

Teaching Subordinate Clauses

Based on a description in Reedy, D. & E. Bearne. 2013. *Teaching Grammar Effectively in Primary Schools*. Leicester: UKLA. This lesson uses the fable *The Mouse and The Lion* as a starting point.

Steps (Session 1)	
1.	T reads fable to the class.
2.	Discussed fables in general – children offered others.
3.	Class works with T to sort out the ‘bare bones’ of the story. T put up each sentence on the screen, to create a list: A lion was asleep. A little mouse ran over him. The lion woke up. The lion grabbed the mouse to eat him. The mouse begged for forgiveness. The lion let him go. The lion was caught in a net. The mouse gnawed away the ropes of the net.
4.	T explains that the ‘bare bones’ above move the action of the story forward.
5.	Class looks at second sentence in both full and ‘bare bones’ form: Thinking the lion was a rock, a little mouse ran over him. A little mouse ran over him.
6.	Confirm idea that the ‘bare bones’ part tells the story, and the rest explains the background (in this case, what the mouse was thinking).
7.	T elicits which parts of the sentence made sense on their own and which part didn’t. The class suggests <i>Thinking the lion was a rock</i> .
8.	T explains that <i>Thinking the lion was a rock</i> is the subordinate clause. T uses the terminology for the first time here.
9.	T and class repeated steps 5-8 for a second sentence: <i>some days later while hunting, the lion was caught in a net set by trappers</i> .
10.	T labels sentence as follows: <i>some days later while hunting, the lion was caught in a net set by trappers</i> SUBORDINATE CLAUSE MAIN CLAUSE SUBORDINATE CLAUSE
11.	T and class repeat steps 5-10 for a third sentence: <i>as the little mouse passed by he heard the lion</i>

Steps (Session 2)	
12.	T recaps main clauses; introduces today's aim – look at subordinate clauses. T uses terminology again here.
13.	In pairs, children look at sentences and decide what information the subordinate clauses contain. <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Some days later while hunting lying in the shade of a tree seeing lion's difficulty</p>
14.	Class feeds back ideas. T makes list on board: <p style="margin-left: 40px;">When (time) Where (place) Why (reason)</p> T checks class understands that these subordinate clauses can be used to add information about time, place and reason.
15.	Homework: T gave class a sentence (<i>I ate some chocolate</i>) and asked them to add subordinate clauses to it that explained something about time or reason.

Steps (Session 3)	
16.	T read two different versions of another fable (<i>The Boy Who Cried Wolf</i>). Class discussed how the authors achieved the differences in tone and effect using the same events.
17.	Pupils wrote their own version of a fable, using subordinate clauses to make the stories interesting.
18.	(over a few days) Class continued reading published fables. While working on their own, they discussed their use of subordinate clauses.
19.	(Later) T collated children's fables and bound them into an anthology.