate the two clauses.

Example: My favorite cereal was Fruit Loops when I was little.

Exercise 2: Underline the subordinate clause and add a comma when necessary.

1. Whenever the weather is beautiful I usually have to work.
2. School was closed for two weeks after an earthquake destroyed the building’s foundation.
3. Thelma doesn’t work here anymore because she won the lottery last week.
4. Although it was pouring down rain I went running anyway.
5. Because the printer’s cartridge ran out of ink the letter quality of the paper was poor.
6. When the windstorm hit the lights went out.
7. I will take my share of the profits if the business is a success.
8. We took a detour because the bridge was under construction.
9. Although it still runs the truck needs to be repaired.
10. After I started believing in myself the world offered me more challenges.
LOGICAL SUBORDINATION

In subordination, a logical relationship must exist between the dependent clause and the independent clause. Different subordinating conjunctions can change the meaning of a sentence.

**Make certain to choose the subordinating conjunction that best expresses the relationship between the two clauses in a sentence.** The following table of subordinating conjunctions is grouped by the relationships that they express.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Show a Relationship of:</th>
<th>Use These Subordinating Conjunctions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>after, before, once, since, until, when, whenever, while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason or cause</td>
<td>as, because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result or effect</td>
<td>in order that, so, so that, that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>if, even if, provided that, unless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>although, even though, though</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>where, wherever</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice</td>
<td>rather than, than, whether</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can see that using a subordinating conjunction that showed time, such as “after” would not make sense if you were trying to show location, such as “where.” Using a subordinating conjunction to show an incorrect relationship creates an illogical sentence.

**ILLOGICAL:** I am looking forward to spring break although I have worked hard this semester. (shows contrast)

**LOGICAL:** I am looking forward to spring break because I have worked hard this summer. (shows reason or cause)

-OR-

Since I have worked hard this semester, I am looking forward to spring break. (shows reason or cause)
The sentence containing the word *although* is not logical because if someone worked hard during the semester, they would naturally look forward to spring break.

Look at another example.

**ILLOGICAL:**  *Because* I was sick, I went to work.

**LOGICAL:**  *Although* I was sick, I went to work.

**OR**

**LOGICAL:**  *Despite* being sick, I went to work.

People do not go to work *because* they are sick. They may be sick but still go to work; however, people do not usually go to work because of their illness.

**Exercise 3:** In the following exercise, place an appropriate subordinating conjunction in front of one of the independent clauses in each sentence. Do not create a compound sentence with a coordinating conjunction. In this exercise, you should select the main idea for the independent clause and create a dependent clause for the subordinate idea. Keep in mind that when you place a subordinating conjunction in front of an independent clause, a dependent clause is formed that may require a comma. Remember the rules of punctuation when joining dependent clauses with independent clauses.

1. Algebra is offered only in the mornings. English is offered at night.
2. The course was excellent. Dr. Dawson taught it.
3. We could see very clearly last night. The moon was so bright.
4. It is cold outside. The joggers are wearing shorts.
6. I knew you were coming. I would have cleaned the guest room.
7. I live just a few blocks away. I drive to school anyway.
8. The soldiers were dreadfully injured. They would lie on the battlefield without medical attention for an hour or a day.
9. Bob is a good mechanic. He is planning to open his own repair shop.
10. The dog barked all night. The neighbors did not complain.
ANSWERS TO EXERCISES:

Exercise 1:
1. (Although) the sunshine was intense, everyone enjoyed the picnic.
2. (If) you continue to practice writing paragraphs, you will be able to write faster.
3. The shirt is on sale today (unless) the store runs out of merchandise.
4. (Since) LaShandra Chambers has a degree in mechanical engineering, she will know how to solve our indoor air pollution problem.
5. Our new car has a lot of power, (although) it uses too much gas.

Exercise 2:
1. Whenever the weather is beautiful, I usually have to work.
2. School was closed for two weeks after an earthquake destroyed the building’s foundation. (No comma)
3. Thelma doesn’t work here anymore because she won the lottery last week. (No comma)
4. Although it was pouring down rain, I went running anyway.
5. Because the printer’s cartridge ran out of ink, the letter quality of the paper was poor.
6. When the windstorm hit, the lights went out.
7. I will take my share of the profits if the business is a success. (No comma)
8. We took a detour because the bridge was under construction. (No comma)
9. Although it still runs, the truck needs to be repaired.
10. After I started believing in myself, the world offered me more challenges.

Exercise 3: (Answers may vary. Be sure the subordinating conjunction you use comes from the correct category.)

1. Although Algebra is offered only in the mornings, English is offered at night. (contrast)
2. The course was excellent because Dr. Dawson taught it. (reason or cause)
3. We could see very clearly last night because the moon was so bright. (reason or cause)
4. Even though it is cold outside, the joggers are wearing shorts. (contrast)
5. Jonathan breaks out in a rash whenever ragweed blooms in the backyard. (time)
6. If I knew you were coming, I would have cleaned the guest room. (condition)
7. Although I live just a few blocks away, I drive to school anyway. (contrast)
8. Unless or Although the soldiers were dreadfully injured, they would lie on the battlefield without medical attention for an hour or a day.
   (Unless shows condition; Although shows contrast. Note the how the meaning of the sentence changes with the different subordinating conjunctions.)
9. Because Bob is a good mechanic, he is planning to open his own repair shop. (reason or cause)
10. Although the dog barked all night, the neighbors did not complain. (contrast)
Websites for Coordination and Subordination

http://owlet.letu.edu/grammarlinks/sentence/sentence3.html
Good info on exactly what is meant by coordination and subordination. Also, has interactive quiz to show if you understand these concepts! This website explains (and shows) how you can improve your writing through the use of coordination and subordination.

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/clauses.htm
Capital Community College has a marvelous power point presentation on Coordination and Subordination. View and learn!

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/573/01/
Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University has a wonderful explanation of these terms.