

## Subordination

*Writing is a rewarding art, because it is a challenging one.*

*Writing well is a learned craft, in which everyone can improve.*

Subordination is a method of combining two simple sentences so that one of them is the main idea, and the other is explanatory of the main idea or of something in it. Subordination is achieved by using subordinate conjunctions or relative pronouns.

### Subordinate Conjunctions

- *Writing is a rewarding art, because it is a challenging one.*

Some subordinate conjunctions are *although, as, as if, as though, because, even though, if, if only, once, than, that, though, unless, until, when, where, while, whenever, wherever.*

Some other words can be both subordinate conjunctions or prepositions: if they're followed by a subject and a predicate, they are conjunctions; if not, they are prepositions. Compare "before I die" with "before lunch;" "after he left," with "after my nap;" "since she forgot," with "since breakfast."

When the main structure comes first, its end is marked with a comma immediately before the subordinate conjunction. It is also correct and sometimes more effective to put the subordinate structure first, in which case a comma marks the end of the subordinate structure before the main one begins.

### Correct Subordination

- *Writing is a rewarding art, because it is a challenging one.*
- *Because it is challenging, writing is a rewarding art.*

### Relative pronouns

Relative pronouns connect (relate) two simple sentences. When you use a relative pronoun, the subordinate clause always follows the main one. The relative pronoun replaces one of the words in the sentence to be subordinated.

- *Writing well is a craft. Everyone should study it. → Writing well is a craft **which** everyone should study.*
- *Writing well is a learned craft. Everyone can improve in it. → Writing well is a learned craft **which** everyone can improve in. OR → Writing well is a learned craft, **in which** everyone can improve ~~in~~.*

Moving the whole phrase "in which" to the beginning is more formal; leaving in at the end of the sentence is informal usage (called ending a sentence with a preposition.) Don't use "in which" unless there is an "in" in the original core sentence.

For punctuation with relative pronouns, see "Restrictive and Non-restrictive uses."